VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES: A CULTURAL HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY ANALYSIS

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted within the context of Vietnam's reform policy imperatives to promote Western-developed pedagogical practices and instructional materials to raise the quality of English language education. However, at the time of the research there had been limited changes in the practice of tertiary English teaching and learning. The literature suggests that the culture of the Vietnamese English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms is generally influenced by Confucian values. Additionally, the culturality and historicity of tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices have been under-researched. Drawing on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and Activity System Analysis Methods, this case study analysed the cultural and historical roots of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. Nine teacher participants from a public university in central Vietnam engaged in classroom observations and individual in-depth interviews (pre- and post-observation). Resources and documents were also collected and analysed (e.g., government policy documents and directives, curriculum documents, tests, prescribed coursebooks, lesson plans, class handouts, and students' work). A reflexive journal provided a complementary data source.

The CHAT and thematic analysis revealed that the outcomes of the teachers' EFL teaching activity appeared to differ from the government's and university's intended outcomes for the national foreign language reform. This might be because of the lack of teacher input into the reforms and the institutional valuing of continuity and teacher retention (i.e., selected students being retained as teachers upon graduation). Cultural Confucian values (e.g., obedience, filial piety, hierarchical collective harmony, role modelling, face keeping, and other culture-specific norms), interwoven with teachers' past histories (e.g., the teachers' familial and school apprenticeships of observation, perezivanhie in the community) and their institutions' past histories worked to preserve traditional teaching practices and to limit transformation. A CHAT analysis illustrated how the misalignment between the current reform with its Western-developed language policy and resources with that of the teachers' values and beliefs and institutional practice caused systemic inertia in tertiary EFL teaching activity. Consequently, the reform objectives were not sufficiently realised.

This study indicates that in order to bring about transformation of EFL teaching in Vietnam, there is a need for a comprehensive mapping of the EFL activity system to identify structural elements, including the existing contradictions within the system. Moreover, it highlights the potential value of a comprehensive examination of other CHAT constructs, including the subject(s), tools, rules, community, and division of labour for a context analysis for a successful reform. Future research and national reform policy could fruitfully focus on the culturality and historicity of teachers' beliefs and practices for a better alignment between the government policy and the institutional and classroom reality. It is recommended that tertiary EFL training programmes should provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to explore their own beliefs to better prepare them for adapting to their teaching contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASs:	Activity System/s
CEFR:	Common European Framework of Reference
CHAT:	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
CHC:	Confucian Heritage Culture
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT:	English Language Teaching
EMI:	English as a medium of instruction
ESP:	English for Specific Purposes
FLs:	Foreign Language/s
HE:	Higher Education
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IELTS:	International English Language Testing System
L1:	Language 1
L2/SL:	Language 2/Second language
MoET:	Ministry of Education and Training
NFLC:	National Foreign Language Competency Framework
PLD:	Professional Learning and Development
TEFL:	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TOEFL:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
VCP:	Vietnamese Communist Party
VFLC:	Vietnamese Foreign Language Competency
VQF:	Vietnamese Qualifications Framework
VSTEP:	Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the study

This thesis is a qualitative case study of Vietnamese in-service tertiary English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' beliefs and practices. The teachers' beliefs and practices were examined through the lenses of culturality and historicity (Engeström, 2015).

The study reported here explores the beliefs and practices of nine EFL teachers who were teaching at RedStar (pseudonym), a public university in Beauty City (pseudonym) in central Vietnam. The assumption was that participants' beliefs are culturally and historically inherited and may differ from their teaching practices, which may be impacted by government and institutional policy guidelines. In other words, what the teachers do in their classrooms might not be what they believe is effective practice.

This chapter starts with a discussion on the status of English and tertiary English education in Vietnam, and then presents a personal rationale for this research. It then sets out the research problem, the purpose, and the significance of the research. The chapter ends with an outline of the thesis organisation.

1.2. English in Vietnam

1.2.1. The primacy of English in Vietnam

At international level, the imported language curriculum and policies and the global mobility of students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds have speeded up the spread of English as a medium of instruction in Vietnam, Asia, and other corners of the world. In Asia, English is referred to as a lingua franca (international language) whose users are assumed to communicate in multilingual settings (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Vietnam's membership of international organisations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007 and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2016 was at the time seen as either an opportunity for or a challenge to the country's stable development. In response to global economic and sociocultural integration, the Vietnamese government and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) requested relevant stakeholders to design and implement robust reforms and to restructure higher education (HE) to effectively deal with potential challenges (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020). A focus of the national educational reform was on building and enhancing FL competency for students for both communication purposes and for employability upon graduation (The Prime Minister, 2008a). English was preferred ahead of four other nominated FLs (Russian, French,

Chinese, and Japanese), and in 2018 was taught as a compulsory subject across levels of study from primary to tertiary. From Grade 3 (primary) to Grade 12 (end of senior secondary school), typically students study English for a total of 1,155 class periods or approximately 866 hours or 87 hours per year (MoET, 2018).

In the Vietnamese context, any FL education and English language education is a political and sociocultural matter. The choice of which FL to study and to enhance the country's position in a global context lies in the intercultural and international partnerships between Vietnam and other nations. Before the 1986 *Đổi Mới*, Vietnam maintained close strategic cooperation with the Eastern Bloc, and Russian was chosen as the major FL nationally. After the US-led trade embargo was lifted in 1994 and Vietnam pursued the open-door policy towards foreign countries, English re-emerged as the predominant FL in the country (Do, 1996; Ngo, 2021). The ongoing dominance of English as the foreign language of choice is reflected through the annual increase in number of Vietnamese students who are studying in English-speaking countries or in foreign-invested universities in Vietnam where English is used as a medium of instruction (EMI). By 2018, for example, there had been approximately 170,000 Vietnamese studying abroad, of whom over 90% were self-funded, and the most preferred destinations were English-speaking countries, including the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (BMI Market Report, 2019). In addition, foreign-invested universities in Vietnam (e.g., Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University Vietnam, Fulbright University Vietnam) recruited both domestic and international students with EMI (Dang Nguyen, 2019).

In brief, the unabated rise of English as both a compulsory school subject and an employment requirement reflects that English language proficiency is a priority in the government's education agenda and in everyday social exchanges. In a recent move, MoET signed a memorandum of understanding with the Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge University Press (Civinini, 2019). This shows the government's determination to raise the quality of English language education in Vietnam to produce a labour force who are competent users of English.

1.2.2. Tertiary English education in Vietnam

At tertiary level, English is offered either as a discipline (for English-major students) or a subject (for non-English-major students). English-major students are trained to be teachers of English, translators, or interpreters. In contrast, non-English-major students study far fewer credits of English as a subject to improve their general English proficiency. The common objective of these two groups of students is to enhance employability upon graduation. Colleges and universities are

responsible for designing their training programmes based on curriculum design procedures stipulated by MoET (2015a) and these programmes must be approved by MoET. According to the national FL competency framework, both English-major and non-English-major students have to achieve set levels upon graduation (to be discussed in Chapter 5). Students can submit a local English certificate awarded by accredited English training institutions or an equivalent international English certificate (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC) as partial fulfilment of the graduation requirements.

For English-major programmes, there are two levels of English training in Vietnamese HE three-year college and four-year university programmes. College graduates usually become teachers at primary and junior secondary schools (6-14 years old), while university graduates become teachers at senior secondary schools (15-18 years old). In many cases, university graduates with outstanding results may be 'retained' on graduation for positions as university lecturers. Those enrolled in a university EFL training programme have to study full time toward a Bachelor of Arts degree across eight academic semesters, structured into two stages. The first stage typically focuses on basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation) and socialist subjects such as Marxist-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, and the History of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The second stage focuses on professional knowledge such as linguistics, British and American literature, British and American cultures, and English teaching methodology. Physical education and military training are two important subjects in any Vietnamese university training programmes, and required for graduation. English-major students who study to teach English must attend a practicum period (between four and six weeks) in the final year.

Non-English-major students at HE institutions are required to complete 4 to 10 credits of English language study over their programme. However, due to low proficiency levels and the need to improve English language skills while the English training programmes at colleges and universities do not satisfy demand, many non-English-major students turn to English centres for out-of-school private tutoring classes as a lifeline. It is estimated that by 2019 there were approximately 4,000 FL centres across the nation (Le Dang, 2019). Some widely recognised foreign-founded English language centres in Vietnam include the British Council Vietnam (1993), American Apollo (1995), Vietnam-USA Society English Centres (1997), and Australian Centre for Education and Training (2002). Additionally, there are thousands of English language centres operated by colleges, universities, provincial Departments of Education and Training in different provinces and cities, and private sectors across the country. However, the quality of many English centres is questionable and there is a lack of criteria for auditing these centres by MoET (Le Dang, 2019; Thuc Tran, 2019).

In addition, English is an important instructional focus in tertiary content-based language learning with EMI for subject areas such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry. HE students are expected to gain both domain knowledge and communication skills in English. This model has been realised by the Vietnamese government's ambition in introducing tertiary advanced programmes, through which Vietnamese students are taught content subjects with EMI. The effectiveness of this move has been debated; however, it shows the Vietnamese government's effort to reform the country's HE and to respond to the globalised context of education. To lift the quality of HE in the country, the Vietnamese government introduced a project encouraging transnational education programmes from 2008 to 2015 which promoted educational cooperation between local state universities and foreign partners intending to enhance the quality of national education (The Prime Minister, 2008b).

Despite attempts from both the government and HE institutions through the National Foreign Languages Project 2020 (Project 2020), Vietnamese HE graduates still show low proficiency in English (Le, 2011; Trinh & Mai, 2019). This is attributed to various sociocultural factors, including the Vietnamese culture of teaching and learning, large EFL classes (e.g., 40 students), lack of teaching facilities, inappropriate English teaching and learning materials, students' low motivation and low and uneven English proficiency, time constraints, untrained teachers of English for Specific Purposes (Trinh & Mai, 2019), a lack of secondary-through-tertiary connection in terms of curriculum (Le, 2011, 2019; Tran & Marginson, 2014), traditional grammar- and vocabulary-based pedagogy (Nguyen, 2014; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019), and a test-oriented educational system (Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Nguyen & Stracke, 2020; Trinh & Mai, 2019). Similarly, underqualified academic staff and the absence of local control of curriculum and textbooks, among many others, have been identified as constraints to improving the quality of tertiary education in general (Harman & Nguyen, 2010). Low salary scales have also impeded educational quality improvement (Harman & Nguyen, 2010; Le, 2019; Tran, 2018). Many scholars maintain that most Vietnamese graduates had only elementary levels of English proficiency (Hoang, 2008; Le, 2013). This greatly influenced graduates' employability as English language skills were often a prerequisite for employment (Gribble, 2014; Kieu, 2010; Tran, T. T., 2015). Education First's English Proficiency Index (2019) ranked Vietnam 52nd (2019) and falling to 65th (2020) out of 100 non-English-speaking countries around the world, which was considered low proficiency.

1.3. Personal rationale

Twenty years of EFL teaching experience convinced me that, although many Vietnamese language and non-language students may master English grammar, they do not show a high English proficiency level as shown in the literature (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Trinh & Mai, 2019). In other cases, many may have a good command and performance of spoken English, but they might not be competent in reading and writing in English or vice versa. Personal observations since 1998 indicate that Vietnamese students of English might be trained to reproduce textbook English and not be well-prepared to use English in specific contexts of communication such as in the English-speaking workplace.

During my English learning at university in Vietnam during the 1990s, language teaching theories were not taught. I was retained as an English teacher at the university where I had studied, I started teaching, consciously drawing on the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) of my former university teachers' practice and that of my father, who had previously been a tertiary teacher of Russian. These were my role models and I believed their teaching methods were superb and could be applied in any language instructional context regardless of students' sociocultural backgrounds. I used to believe that my good command of English would help produce appealing English lessons. In some cases, I was successful; however, in others, my lessons were unsuccessful. The classroom pratice made me realise that my beliefs about language teaching and learning, the role of both teachers and students, and the teaching methodology needed to be questioned. There might be mismatches between my beliefs about language teaching and learning and the historical and sociocultural practice of my classroom. Likewise, there might be mismatches between my beliefs and those of students about language teaching and learning that are historically and socioculturally formed. There might be differences in the cultural values my students and I held, such as the roles of the teacher and students in the classroom, which affected our teaching and learning practice. My teaching made me realise that I had to return to traditional methods such as grammar-translation because my students wanted me to explain grammatical rules or word meanings explicitly. Later in my teaching years, I realised the traditional grammar-translation method with the teacher's provision of grammar and vocabulary exercises (e.g., English verb tenses) was effective because students needed to absorb language knowledge in silence. Still later I realised this silence was not a reflection of passive learning, but rather a sociocultural feature of the Yin-Yang (static – active) of a phenomenon.

A radical change in my teaching beliefs occurred when I attended a three-month training course for in-service tertiary English teachers in Hanoi in 2000. The Australian government sponsored the course under the VAT project (Vietnam Australia Training), and both Vietnamese and Australian scholars and professionals were in charge. Working with English-speaking professionals who held reflective views of language teaching and learning changed my vision and beliefs. I realised that what I had been doing in my English language classrooms had to be revisited. Language teaching was not only about the language *per se* or about obtaining high qualifications. Upon completing this course, I came back to my home city, eagerly applying what I had learned from more knowledgeable partners, being confident that things would improve. A communicative approach to teaching and learning, authentic materials, and what I had learned from the course were applied. Communicative tasks such as communication games, pronunciation games, and group-work tasks such as using extracts from newspapers for reading or for translation helped create an exciting learning environment in the classroom. However, my students frequently appeared to resist change in the classroom environment. They preferred teacher talk, and explanations of language and content. I remember one student who diplomatically told me that what I applied in the English classroom was 'cool and fun', but said they still needed to have word meanings and grammatical rules explicitly explained. I realised that the cool and fun learning environment was not necessarily what my students wanted. My students had their own beliefs about language teaching and learning formed during senior secondary school. They brought what they had observed and valued in lower levels of study into their university study. Therefore, there might be mismatches between their beliefs and mine about how language was learned.

I still recall my lessons on representation and identity, delivered by Professor Lesley Farrell of Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, where I studied for my Master's degree in 2001. Thanks to these lessons, I came to understand that the way one sees the world may have a significant impact, either positively or negatively, on their social interactions with others in society generally and teaching and learning contexts particularly. That might be why many Vietnamese EFL teachers have long expected or assumed that the way their students of English might see the world, language teaching and learning particularly, was the same as theirs. Given that language and culture are inextricably linked, teaching a language is not a simple task. The exposure to English-speaking cultures while studying abroad enlightened me that one's arbitrary identity or culturally deep-rooted beliefs may be a challenging obstacle toward their teaching practice. In addition, sociopolitical contexts of activity might be another significant mediator of language teaching and learning.

My experiences as a learner and my teaching experiences motivated me to further understand Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs about English teaching and learning and explore the extent to which these beliefs are enacted in their teaching practices from sociocultural historical perspectives. The aim is to strengthen understanding of the relationship between Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices, which may contribute to the improvement of EFL teaching in Vietnam.

Therefore, this thesis will contribute to the further conceptualisation of language teachers' beliefs. Theoretically, the findings will contribute to the growing body of literature exploring language teachers' beliefs from sociocultural perspectives in general and activity theory in particular. Practically, it is intended to result in more effective language curriculum developments, better designs of language teacher education programmes, and more productive language teaching practices in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL context and the like.

1.4. The problem in context

Since 2008 the major focus of language learning in schools and tertiary institutions in Vietnam has been the English language (Nguyen, 2012; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). Project 2020, with an estimated cost of approximately VND$ 9,500 billion (US$498 million), was launched by the government in 2008 to boost the quality of English language teaching and learning and produce competent English users for the country's economic development. Project 2020 adopted the Western-developed language framework (Common European Framework of Reference – CEFR). Accordingly, the national minimum proficiency for tertiary FL teacher proficiency, for example, is C1 of the CEFR, tertiary non-language teachers and graduates is B1, and C1 for tertiary FL graduates. However, growing evidence suggests that these targets have not been achieved and there is concern with slow progress in developing language proficiency (Nguyen, Hamid & Renshaw, 2016; Ngo, 2021). Project 2020 came to an end having only partially succeeded in achieving its stated objective of creating new generations of teachers and graduates with higher FL proficiency. Therefore, the Vietnamese government issued the amendments of Project 2020 for the period 2017–2025 (The Prime Minister, 2017).

Researchers have questioned the appropriateness and suitability of a Vietnamese context of what is essentially a Western-developed language framework (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020; Nguyen, Hamid & Renshaw, 2016). Many other researchers described the number of low-proficiency English teachers compared to requirements of Project 2020 as alarming and shocking (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2017; Nguyen & Mai, 2015). There is mixed evidence of the experiences of Vietnamese EFL teachers

in reconciling Vietnamese pedagogical values and practices with Western derived frameworks, resources, and practices for EFL teaching and learning (Nguyen, Hamid & Renshaw, 2016). Some found an East–West harmony in which the Western-developed methodologies match well with the culture-specific environment of the EFL classroom in the Vietnamese context (Pham & Ton, 2010). Yet others have reported pedagogical discord, which is attributed to cultural elements in the instructional practice (Le, 2011; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018; Pham, H. H., 2007). Additionally, researchers have highlighted the lack of autonomy EFL teachers have concerning curriculum, textbooks, resources and assessment design (Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018). Importantly, there is not robust cooperation or connection between the policymakers and teachers as change agents in FL reform in Vietnam (Le, 2019; Le & Barnard, 2019). The lack of progress with Project 2020 suggests problems in the current approach to EFL, and there is a need to understand why this is.

Within the context of the national policy imperative to lift proficiency in English language, this study focuses on teacher beliefs in EFL teaching and learning. The exploration of EFL teachers' beliefs is critically important to gain insights into the role of culture and values in the EFL classroom. Recent research findings suggest that Vietnamese society generally and EFL classroom cultures particularly are influenced by deep-rooted Confucian values (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Pham, T. H. T., 2014), while at the same time Western-developed methodologies and instructional materials are promoted for use in the classroom context. Recent studies on English language teaching and learning in Vietnam have focused on pedagogical aspects (Grant & Nguyen, 2017; Nguyen & Hall, 2017; Pham & Pham, 2018). Many have identified the need to have a wider and deeper understanding of EFL teaching and learning (Le, 2011, 2019; Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Nguyen, et al., 2014; Nguyen, et al., 2016; Pham, 2014). As one of a number of areas identified for future research, teachers' beliefs are of growing interest in the Vietnamese context (Nguyen, B. H., 2013; Nguyen, T. Q. T, 2017; Nguyen, X. N. C M, 2017; Nguyen & Hamid, 2015; Pham & Hamid, 2013; Phan & Locke, 2015, 2016). However, there has been little or no research on the cultural and historical roots of teachers' beliefs about how Vietnamese students might be supported to develop language proficiency nor on how and in what ways such beliefs influence teacher practices. It is intended that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of EFL pedagogy and practices in Vietnam. It may also contribute to the language curriculum policy in the Vietnamese context.

1.5. Purpose of the study

This qualitative case study aims to investigate and contribute to the understanding of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teaching at tertiary level in Vietnam by examining in-service teachers' beliefs and practices through the lens of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2015). In addition, this study will explore Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' perceptions of what constitutes effective language teaching practice in Vietnam. Its findings will contribute to theoretical, pedagogical, and curricular dimensions of EFL learning and teaching in Vietnam. This research aims to:

1. Develop an understanding of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs;

2. Develop an understanding of how these beliefs are shaped and developed over time;

3. Explore how teachers' beliefs and practices are influenced by historical and cultural factors; and

4. Identify potential contradictions and tensions in teachers' EFL teaching activity.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study is guided by the following questions:

Key question:

What are Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about English language teaching and learning?

To answer this question, the following sub-questions, which reflect sociocultural and historical perspectives, will be addressed:

1. What is the genesis of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs?

2. What cultural and historical features are inherent in their beliefs and practices?

3. What are the contradictions and tensions in their EFL teaching activity?

1.6. Significance of the research

This study is important for the following reasons. First, this study uses CHAT to examine the impacts of historical factors on teachers' beliefs and practices. This original approach has received little attention in literature, especially in the Vietnamese educational context. Furthermore, the methodological incorporation of CHAT and thematic analysis in this study adds a fresh dimension to understanding teachers' beliefs and practices (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). Therefore, it makes a strong contribution to literature and the growing body of CHAT-based research on teachers'

beliefs and practices. Secondly, given the inseparability of beliefs and practices in language education (Barcelos, 2015; Borg, 2003, 2006, 2011; Zheng, 2015) that the better an understanding of teachers' beliefs, the closer we are to the instructional practice (Kagan, 1992), this study helps identify challenges and tensions facing Vietnamese tertiary EFL educators in their teaching activity. Thirdly, the findings of this study will contribute knowledge about English tertiary teaching and learning in Vietnam. Fourthly, an explicit exposure of teachers' beliefs will be more likely to encourage professional development (Borg, 2011; Zheng, 2015). Teachers can monitor their beliefs and instructional practices for more context-specific approaches to language teaching. Fifthly, understanding teachers' beliefs also beneficial in terms of teacher education and curriculum development (Borg, 2003, 2011; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Zheng, 2015). Exploring teachers' beliefs helps provide appropriate support as necessary for teacher education and training programmes in which teacher learning processes take place (Borg, 2011). Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own teaching and learning practice, in understanding how their past educational and professional experiences impact their current beliefs. The design of both national and local curricula needs to take into account teachers' beliefs and their personal pedagogical values. A large-scale curriculum reform has to start with careful examination of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning (Zheng, 2015). In the context of reforming FL education in Vietnam under Project 2020 to improve language teachers' professional skills, this study is both timely and relevant in terms of examining the effectiveness of such a large-scale national foreign language project. Finally, beliefs and affective factors (emotions) are closely linked (Aragão, 2011; Barcelos, 2015; Golombek & Doran, 2014); therefore, it is important to explore Vietnamese teachers' beliefs further because Confucian ideologies still have a significant impact on the country's educational system (Luong, 2016; Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). These points will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2 – Literature Review.

1.7. Thesis organisation

The current chapter started with my personal rationale for this research, which provided a snapshot of my learning English and becoming an English teacher. The chapter then discussed the current situation of English language education in Vietnam and its inherent problems despite the reform launched by the Vietnamese government with the National Foreign Languages Project 2020 based on the adapted Western-developed language framework (CEFR).

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on teachers' beliefs and practices, followed by a review of research into Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices and a discussion on methodological

issues in examining teachers' beliefs. The next part of the chapter highlights contemporary views on effective EFL teaching and Confucian values in Vietnamese education.

Chapter 3 presents Cultural Historical Activity Theory with a focus on key conceptualisations and generations. It discusses how CHAT as a theoretical framework can align with a case study approach.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology and methods used in the research, including that of case study, and the data collection and analysis procedures. It then demonstrates why and how CHAT and Activity Systems Analysis align with case study in exploring the culturality and historicity of teachers' beliefs and practices. The chapter also discusses cultural and ethical considerations in interviewing Vietnamese participants

Chapter 5 describes the governmental and institutional contexts within which higher education and tertiary EFL teaching and learning are bound. Cultural features are woven in the discussion on ethical issues.

Chapter 6 starts with the profiles of the nine teachers who serve as individual case studies for the research. Attention is paid to their past language learning experiences whether in the home, school or at university, and to their views on what constitutes effective EFL teaching and learning. The chapter continues with a cross-case analysis, focusing on common patterns of beliefs and practices in EFL teaching activity.

Chapter 7 discusses key findings from teachers' interviews and observations in relation to relevant literature, particularly attending to historicity and culturality of tertiary EFL teaching activity in the case study university in central Vietnam.

Chapter 8 summarises key findings of the research, research contributions and limitations, implications and possibilities for future research, followed by references and appendices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces the general concept of beliefs and reviews the literature on teachers' beliefs and language teachers' beliefs in general. It then examines studies on teachers' beliefs in English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) contexts, including those in Vietnam. The chapter continues to focus on Vietnamese education from the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) perspective. As beliefs are characterised by affective factors, there is a section that discusses affective factors in Vietnam's education system. The chapter ends with a summary of the literature on teachers' beliefs and the identified research gap.

2.1. Teachers' beliefs

This section will discuss the definition and characteristics of beliefs in general and language teachers' beliefs in particular. It will then focus on studies related to teachers' beliefs in EFL contexts, including Vietnam.

2.1.1. Beliefs

Beliefs are something inside our mind and are personal mental constructions of experience of the outside world that can be true or false (Sigel, 1985). Beliefs, constructed gradually, are judgments and evaluations people make about themselves, others, and the external world (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Beliefs might be used interchangeably with other terms. For example, Pajares (1992) suggests a complex conceptualisation of beliefs with interchangeable terms: attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy. Beliefs are conscious or unconscious propositions held by an individual, which are subjective and evaluative and serve as a guide to thought and behaviour (Borg, 2001). Beliefs can be core (i.e., socioculturally benchmarked, systematic, and resistant to change) or peripheral (i.e., less systematic, shaped through personal experiences, and less resistant to change) (Gabillon, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). As such, core beliefs are socioculturally informed and ingrained while peripheral beliefs are theoretically embraced (Niu & Andrews, 2012). For this research, I conceptualise beliefs as a cognitive, affective, and relational construct of human thinking, which is shaped by sociocultural and historical contexts of lived experiences.

2.1.2. Teachers' beliefs and influential factors

Teachers' beliefs are a particular form of personal knowledge and generally related to their implicit assumptions about students, learning, classrooms, and the subject matter to be taught (Kagan, 1992). Teachers' beliefs can be conceptualised as educational beliefs because, by nature, teachers' beliefs include those beliefs about the content (subject matter) and knowledge (epistemology), self (e.g., self-efficacy, sense of agency), teaching (pedagogy), contextual or environmental factors (e.g., politics, social norms), and students (e.g., motivation, culture, intelligence) (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Levin, 2015; Pajares, 1992).

Table 2.1

Key aspects in examining teachers' beliefs

Key aspects	Scholars
1. Teachers' beliefs are individual and subjectively true mental constructs	Pajares (1992); Skott (2015)
2. Teachers' beliefs are cognitive as well as affective	Abelson (1979); Aragão (2011); Barcelos (2015); Barcelos & Kalaja (2011); Gill & Hardin (2015); Golombek & Doran (2014); Nguyen, M. H. (2018); Pajares (1992); Skott (2015)
3. Teachers' beliefs are temporally and contextually stable, and these beliefs are subject to change based on substantial engagement in relevant social practices	Buehl & Beck (2015); Kagan (1992); Mansour (2009); Pajares (1992); Skott (2015)
4. Teachers' beliefs are culturally and historically situated	Barcelos & Kalaja (2011); Pajares (1992); Skott (2015)
5. Teachers' beliefs have a significantly dialectical influence on how teachers interpret and engage with their teaching practices	Barcelos (2003); Borg (2006, 2011); Breen et al. (2001); Pajares (1992); Skott (2015); Zheng (2015)

Teachers' beliefs are shaped by the goals, values, and the ways they perceive the content and process of teaching (Skott, 2015). These beliefs are likewise formed by teachers' learning experiences, personality, perceptions of the most effective teaching practice, institutional practices, and teaching principles. Lived experiences in society, prior schooling, professional education, and instructional experience are the main factors in teachers' acquisition of their own beliefs (Gabillon, 2012). Beliefs are socioculturally and historically situated and dynamically transformed through the process of personal internalisation (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011). As such, beliefs can be examined based on the key aspects (Table 2.1).

Teachers' beliefs are influenced by various internal factors (e.g., other beliefs, knowledge and experience, self-reflection) and external factors (e.g., classroom contexts, school contexts, national contexts) (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Pajares, 1992). Teachers' other beliefs may have an impact on their belief system, for example, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can be either a hindrance or support of the enactment of their beliefs about teaching. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can be moderators between teachers' beliefs about content and their instructional practices (Buehl & Beck, 2015). A Vietnamese EFL teacher in Phan and Locke's (2016) study decided to teach English writing skills although she had found it challenging before. This was because her level of self-efficacy increased as a result of her determination to enlarge her professional knowledge of teaching writing methodology.

Teachers' beliefs are related to knowledge in intricate ways (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012) and formulated through experience-based knowledge (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011). Buehl and Beck (2015) found that teachers might not act on their beliefs due to a lack of content or pedagogical knowledge. Borg's (2011) study on the influence of a teacher education programme on English language teachers in the United Kingdom revealed a significant influence of the programme on teachers' beliefs by creating more room for alternative conceptualisations of teaching practices. Dang (2013) provided a detailed analysis of two prospective EFL teachers during a 15-week practicum in a university in Vietnam through which their beliefs about teaching changed. Specifically, at a later stage of the practicum, one teacher changed her objective of teaching toward student learning instead of her being faithful to lesson plans designed beforehand. Obviously, the teachers' experiences with teacher education programmes are an important internal determinant of belief enactment among teachers.

Externally, institutional factors such as classroom contexts and school environments can impact teachers' beliefs. The institutional culture within which teachers operate is one dominant force to changes in teachers' beliefs (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012). Fives and Buehl (2012) note that teachers in Chinese Confucian society might not be able to enact their beliefs about constructivist teaching practice because the emphasis of Confucianism is on hierarchical human relationships, which is in contrast to some values of Western-endorsed constructivism in education. Similarly, Pham and Hamid's (2013) study on Vietnamese beginning EFL teachers' beliefs revealed the teachers had to follow, either consciously or unconsciously, the traditional way of teaching with little opportunity for students to use the target language. This was in contrast to their espoused belief of the effectiveness of the communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

Luong's (2016) study on Vietnamese tertiary teachers' beliefs about student assessment found teachers were reluctant to make changes in student assessment even though they believed student assessment was to motivate and support student learning and individual development. This was because they were either happy with the status quo of traditional norm-referenced assessment or hesitant in making a strong commitment to changes.

Teachers' beliefs in this study are understood as what teachers think about the teaching and learning of the English language (Borg, 2003, 2006), which are "constructed by teachers themselves as they respond to their teaching contexts" (Nishino, 2012, p. 380), and defined through conceptualising activity or sense-making activity (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011) and substantial social experiences (Skott, 2015). The view that teachers' beliefs are contextual individual conceptions related to their experiences (Fives & Buehl, 2012) has been adopted. In this study, the examination of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs included affective factors (i.e., how teachers feel about their own thinking and doing) that should be placed at the same level as thinking and doing in exploring teachers' beliefs (Golombek & Doran, 2014). It is argued that teachers' beliefs are shaped by broader cultural and historical contexts, be it local or global.

2.1.3. Teachers' beliefs and instructional practices

The relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices is symbiotic (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996). A universal agreement has been that teachers' beliefs are shaped by a number of variables and dynamically interact with their learning experiences or apprenticeship of observation, which is either positive or negative (Borg, 2004; Borg, 2015; Holland et al., 1998; Lortie, 1975; Moodie, 2016; Nishino, 2012; Rahman et al., 2020; Rogoff, 1995), language education programmes they attended, professional development, their instructional practices (Cancino et al., 2019; Dao & Newton, 2021), and learners' motivation and achievement (Gabillon, 2012; Skott, 2015). Research on teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning underscore a deeper understanding of their own beliefs because this helps teachers change and improve teaching effectiveness (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). In other cases, teachers' beliefs are found to affect instructional practice as they create classroom tension and students' anxiety, hence students' achievement (Brown, 2006; Moodie, 2016).

Past learning experiences are important in shaping teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching and learning (Borg, 2004; Borg, 2013; Dao & Newton, 2021; Gabillon, 2012; Lortie, 1975; Moodie, 2016). Teachers own these past learning experiences and turn them into a valuable resource for their professional development (Bailey et al., 1996). They internalise these experiences and may replicate

(e.g., positive learning experiences), avoid (e.g., negative learning experiences), and/or adapt them in their classroom contexts (Cancino et al., 2019; Dao & Newton, 2021; Kennedy, 1991; Moodie, 2016). Importantly, these positive and negative learning experiences are often teachers' personal preconceptions and have a strong hold on their classroom practices (Botha, 2020; Cancino et al., 2019; Nishino; 2012).

Many researchers maintain that exploring teachers' beliefs should be a focus of language education processes as this will foster more effective teaching and learning practices (Barcelos, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Borg, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2011; Breen et al., 2001; Pajares, 1992; Zheng, 2015). Teachers' beliefs play an important role in instructional practices such as designing classroom learning tasks, choosing materials, and organising and communicating knowledge (Borg, 2003; Pajares, 1992). Therefore, teachers need to understand their own beliefs via a constant personal reflection through which they become aware of their educational theories or theories of action (Kane et al., 2002; Yanping, 2014). Given that the two criteria of learning are, first, correcting any mismatches between intention and actuality or, second, producing a match between intention and actuality for the first time (Argyris, 1997), the inquiries into the relationship between teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning and the instructional practices have to be further implemented.

Conversely, instructional practices may significantly impact teachers' beliefs because teachers' beliefs respond to context demands (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Li, 2012). In this sense, teachers' beliefs are context-dependent and shaped through their engagement in specific social actions. Pre-service teachers' beliefs about English language teaching in Li's (2012) study were found to change after their participation in a teacher education programme. Specifically, at the end of the first term, one teacher no longer held a simplistic conception of English as a system with rules, but that it represented a culture, identity, and social values. The other teacher believed that in order for effective instructional practice to take place, eclectic communicative language teaching (CLT) needs to be promoted. This changed from the view of the teacher as knowledge authority to a learning friend of students.

Similarly, the teaching practices influenced teachers' beliefs in Debreli's (2012) study on EFL teachers in Northern Cyprus in a teacher training course. At the beginning of the course, all teachers stated the importance of implementing communicative approaches to teaching English based on group-work learning tasks. They claimed this approach was more likely to improve students' communicative skills and enhance teaching quality. However, by the end of the course, they shifted

their beliefs by attributing their difficulties in carrying out such an approach in their language classrooms to control problems. Additionally, their beliefs shifted in relation to learning materials from material-based learning to teacher-initiative and student-involvement in the lessons.

2.1.4. Belief – practice congruence and incongruence

For the last two decades, one of the focuses of research into teachers' beliefs has been the congruence or incongruence between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices. In the field of language teaching, researchers have found matches and mismatches between teachers' beliefs about second/foreign teaching and learning and their teaching practices and matches and mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs (Borg, 2003, 2011; Gabillon, 2012; Hos & Kekec, 2014; Niu & Andrews, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Polat, 2009; Ramazani, 2014; Wan et al., 2011).

Polat's (2009) study on teachers' and students' beliefs concerning grammar instruction in Georgia revealed a consensus between teachers' and students' beliefs about the significance and importance of grammar in language learning. Furthermore, both teachers and students in Polat's study (2009) held the same beliefs that knowledge of L1 grammar and the learning of L2 were a prerequisite to language learning. In the same vein, Hos and Kekec (2014) explored the differences between Turkish university EFL teachers' beliefs and their teaching practice regarding grammar instruction in five areas: definition of grammar, the importance of grammar, approach to teaching grammar, feedback and error correction, and practices used in teaching grammar. Significantly, teachers' beliefs about grammar were not always in accordance with their instructional practices. The results revealed that teachers believed grammar is essential for language learners and language teaching in general, especially in test-driven educational practice. Most of them thought that students valued grammar because it would help them pass the tests. Interestingly, the teachers found it unnecessary to correct students' grammatical mistakes, provided the message was conveyed. However, there was a conflict between teachers' beliefs about grammar and their teaching practice as many teachers corrected students' grammatical mistakes, which caused a high level of anxiety and affective filter among students who were afraid of making mistakes in class. Another tension was that while teachers stated that their approach to grammar instruction was communication-based, their teaching practice reflected a grammar-translation approach. The researchers concluded that the mismatches between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices were attributable to students' profiles, course objectives, curriculum, content, available materials, and institutional setting.

Niu and Andrews (2012) researched congruences and incongruences of four female Chinese university EFL teachers who taught in the English-major vocabulary instructional context. They found teachers had a common belief about explicit vocabulary instruction, communication-based vocabulary instruction, vocabulary learning through meaning guessing, use of Chinese in vocabulary instruction, and self-directed vocabulary learning. For example, most of the teachers considered the use of Chinese to be best way to help students to understand key concepts and notions. However, teachers held differing beliefs about vocabulary teaching regarding the kind of word knowledge taught, the role of learner factors, dictionary checking, and teachers' pedagogical practices. While one teacher favoured the inclusion of world knowledge, cultural aspects of word use, and meaning subtleties, another was inclined to teach word meanings. This was also the case regarding the role of learner factors when one teacher held a differing belief from the other three that she did not perceive learners' proficiency as a contributing factor to her choice of vocabulary instruction. Although all the teachers shared similar beliefs about the use of the dictionary in vocabulary learning, they reported discrepant approaches to dictionary use in the classroom. One teacher allowed her students to use the dictionary in vocabulary lessons for word meanings, spellings, and pronunciation, whereas another maintained that the use of a dictionary in the lesson might seduce students into a habit of checking every new word they came across. Niu and Andrews (2012) concluded that consistencies and inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs should be considered dynamic, from a cultural perspective, in that beliefs and practices are in a reciprocal interaction. This aligns with Negueruela-Azarola's (2011) argument that the association between beliefs articulated through language and actual actions in the language classroom is indirect. Therefore, there might be matches, at best, or mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs because of discrepancies in personal internalisations of phenomenological concepts.

To sum up, despite the impact of teachers' beliefs on their instructional practices, the evidence from the literature indicates that what teachers actually do in the classroom does not always correspond to their espoused beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012). Specifically, the belief-practice non-alignment is attributable to contextual constraints (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011). Phipps and Borg (2009) refer to the lack of belief-practice correspondence as teaching tensions. Therefore, understanding the reasons underlying these tensions helps better understand the teaching activity.

2.1.5. Changes in teachers' beliefs

Changes in teachers' beliefs have an impact on their instructional practice. Fives and Buehl (2012) maintain that effective changes in teaching practices could be attributable to changes in teachers'

pedagogical beliefs, while other researchers (Feryok, 2012; Song & Kim, 2016) advocate that teachers' social and professional experiences result in changes in their beliefs.

The extent to which teacher education programmes influence teachers' beliefs was explored. For instance, Borg's (2011) study on the impacts of an in-service teacher education programme on English language teachers in the United Kingdom found that the teachers' beliefs changed, though not profoundly and radically, after a teacher education programme. Specifically, one teacher admitted her beliefs remained but acknowledged space for new beliefs such as developing the lessons based on students' existing knowledge. Borg (2011) claims that if the impact is equated with radical change, the impact of the teacher education programme in his study on teachers' beliefs was insignificant. Muthanna and Karaman's (2011) study reveals similar insignificant impacts of a teacher education programme on Yemeni prospective English teachers' beliefs. Although the participants acknowledged the advantages of the practicum courses that helped with personal development and the acquisition programme, they maintained there needed to be a balance between theoretical and practical components of such courses.

Other researchers investigated changes in teachers' beliefs regarding the application of technology in their instruction (Chiu & Churchill, 2016; Fluck & Dowden, 2011). In their study on changes in Australian pre-service teachers' beliefs about using information and communication technology (ICT) for student learning, Fluck and Dowden (2011) found that teachers expected more frequent use of ICT in the classroom compared to their previous schooling. Furthermore, teachers believed that ICT could be used as a social tool for education rather than as a mere tutor for student learning. Chiu and Churchill (2016) investigated how Hong Kong teachers' beliefs changed after they received training workshops on the use of mobile devices in their classrooms. They found that with practical experience in the training workshops, teachers' beliefs changed significantly, especially their higher self-efficacy in using mobile devices in their teaching.

Song and Kim's (2016) study investigated the teaching motivation of two experienced female South Korean teachers of English. Teachers' initial beliefs about English teaching were found to be significantly affected by the environment in which they worked. One teacher lost her belief about the effectiveness of the grammar-translation method in her new school because this method caused demotivation and dissatisfaction among her students. In contrast, the other teacher positively changed her beliefs, hence positively impacting her teaching motivation. Although she had not believed in the effectiveness of the grammar-translation method when she taught in her previous

teaching environment, this method worked well in her new school because it helped her students be well-prepared for their exams.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, which are importantly linked to their classroom behaviour, are likely to change with their engagement in specific professional practices. Self-efficacy, as theorised by Bandura (1997), is dependent on four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. According to the self-efficacy theory, individual efficacy is "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Self-efficacy beliefs affect individuals in various ways, such as the choice of actions, how much effort to put into actions, and how long they can remain in and overcome stressful environmental situations (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Generally, the more successful an individual's course of action, the higher their self-efficacy (Buehl & Beck, 2015). In class, efficacious teachers tend to show their confidence and capability in altering their behaviours towards ultimately compelling performances in their instructional practices to increase their students' learning outcomes. For example, in Zonoubi et al.'s (2017) study, Iranian EFL teachers' pedagogical efficacy in applying innovative instructional strategies to teach grammar significantly increased after they had participated in professional learning communities. Similarly, the Turkish EFL teachers in OrtaÇtepe and Akyel's (2015) study became more efficacious after an in-service teacher education programme grounded in social constructivism. This was evident in their classroom teaching when they shifted from traditional grammar-based instruction to a more communicative approach to language teaching with meaning-based learning. OrtaÇtepe and Akyel (2015) observed that the teachers' instructional practices focused less on immediate error correction and more on students' active engagement in real-life conversational activities. In contrast, despite an overall increase in self-efficacy after a five-week online learning module, the US teachers in Yoo's (2016) study expressed that gaining more content knowledge and instructional strategies put them on the fence, overrating their confidence on the one side and underrating themselves with feelings of uncertainty.

In summary, the findings in the literature on changes in teachers' beliefs were contextually varied, either significant or insignificant. This may partly be due to methodological issues regarding exploring changes in beliefs. Arguably, research into changes in teachers' beliefs should be longitudinal because it might take a long time for a shift in beliefs to take place (Levin, 2015). Another explanation might be that most of the reviewed studies did not pay sufficient attention to

historical events and cultural circumstances of the participants. Therefore, developmental changes in teachers' beliefs, although temporary in nature, were not thoroughly explored.

2.1.6. Language teachers' beliefs

With the accumulation of research into teacher cognition in the 1990s, the majority of research into language teachers' beliefs proliferated in the mid-1990s (Borg, 2006). The last decades have experienced a divergence in research on teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning from several perspectives. The foci of research into language teachers' beliefs and practices in the last decade included:

- congruences and incongruences between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices (Gabillon, 2012; Hos & Kekec, 2014; Niu & Andrews, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Ramazani, 2014; Wan et al., 2011)

- curricular areas, for example, intercultural competence in language teaching and learning (Howard et al., 2016; Young & Sachdev, 2011); language proficiency level (Alexander, 2012; Yilmaz, 2011), the instruction of grammar and language skills (Borg, 1999, 2011; Hos & Kekec, 2014)

- teacher education and belief change (Borg, 2011; Muthanna & Karaman, 2011)

- beliefs as a complex system (Feryok, 2010; Li, 2013; Zheng, 2015).

Phipps and Borg (2009), for example, studied three teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching with a primary focus on the conflicts or tensions in teachers' beliefs, categorising these into core and peripheral beliefs. The findings of their 18-month qualitative study indicate that the tensions in teachers' teaching grammar were primarily because of students' expectations and preferences and classroom management concerns. These tensions forced the teachers to vary their teaching approaches that conflicted with their stated beliefs. However, it was noteworthy that the teachers' practices were still "consistent with deeper, more general beliefs about learning" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 387). Such core beliefs seemed to have been formed by teachers' experiences and became ingrained. In contrast, peripheral beliefs were formed by classroom practice. Phipps and Borg further suggest that if there was a harmony between core and peripheral beliefs, there would be fewer tensions in the teacher's practice; on the contrary, peripheral beliefs would not necessarily be evident in practice.

2.1.7. Teachers' beliefs and practices in EFL contexts

Numerous studies on teachers' beliefs have been situated in EFL contexts (Dogruer et al., 2010; Larenas et al., 2013; Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen, T. Q. T., 2015b; Nguyen, 2015b; Nguyen, G. et al., 2015; Pham, 2014; Wan et al., 2011; Xiang & Borg, 2014). However, among these studies, only a few have focused on exploring in-service EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching. For the scope of this study, those studies related to beliefs of tertiary in-service EFL teachers will be discussed.

Dogruer et al. (2010) conducted questionnaire-based research into teachers' beliefs about English learning and the impacts of these beliefs on teaching styles held by 35 full-time university EFL teachers in Turkey. The findings showed teachers preferred individual to whole-class and small-group learning tasks in the classroom. They believed that aptitude to language, motivation, and expectations affected student learning. Lo (2010) focused on 33 teachers' and 292 college students' beliefs about English teaching and learning in Taiwan in her mixed-method study. Similar to Dogruer et al.'s (2010) findings, Taiwanese college students in Lo's (2010) study favoured individual tasks in language learning in which students' memorisation in English learning was preferred. While teachers in Dogruer et al.'s (2010) study believed that it was important for language learners to learn communication strategies, the teachers in Lo's (2010) study stressed the importance of creating opportunities for communication with native speakers of English and the necessity for teachers to acquire native-like pronunciation.

Teachers' and students' beliefs about effective language teaching have been a focus of a number of studies. Xiang and Borg (2014), for example, explored beliefs about effective language teaching held by 57 Chinese College English teachers in four Chinese universities. They found that the teachers shared a common belief in the importance of teachers' personalities in effective language teaching by creating a positive and supportive learning environment that required students' active learning rather than being dependent on teachers' input. Contrarily, the learners in Brown's (2009) and Ganjabi's (2010) studies highly valued grammar teaching in relation to effective FL teaching, while the teachers in these studies preferred communicative language teaching and learning. Wan et al.'s (2011) study on beliefs of 33 in-service Chinese university teachers and 70 English major students about EFL teachers' roles reported that teachers were regarded as providers of knowledge. To be effective, teachers in the Chinese context were expected to be nurturers, devotees, instructors, and cultural transmitters. The findings of Wan et al.'s (2011) study were in contrast to what was found

in Dogruer et al.'s (2010) and Lo's (2010) studies, which showed that students were encouraged to individualise their language learning through communicative tasks with their peers.

The findings in the studies in the Chinese context (Wan et al., 2011; Xiang & Borg, 2014) have some similarities with the study by Larenas et al. (2013) with 30 EFL teachers in a Chilean university in which teachers were believed to be a source of information, providing students with suggestions and assistance in learning upon request. In order to do this, teachers should show a high self-efficacy in language proficiency. In the questionnaire-based study on characteristics of effective English teachers in the Iranian university context with 121 teachers and 348 students of English, Ramazani (2014) captured opposing beliefs about listening and grammatical proficiency. While the teachers advocated the ability to understand, the students endorsed grammatical knowledge. Moreover, Iranian teachers attached more importance to English proficiency than pedagogical knowledge, whereas the students viewed pedagogical knowledge as more significant. Similarly, the research with metaphor analysis by Wan et al. (2011) on students' and teachers' beliefs about EFL teachers' roles in the Chinese university context indicated differing results in that teachers expected themselves to be a guide, a helper, or an assistant while the students were fairly independent.

In summary, the review of literature shows that the content of teachers' beliefs (the 'what' of teachers' beliefs, which is related to their teaching practices) was the focus of most studies. In addition, the literature identifies teachers' stated beliefs and the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices without furthering the developmental process of how sociocultural and historical contexts impact on teachers' beliefs through specific periods of their lived experiences. Therefore, it is essential to explore the developmental changes in teachers' beliefs through sociocultural and historical events with a view to improving teacher education programmes and better understanding teachers' instructional practices.

2.1.8. Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices

The review of the literature on tertiary English language teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context shows that there have been a number of studies in the field. However, there has been little research on in-service tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs. Of more than 200 published studies on English language teaching and learning in Vietnam between 2005 and 2021, six studies that investigated Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs were reported as journal articles over the past decade (Table 2.2). Encouragingly, these few studies focused on the relationship between different cultural aspects and teachers' beliefs (Nguyen, T. Q. T., 2017; Phan & Locke, 2015; Phan & Locke, 2016).

T. Q. T. Nguyen (2017) focused on the Vietnamese cultural concept of face or self-image (*thể diện*), which is dependent on social judgment and evaluations and believed to have a strong influence on teachers' practices. She explored the relationship between teachers' concepts of face and their beliefs about good teaching. The findings showed that maintaining face was important for teachers because teaching was positioned as one of the most honourable jobs in Vietnamese society. Acknowledging the teaching profession as a socially respected career, the teachers said the teaching profession was not merely a job; it was a superior career and it was considered nobler than other social jobs. This reflects a strong impact of Confucian values on education in general and the teaching profession in particular in that the face of teachers is maintained (Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Pham, T. H. T., 2014; Phan, L. H., 2004a, 2004b).

However, in the current context of global education within which old and new ideas and social expectations and personal views are intertwined, teachers found it a struggle to maintain face in front of their students (Nguyen, T. Q. T., 2017). Interestingly, the teachers in this study tended to cover their knowledge-based shortfalls by referring to other factors such as an inadvertent writing mistake on boards or their carelessness for saving their face. The concept of face in the Vietnamese cultural context generally and its impact in the Vietnamese educational settings have been supported by much other research (Pham, T. H. N., 2007, 2011, 2014; Vu, T. T. H., 2002). Figuratively understood, the concept of face in the Vietnamese context bears a social meaning that reflects "social roles and role-driven characteristics, positive qualities and achievements" (Pham, T. H. N., 2014, p. 225). Accordingly, teachers, who are considered to be in a noble career in the Vietnamese context, are expected to keep their face both physically and academically.

In contrast, examining teachers' beliefs from a cultural perspective, Phan and Locke (2015, 2016) provided an analysis based on Bandura's (1997) model of sources of self-efficacy. In their research, four sources of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were identified: mastery experiences (self-oriented evaluation of teachers' own authentic performances); social persuasion (other-oriented evaluation or judgment); vicarious experiences (the information of observations of colleagues or comparison between past and present teaching practices); and physiological/affective factors (anxiety or excitement in teachers' performances). The findings showed that the most influential source of efficacy among teachers was social persuasion, which reflected the cultural concept of loss of face in the Vietnamese context. This finding of the impact of the concept of face is similar to T. Q. T. Nguyen's (2017) study. Fearing loss of face, the teachers in their study expressed that the judgments or feedback from their colleagues or institutional leaders greatly influenced their sense of efficacy.

Culturally, according to them, this can be explained by the emphasis on the inter-dependent self as a feature of collectivist societies, which strongly values obedience and respect for authority.

Table 2.2

Research on Language Teachers' Beliefs in the Vietnamese EFL University Context

Research reported	Methodology	Focus of study	Participants	Data collection and analysis
Nguyen, B. H. (2013)	Case study (part of a wider action research)	Teachers' beliefs about support for teacher change	2 teachers of science teaching ESP	• Interviews • Observations • Thematic analysis
Nguyen, T. Q. T. (2017)	Qualitative grounded theory	Teachers' concepts of face and their beliefs about good teaching	15 lecturers teaching both natural and social sciences	• Interviews • Thematic analysis
Nguyen, X. N. C. M. (2017)	Mixed method grounded theory	Impact of teacher education on teacher beliefs regarding engagement with native speaker model	85 teachers from different educational institutions	• Online Likert scale questionnaires • Interviews (content analysis)
Pham & Hamid (2013)	Qualitative grounded theory	Teachers' beliefs about quality questions and their questioning practices	13 beginning EFL teachers	• Questionnaire • Participants' self-video • recorded lessons • Observations • Content analysis
Phan & Locke (2015)	Qualitative case study	Teachers' sources of self-efficacy beliefs	8 teachers of general English and international English Language Testing Systems (IELTS)	• Interviews • Journalling • Observations • Thematic analysis
Phan & Locke (2016)	Qualitative	Culture and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs	8 teachers	• Interviews • Journalling • Observations • Focus group discussion • Thematic analysis

The impact of teacher education programmes on teachers' beliefs was explored by X. N. C. M. Nguyen (2017). In her study, Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs were examined regarding their

engagement with native speaker models in teaching English. The teachers' beliefs about linguistic diversity were strengthened by teacher education programmes both internationally and domestically. However, teachers still favoured native-speakerness regarding language proficiency, especially oral proficiency. This seems to be contradictory to the perspectives of English as an international language that appreciate different English varieties in practical contexts of use. Essentially, this contradiction might be because the teachers in education programmes did not pay due attention to the concept of language proficiency.

Researchers in another study investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom behaviours (Pham & Hamid, 2013). They examined teachers' beliefs about questioning and quality questioning, featuring four aspects: questioning purpose, content focus, students' cognitive level, and wording and syntax. The findings revealed congruences between teachers' beliefs and their questioning practices. However, incongruences appeared when it came to the content focus of questioning. In practice, the teachers focused more on factual knowledge than on conceptual knowledge, which was at odds with the teachers' expressed beliefs in valuing conceptual knowledge over factual knowledge. Furthermore, even though the teachers claimed they followed the CLT approach in their teaching, they still favoured the Initiate-Response-Evaluate (IRE) model of questioning in practice.

In summary, despite considerable research into teachers' beliefs in EFL contexts, fewer studies have been conducted in the Vietnamese context. In addition, the reviewed studies, although investigating various aspects of English language teaching and learning, do not examine the genesis of teachers' beliefs, which is the focus of this study. Specifically, most studies identify the content of teachers' beliefs without locating them within the cultural and historical contexts in which the teachers' beliefs have been shaped and possibly changed. Under the presumably Confucian-influenced ideologies (usually in the minds and hearts of people (Skott, 2015)) in Vietnam's educational system, understanding in-service teachers' beliefs is crucial because they are considered the major source of and impetus for innovative reforms and changes in FL education. Teachers appear to be considered to be the authoritative source of knowledge in the Vietnamese educational system (Nguyen & Hall, 2017); therefore, it is important to explore in-service teachers' beliefs, including the phases of development of those beliefs (ontogenesis).

2.2. Effective teaching

Researchers have attempted conceptualisation of an effective teacher based on teacher knowledge (Galbraith, 1998, Shulman, 2013). Galbraith (1998), for example, views an effective language

teacher as demonstrating knowledge of principles of practice, knowledge of self, knowledge of learners, knowledge of content, and knowledge of methods. Shulman (2013) groups knowledge of content and knowledge of teaching under content knowledge that includes content knowledge (quantity and organisation of knowledge in teacher's mind), pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of teaching), and curricular knowledge (knowledge of programmes and courses). Chinese researchers Huang and Lin (2014) conceptualise effective teaching as consisting of personal character traits (e.g., patience, objectivity, responsibility, morality, being democratic, being a role model), knowledge (e.g., subject content knowledge, flexible approaches to teaching materials and techniques, knowledge of other fields), sense of humour (e.g., being able to motivate students, telling funny stories, fun teaching methods, creating a fun and relaxed learning environment), and teaching techniques (e.g., using new and interesting materials, new and non-traditional teaching methods, using creative stimulation for student learning).

In language teaching, the conceptualisation of effective teaching has been contestable. For example, Horwitz (2008) appears to focus on teachers' knowledge of learners' characteristics, whereas Kissau and Algozzine (2017) conceptualise effective teaching around content knowledge. Horwitz (2008) claims that language teachers should be concerned with common learners' characteristics including affective (or emotional) factors (attitudes and motivation, anxiety), cognitive factors (language aptitude, learning styles), and metacognitive factors (beliefs about language learning, language learning strategies). For Kissau and Algozzine (2017), content knowledge is subcategorised to include common content knowledge, specialised content knowledge, knowledge of content and students, and knowledge of content and teaching. Common content knowledge is related to a given domain and is necessary in different out-of-class settings. In the field of FL teaching and learning, common content knowledge is often associated with knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, expressions, and discourse conventions (Kissau & Algozzine, 2017). Importantly however, the learner should be able to utilise this knowledge for effective communication of ideas. Knowledge of culture is regarded as an integral part of common content knowledge. Specialised content knowledge, in contrast, helps to explain why certain uses of the language in a given context of communication are accurate and culturally appropriate. Knowledge of content and students is associated with the teacher's ability to anticipate types of student errors. It refers to how the teacher explains concepts to make it accessible, interesting, and engaging for the learners. An effective teacher is expected to be able to anticipate learners' thoughts, feelings of confusion, interest, and motivation. Knowledge of content and teaching helps teachers make decisions

regarding the selection of topics and materials, the design of lessons, and the revision of the instruction to optimisze student learning (Kissau & Algozzine, 2017).

Within the EFL contexts, researchers have attempted to conceptualise the characteristics of an effective teacher and EFL instruction (Brown, 2007; Hajizadeh & Salahshour, 2014; Saban, 2015; Tran, L. H. N., 2015). Brown (2007) conceptualises four main categories that help shape an image of an effective English teacher: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities. These categories are not prescriptions; however, they are useful for observations, evaluations, and systematic personal reflections (Brown, 2007). This means that contextualised adaptation is needed. Technical knowledge refers to an understanding of the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse. A well-thought-out and informed approach to language teaching should be a criterion for teacher self-reflection of their classroom practice. In addition, an effective teacher is expected to be aware of cross-cultural differences and espouse a sense of students' cultural traditions. Finally, an effective teacher is expected to be a good exemplar of ethical and moral standards.

L. H. N. Tran (2015) recommends qualities of an effective EFL teacher in the Vietnamese higher education context, which appear similar to Brown's (2007) categorisations. These include technical knowledge (e.g., good command of English language with natural and fluent pronunciation, knowledge of target culture, knowledge of Vietnamese culture, knowledge of ICT), pedagogical knowledge and skills (e.g., knowledge of teaching principles, exploiting teaching materials effectively, effective class management, effective feedback and assessment), interpersonal skills (e.g., understanding students' needs), and personal qualities (e.g., good reputation in the EFL teaching community, confidence, proper manner of conduct in class, punctuality, dedication, friendliness, helpfulness, keeping frequent contact with students via email, phone, and social media). Important in these categorisations is that of the cultural perception as an influencer on being an effective teacher and on effective teaching. The culture of teacher-centredness in the Iranian English classroom was found to be a hindrance to effective teaching and learning because students' voices were unheard (Noora, 2008). Similarly, the Vietnamse culture of considering teachers masters in their specialisations influenced their classroom practice. Vietnamese EFL teachers in Nguyen G. V.'s (2014) study believed that lessons were effective if they focused more on accuracy, whereas those in Nguyen T. Q. T.'s (2017) study viewed teaching to be effective when teacher's attempted to avoid making mistakes and prevented face loss.

In summary, although researchers have different categorisations of an effective EFL teacher and teaching, there is a consensus on professionalism, personal characteristics or qualities, and interpersonal skills as three broad criteria. More importantly, these categorisations seem to reflect the two integral qualities expected of a teacher in the Vietnamese context: *đức* (ethics and morality) and *tài* (professionalism and talent) (discussed in Chapter 5).

2.3. Confucian Heritage Culture and Vietnam's education

Vietnam, among other Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia can be considered Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries (Carless, 2011; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Ryan & Slethaug, 2010). With the influx of Confucian philosophy during a long period of Chinese domination, there remains evidence of its impact on Vietnamese people's attitudes, behaviours, ritual propriety, and the formation of virtues (Nguyen & Phan, 2012). Regarding education in general terms, Confucian philosophy has substantially framed teachers' and students' roles and the process of teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context.

'*Giảng dạy*' and '*học tập*' are two Vietnamese words used to refer to the process of teaching and learning in Vietnam's educational contexts. '*Giảng dạy*' is a compound word that culturally means 'teaching and nurturing'; '*học tập*' means 'learning and practising'. The two words by their very nature observe a Confucian value by which teachers impart the knowledge and nurture their students by guiding them with ritual propriety (i.e., to raise their students both intellectually and morally).

From a Western perspective, the learning process in CHC countries can be potentially stereotyped as a passive process in which the teacher–student interactions are seen as unidirectional (Carless, 2011; Kang & Chang, 2016; Lee, 2018; Ryan & Louie, 2007; Ryan & Slethaug, 2010). The following sections will discuss stereotypes of learning and alternative approaches to understanding teaching and learning in CHC countries.

2.3.1. Teaching and learning in Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries

From some Western perspectives, learners in CHC countries are mistakenly assumed to be passive and the learning environment under-equipped (Pham, H. H., 2007; Ryan & Slethaug, 2010). In Western terms, classrooms in CHC countries are described as large classes that are greatly under-resourced, sterile learning climates with external examinations, and as conservative and traditional (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014). In this sense, learners in CHC countries are passive and surface learners who do not show a stance of a creative and critical agency in the learning process. In the context of

globalised HE, Western and Asian educational systems are often distinguished on a binary or polarised category such as deep/surface, adversarial/harmonious, independent/dependent, rote/creative learning, and knowledge conservation/extension (Grimshaw, 2007; Ryan & Louie, 2007) (Table 2.3).

In this sense, there exists a clear dichotomy between Western and Confucian learning styles. While Western cultures advocate student-centred learning, CHC countries are in favour of teacher-centeredness. For a long time, teacher-centredness has been criticised for its ineffectiveness in education in general and language education in particular. Learners in CHC countries, as perceived by Western educational philosophy, are passive and tend to respect and follow historical texts with little, if any at all, curiosity to create new knowledge, which is in contrast to their Western peers who are assumed to be argumentative and inclined to constructing new knowledge.

Table 2.3

Assumptions of Western versus Confucian learners and learning (Ryan & Slethaug, 2010, p. 43)

Western	Confucian
Deep learners	Surface learners
Independent learners	Dependence on the teacher
Critical thinking	Follow the master
Student-centred learning	Respect for the teacher
Adversarial stance	Harmony
Argumentative learners	Passive learners
Achievement of the individual	Achievement of the group
Constructing new knowledge	Respect for historical texts

In international educational contexts, CHC students are automatically perceived as ill-prepared and passive rote learners who tend to memorise what they are taught (Ballard & Clanchy, 1984; Pratt et al., 1999; Song, 2014). In terms of essentialism, CHC students are assumed to be inferior to their Western peers in cognitive capabilities and styles of learning, which results in poor academic performance (Song, 2014). In Western HE institutions, CHC students are subjectively stereotyped as showing an inability to communicate effectively in English, passivity in classroom learning tasks, improper references in their academic writing, and a low sense of critical thinking (Ryan & Slethaug, 2010).

However, it is argued that Western stereotypes of CHC learners and learning, and teachers and teaching might positively add to a growing body of literature on language education because

challenging these stereotypes helps develop culturally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning. In the context of globalisation of educational mobility, it is not a question of a right-or-wrong approach but of how we make the teaching and learning process socioculturally situated to serve cohesion of a wider community. In this respect, the importation or adoption of Western-developed methodologies might be a failure if no attention is paid to specific contexts of cultural diversities and environmental resources. This argument echoes Garrett-Rucks's (2016) claim of infusing the world's cultural knowledge in the educational agenda. In this regard, it is important to revisit the Western pejorative stereotypes of CHC teaching and learning in the context of global integration of education. I am in favour of the argument that the Western stereotyped views of CHC education, which are often blanket assumptions (Tran, 2013), should be challenged in the current context of the changing nature of a globalised educational cohort (Ryan & Louie, 2007) and the development of universal mobility of knowledge (Song, 2014).

2.3.2. Confucian values in Vietnamese education

In contemporary Vietnam, Confucian values are still evident and embedded in the hearts of almost all Vietnamese (Hoang, 2014). Essentially, the fundamental values of the Vietnamese tradition can be expressed through "*tam cương ngũ thường*" (three bonds, five virtues), in which three bonds refer to associative connectedness between Vua–Tôi (King–Subject), Chồng–Vợ (Husband–Wife), and Cha–Con (Parent–Child) while the five virtues consist of *nhân* (humanness), *nghĩa* (righteousness), *lễ* (ritual piety), *trí* (wisdom), and *tín* (trustworthiness). These values are believed to help maintain social order (Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Nguyen, Bensemann, & Kelly, 2018; Pham, D. N., 2005) and logic interaction with *thứ-bậc* (hierarchy) (Vo, 2020) in contemporary Vietnamese society.

The Confucian impacts on Vietnam's contemporary education can be characterised according to the following dimensions: teachers and teaching, learners and learning, teacher–student relationships, purpose of schooling, relationship between individuals and groups, equality and hierarchy, and students' evaluation of teachers (Dang, 2006, Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen et al., 2006). Confucian values in Vietnam's education are still evident and to understand classrooms in Vietnam is to understand Confucian impacts on the educational process (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Pham, 2007).

In Vietnam's sociocultural context, teachers are authority holders who are responsible for both the intellectual and moral life of their students. A Vietnamese ancient saying goes: "He who teaches you a word, or even half a word, is your teacher" (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014). In Vietnamese sociocultural

norms, individuals have to respect the hierarchical order of *Quân-Sư-Phụ* (the King-the Teacher-the Father) (Dang, 2006, Nguyen et al., 2006; Nguyen & Phan, 2012). Every year, 20 November is Vietnamese Teachers' Day when people honour teachers of all levels of the national educational system.

Learners are expected by their parents and teachers to attend classes eagerly and enthusiastically to learn the right things from their teachers. A person's learning is a sense of pride for themselves and for their parents and society as a whole. Those learners who have a "high uncertainty avoidance tend to be people who feel comfortable only with structured learning, precise objectives, detailed assignments and good instruction" (Nguyen et al., 2006, p. 10). In other words, detailed introductions to the lessons and teachers' step-by-step instructions are the common norms in Vietnamese classrooms. The method of teaching is teacher-centred, which is formal and hierarchical and results in a question-free style of learning.

For the purpose of schooling, students are expected to learn moral behaviours before learning knowledge, which is believed to help maintain harmony in education in general. In terms of relationships between individuals and groups, a classroom is similar to a family where the teacher is expected to play the role of a father or mother who takes good care of his/her students. The relationship among students may last for a lifetime, which is the same as one's emotional bonds towards their family members (Dang, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2005). Hierarchy is obviously reflected in a Confucian-based education system in which younger colleagues are considered younger brothers/sisters regardless of their academic qualifications. In contrast to western educational systems where teaching is considered a normal job among others, teaching or being a teacher is held in high esteem in Vietnamese society, so it may not be appropriate for students to formally evaluate their teachers (Dang, 2006; Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2012).

In the observations of the inherent reality of the world by people from CHC countries, everything has two sides: the 'Yin' – stillness and the 'Yang' – movement, which are called "vital stuffs" (Angle & Tiwald, 2017; Nguyen & Phan, 2012). These two elements nurture each other and create both internal and external harmony in everything. By observing the function pairs of the cosmos, for example sky and earth, male–female, father–mother, black–white, people come to understand the philosophy of life (Nguyen & Phan, 2012). Following this relational concept, one's silence, disapproval, and disagreement may be understood that they are trying to keep the balance or harmony of the existence. Within the Yin-Yang principle, neither Yin nor Yang is in complete dominance. In other words, it is simplistic to argue that the implicit disapproval is detrimental to

shared vision; rather, it is the way social life exists: Yin at one time and Yang at another or implicit disapproval at one time and explicit disapproval at another. The Yin-Yang relationship is central in maintaining the collective harmony as it allows a person to be sensitive, flexible, and adaptable in dealing with social changes and conflicts (Tran, 2009).

Let us take water (Yin) as a simple example. When boiled, water (Yin) creates vapour (Yang), and if vapour is frozen (Yin), ice (Yang) is created. Applying the Yin and Yang in the practice of teaching and learning, it can be understood that a teacher's decision-making process on 'how' and 'what' to teach and students' decision-making process on 'how' and 'what' to learn are influenced to a certain sense. Taking turns in teacher talk and student talk reflects the intervals of 'Yin' and 'Yang' in activity. This is why the student's passivity can be positively understood as a 'Yin' interval in her learning. Within collegial relationships, Yin-Yang can be observed and practised through "*chỉ trích tế nhị*" (witting/deliberate critique) by which the subordiates (e.g., younger colleagues) show respect to superiors (e.g., older and more experienced colleagues, management staff). To the best of my knowledge of the Yin-Yang relationship, I would argue that classroom practices in the Vietnamese contexts have yet to be explored thoroughly. This is because the Western stereotypes of teaching and learning in Vietnam might be attributed to the misunderstanding of the Yin intervals during classroom interactions and other operationalisations in an activity system.

2.3.3. Alternative conceptualisations of teaching and learning in Confucian Heritage Culture countries

Despite these stereotypes of CHC education in general, many researchers have proposed alternative approaches to understanding and dealing with Western misconceptions or myths. Mounting evidence in the literature has shown this deficit view regarding education in CHC countries should be re-examined to gain deeper understanding of cultural impacts on FL or SL learning (Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Pham, 2007; Phan, 2004a, 2004b; Ryan & Louie, 2007; Ryan & Slethaug, 2010; Song, 2016; Tran, T. T., 2013). Researchers have called for a critical look into Confucian values and their impacts on the process of education and assessment to broaden our global knowledge on the current culture of international mobility (Carless, 2011; Garret-Rucks, 2016; Song, 2016). Ryan (2010) argues that a binary, stereotyped view of CHC and Western education is outdated and unhelpful. Other researchers have opted for alternative understandings of Confucian learning and teaching styles (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Pham, 2007; Phan, 2004a, 2004b; Sullivan, 1996).

Bearing in mind the possible influences of Confucian values on education while doing her research on the appropriation of (CLT) through classroom observations and interviews in the Vietnamese EFL

context, Sullivan (1996) was amazed by what she later concluded was an appropriation of CLT in the Vietnamese EFL context. The teachers in her study adopted the Western pedagogical artefact in a poetic and stylistic way (Sullivan, 1996). She argues for a justification of CLT that aims at not only approaches to exchanging information but also recognises a wide range of communicative styles. Sullivan's (1996) stance has been further advocated by other researchers (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014, Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Pham, 2007; Pham, 2014; Phan, 2004a, 2004b).

Discussing the appropriateness of CLT in the Vietnamese context, Pham (2007) advocates an approach to teaching and learning English that represents unity within diversity. Within this model, unity refers to sociocultural contexts of FL education in Vietnam, whereas diversity is reflected through a variety of teaching and learning approaches that help improve the quality of the process of language teaching and learning.

In the same vein, Biggs (1998), among other scholars (Chen, L., 2017; Phillipson & Lam, 2011), advocates a distinctive dichotomy between rote learning and repetitive learning. In his view, what actually appears to be common in CHC learning is the strategic repetitive learning that ensures accurate recall of knowledge rather than the Western-perceived rote learning that refers to memorisation of information without proper understanding. In this respect, repetitive learning does not necessarily mean learning or ineffective learning but exploring the *Way* (Angle & Tiwald, 2017). Therefore, one of the ways to understand the discourse of classrooms in CHC countries is to understand a multi-stratified ecosystem within which the process of teaching and learning takes place.

Another approach to understanding CHC learning tradition is by re-defining the cultural notion of collectivism, which is often a misconception among Western-inclined research literature. Collectivism is normally attached to passive and dependent learning, which is contrary to independent learning (individualism) claimed in Western educational ideologies to be effective. Littlewood's (2001) comparative study on students' attitudes to classroom English learning in European and East Asian countries revealed that students in CHC countries wish to participate actively, collectively and purposefully in groups to explore knowledge, . Therefore, collectivism does not necessarily lead to passive learning; the question is how to promote effective teaching and learning within collectivism.

Nguyen et al. (2006) refer to another approach to cultural understanding as an alternative for the paradox in CHC countries. In their research on group learning in the Vietnamese context, students were found to appreciate the spirit of the one-for-all to maintain collective harmony; therefore,

different opinions and views were considered as exploring fallacies in other people's thinking. Consequently, it is dangerous to apply a Western-developed teaching methodology without understanding the complexities of CHCs; rather, a culturally appropriate pedagogy should be developed, taking specific cultural dimensions into account. Similarly, Pham T. H. T (2014) posits that for effective cooperative learning in CHC classrooms to be observed, the interdependence attribute of CHC learners should be carefully examined. This view concurs with Garrett-Rucks's (2016) argument that improved learning should be based on a cultural sensitivity; people understand the thoughts and feelings of others and show more empathy and more positive attitudes towards others. Within the Vietnamese universities, collective harmony is believed to be a strength in a competitive globalised educational context (Jones et al., 2021).

Many scholars (Lee, 2018; Vivian et al., 2014) point out that the deficit view of stereotyped CHC students originated from observations of formal instructional practices (i.e., from classroom environment) without further investigation into how informal social interactions between CHC students might help with their academic learning (i.e., outside the classroom environment). Lee (2018) and Stovel et al. (2011) advocate further investigation into the new concept of informal academic interactions among CHC students mediated by social networks – brokering. Following this, a broker is formally defined as "intermediary links in systems of social, economic, or political relations who facilitate trade or transmission of valued resources that would otherwise be substantially more difficult" (Stovel et al., 2011, p. 21326). Academically, brokering occurs when a learner seeks help from their peers who have more access to the target language, culture, and academic practices (Lee, 2018). CHC students tend to seek academic help from their peers – the brokers – through informal channels such as social websites or internet-based applications. Further exploring this aspect of CHC students in academic interactions will facilitate deeper understanding of how CHC students actively participate in academic activities, contrary to what is assumed of them as passive learners.

Many researchers have referred to the much-contested notion of 'surplus' of contribution of Confucian ideologies to international education (Ryan & Louie, 2007). Accordingly, Confucian educational ideologies are considered 'surplus' to Western philosophy. This view may be flawed because each educational system, be it based on Confucian social ideology, Socratic spirit of examined life, or Dewey's school of reflective thinking, has its own distinctive values that should be substantially recognised in the context of international mobility of education. The use of the word 'surplus' and the like does not sufficiently reflect educational democracy in today's global mobility.

Stereotyped assumptions of other educational systems may lead to serious misunderstandings and "inhibit opportunities for the development of innovative, creative, and generative ways of teaching and learning" (Ryan, 2010, p. 37).

2.3.4. Affective factors in Vietnam's education

Teacher–student relationships in Vietnam's sociocultural context are affective. Respect toward teachers in Vietnam has been salient through proverbs, folklore, and old teachings that have been passed on through generations. These cultural artefacts demonstrate a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes of a community in question (Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Som, 2011). In Vietnam, the predominant image of teachers in cultural artefacts is that of being noble and glorious (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen, M. H., 2018). Word-of-mouth phrases in Vietnam's educational context are "*Không thầy đố mày làm nên*" (I can't do anything without a teacher) or (He who teaches you one word or half a word is your teacher). These phrases can be understood either as the absolute respect paid to the teachers or as perceptions of the teachers as powerful authorities who impart knowledge to the students. Other interpretations of phrases of this kind may be possible and comprehensible in Vietnamese culture. On the one hand, students are expected to be modest in the way they gain knowledge; on the other, the role of the teachers is unquestionable. Teachers' words are invaluable inputs for student learning.

Right from the age of kindergarten, Vietnamese children are taught morality through songs and poetry.

> Lúc ở nhà mẹ cũng là cô giáo
> Khi đến trường cô giáo như mẹ hiền
> Cô và mẹ là hai cô giáo
> Mẹ và cô ấy hai mẹ hiền
>> (Phạm Tuyên – song writer)

> (When at home, mother is the teacher
> When at school, the teacher is a loving mother
> Teacher and mother are two teachers
> Mother and teacher are two loving mothers)
> > (Author's translation)

It is interpreted from this song that school is home and home is school; the teacher is mother, and mother is the teacher. Both school and family are important and affective in the process of education. The role of the teacher is similar to that of a mother, a caregiver, and a knowledge transmitter. In Vietnamese moral terms, a mother is the person one has to obey.

T. M. H. Nguyen (2014) argues for a dependency on teachers for knowledge in Vietnam's sociocultural context of education. Most evident are expressed through proverbs such as "*Muốn sang thì bắc cầu kiều, muốn con hay chữ phải yêu lấy thầy*" (Make a bridge if you want to cross the river; Love your teacher if you want to be knowledgeable), "*Uống nước nhớ nguồn*" (Remember the source when you drink water), or "*Công cha nghĩa mẹ ơn thầy*" (Father's devotion, mother's love, and teacher's knowledge). Prominent in schools in Vietnam are slogans such as "*Tiên học lễ, hậu học văn*" (First learn manners of conduct, then get knowledge) or "*Tôn sư trọng đạo*" (Respect the teacher, value morality). These slogans are to teach younger generations about hierarchical paths to knowledge with teachers as a torch.

As such, the teacher's roles may be that of a nurturer, a guide, a father, a mother, and a knowledge authority without whom students' path to knowledge may be much harder and more challenging. The image of teachers in the Vietnamese educational context may be that of a person who devotes his or her whole life to taking care of students from a very young age to their adolescence (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014).

The discussion so far is somewhat consonant with Lumpkin's (2008) conceptualisation of teachers-as-role-models by demonstrating moral integrity consists of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. An example of honesty is the teacher's compliance with guiding documents such as the government policy and institutional curriculum or their fulfilment of professional responsibilities in an honest manner. Trust refers to the teacher's confidence in their students' success and opportunity to learn, for example, assisting students to overcome learning challenges. Mutual trust is believed to replace apprehension or fear. Fairness is reflected through the teacher's fair attitude towards individual students' learning opportunities, for example, giving students fair feedback and grading. A typical example of respect is a teacher's care for individual uniqueness. Finally, responsibility is exemplified by a teacher's moral accountability for their actions, manifested through an attempt to improve their student's psychological, cognitive, and affective abilities.

It brings me at this point to the concept of *perezhivanie* – a human psychological unit approximately translated as emotional experience – developed by Vygotsky in the last years of his life (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Mok, 2017). The notion of perezhivanie is so complicated that it is a great

challenge to capture its core content in other languages (Blunden, 2016) and there have been various equivalents suggested by different scholars such as lived experience (Blunden, n.d.), inner experience (Zavershneva, 2010), or intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience (Ferholt, 2010). Perezhivanie describes how individuals perceive, experience, and process their emotional aspects in relation to social interactions with the environment (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). In other words, perezhivanie is 'how one experiences one's experiences' because they "frame and interpret their experiences through interdependent emotional and cognitive means, which in turn are related to the setting of new experiences" (Smagorinsky, 2011a, p. 337). As such, perezhivanie can be broadly understood as meta-experience – a channel by which individuals "render their socially and culturally situated activity into meaningful texts of events" (Smagorinsky, 2011a, p. 337) or interpret and internalise their sociocultural experiences (Johnson, 2009, 2015).

In this sense, perezhivanie can be understood as a unity of human development in relation to the social situation in which this development occurs (González Rey, 2016). Any individual has a perezhivanie to determine their whole process of development in response to a given social situation (Blunden, 2016). Consequently, an adult will gain a full understanding of their experience at a later analysis stage of their perezhivanie (Blunden, 2016). To illustrate, let us consider the example of the retrospective memory of the African American writer James Baldwin in Mahn and John-Steiner (2002). By the time Baldwin was 10 years old, he was taught and mentored by a white teacher who, as he recalled, had a powerful influence on him and provided him the gift of confidence and a model of resistance. One day, Baldwin and his classmates were taken downtown to get free ice-cream at a police station. The police were reluctant to give the 'coloured kids' like Baldwin ice-cream. Although he did not remember what his teacher had told the police, the way his teacher stared at the police, waiting for the ice-cream to be given, had taught him the lesson of courage that Baldwin still remembered vividly when he became an adult. This example clearly reflects how important, through perezhivanie, the emotional aspect of language as well as the human connection in social interactions are (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).

Different individuals demonstrate different levels of perezhivanie although they experience the same social situation (Veresov & Fleer, 2016). In other words, each individual has their own emotional interpretation or reflection of the social environment through their own prism. Veresov and Fleer (2016) argue that daily "transitions … can be critical moments of perezhivanie" (p. 5) and this is the source for development for an individual. These researchers term these as "dramatic perevazhine" that results in "developmental qualities and change the course of the child's

development" (Veresov & Fleer, 2016, p. 5). Their simple example was about a morning in a family when no breakfast was found in the fridge (Veresov & Fleer, 2016). Four children of the family (aged six, five, two, and under) reacted differently to this social situation. The eldest did not eat beakfast and helped the mother by turning available food into lunches; the five-year-old screamed hungrily, rolled on the floor, and disputed with the mother; the two-year-old nagged the mother for readily packed school snacks; and the under two waited silently in the stroller with a bottle of milk given by the eldest child. The researchers conclude that perezhivanie is the "personal way of experiencing a dramatic event" within the reciprocal child-environment relation and a "decisive component of social situation of development" (Veresov & Fleer, 2016, p. 10).

There has been an increasing interest in advancing this final incomplete legacy of Vygotsky, in relation to the cultural historical approach to education in the past decade (e.g., Fakhrutdinova, 2010; Fleer & Hammer, 2013; González Rey, 2016; Mok, 2017; Smagorinsky, 2011a) because this unit of psychology is closely linked to teachers' professional identity (Dang, K. 2013; Nguyen, M. H., 2018), teacher's professional development, well-being, and teaching effectiveness (Antoniadou, 2011; Gao & Benson, 2012; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Nguyen, T. M. H., 2013; Nikoopour & Esfandiari, 2017), and students' learning (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Smagorinsky & Daigle, 2012). Empirically, there is a close relationship between emotional feelings and teachers' cognitive development. In a study on the influence of the practicum programme on teachers' professional identity, Dang (2013) found that Vietnamese EFL teachers' emotions resulted from peer learning opportunities and they helped resolve conflicts and develop teachers' professional identities. Similarly, a preservice teacher in Golombek and Doran's (2014) study experienced cognitive development when her emotions were mediated by her teacher educator. A Korean English teacher in Song's (2016) study expressed his personal sense of shame and being trapped while acknowledging the gap in English between himself and his students. The reason was his English was taught during the 1960s with inadequate teaching facilities, which was several decades behind his students' learning English. However, he showed an effort to bridge this gap and overcome his emotional labour by going overseas to study to improve his teaching in his home country. This was for him to experience pedagogical transformation.

So far, I have argued for the concept of individual inner intangible emotional attachment that may be retracted through their activity in reality. By the time I started to learn English, my father was my first teacher of English, whose teaching was based on knowledge of the language and the father–child emotional attachment. Even though my learning of English at later stages was not with him,

the image of a teacher–father has still been with me till now, the moment I am writing this. I still recall vivid moments with my teacher–father beside the small white table in what was then a poorly designed small one-room house when we worked together. The fact that I may get a higher certification than my father does not diminish what he taught me long ago. As he and I have had a strong intangible relationship, not merely a teacher–student relationship, I confess that every moment of my teaching practice can be traced back to the moment we were teacher–father and student–son. This strong emotional relationship with my teacher–father helps build teaching and learning beliefs in myself, which then affects my conceptualisation of teaching. I simply wanted to be a teacher like him. I believed if I taught as he had, I would be an effective teacher. As such, it is important to explore this aspect in teachers' belief systems so that the relationship between these beliefs and the teachers' instructional practices, culturally and historically, can be further understood for effective teaching and learning. This is how meta-experience affects one's interpretation and operationalisation of events in social interactions as argued by Smagorinsky (2011a) and shows how perezhivanie is situated within the system of cultural historical theory (Mok, 2017). In exploring teachers' beliefs, a cognitive aspect, it is essential to discover the affective aspect because they are interrelated (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012).

2.4. Chapter summary and research gap

This chapter has reviewed studies on teachers' beliefs generally and EFL teachers' beliefs in particular. The review has revealed a gap in the literature on teachers' beliefs, indicating that very little research has been conducted regarding beliefs of in-service tertiary EFL teachers from historical and sociocultural perspectives. Even at this level of study, none of the reviewed literature focused on exploring the development of or changes in teachers' beliefs within specific historical and cultural contexts throughout their professional lives.

The review has shown an intricate relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices, which requires an insightful explanation of situatedness from a cultural and historical perspective. This suggests that the impacts of historical factors on teachers' beliefs and practices have been under-researched, especially in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL context. Therefore, the present study offers a more comprehensive cultural and historical view of teachers' beliefs and practices (i.e., how teachers' beliefs shape, develop, and change and to what extent these beliefs are translated into teaching practice).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was developed from Vygotskian (1978) sociocultural theory and furthered by his colleagues Leont'ev (1978) and Luria (1981). Later scholars have developed further iterations of CHAT (e.g., Engeström, 1987, 2001, 2015; Wertsch, 1985), working on the activity system (AS) in which teaching and learning occur. Within CHAT, culture is regarded as instrumentally central in understanding the human learning process (Barahona, 2016). The human developmental process counts on pre-existing cultural tools that are appropriated through on-going social interactions (Ellis et al., 2010). Accordingly, the complex interactions between the teacher and other parties during their teaching practices are investigated in specific sociocultural contexts, which are mediated by artefacts such as the language curriculum or textbooks (Barahona, 2016, Wertsch et al., 1995). Sociocultural contexts help shape human development in an object-related practical activity. Such an activity is considered as an appropriate unit of analysis because it provides a systematic illustration of how a person interacts with other influential elements of an AS (Roth & Lee, 2007). According to Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) original theory of thought and language, human activities and consciousness are socioculturally mediated through tools such as semiotics or models of actions. In this respect, the relationship between individuals' internal world of mental processing and the objective external world is made meaningful (Wertsch, 1985, Wertsch et al., 1995). The following sections will provide an overview of CHAT and how CHAT is used to more deeply understand the practices of language teaching and learning.

3.1. An overview of CHAT

The primary unit of analysis of CHAT is the AS in which human cognitive actions take place (Engeström, 1987). This AS consists of a web of sociocultural components with complex mediational structures in which collaborative individual actions are converged to achieve a common goal (Trust, 2017). There are two dominant contemporary interpretations of Vygotskian sociocultural theory: one is the dialogical perspective, and the other is CHAT (Barahona, 2016; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The dialogical perspective focuses on the understanding of tools functioning as mediators in human conceptualisation of the material world, whereas CHAT takes into account a whole system of activity as the unit of analysis including the individuals, tools, and mediated action for analysing the AS as a whole (Barahona, 2016).

The first generation of CHAT is represented in the triangular model of cultural mediation of individual object-oriented action (Engeström, 2001) (Figure 3.1). In this framework, human social activities are mediated by tools and signs (cultural and historical artefacts), which are created and

accumulated through historical time by social members. Individuals make meanings of the external material worlds through their interactions in cultural, historical, political, and institutional settings. Through these interactions, people continue to modify and create new activities, possibly with new mediating artefacts, to transform the AS. The Vygotskian original idea of cultural mediation of human activity, which is regarded as the first generation of CHAT, is expressed as the triad of subject, object, and mediating artefact (Engeström, 2009). Such a triad stresses the fact that the individual could be understood in relation to cultural means on which they rely, and the sociocultural contexts could be made meaningful with the agency of individuals who use and produce artefacts (Engeström, 2009).

Figure 3.1

Individual model of mediated action (adapted from Engeström, 2001)
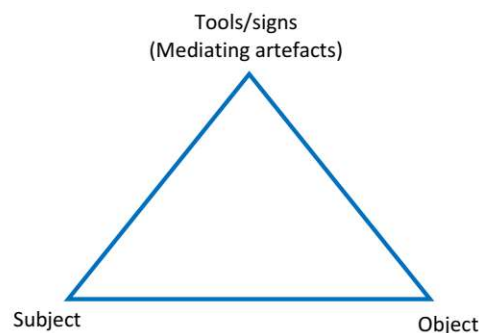
The inclusion of cultural artefacts into human actions was revolutionary because individual actions can be explored in relation to societal structural interactions (Engeström, 2009). In other words, individuals and their sociocultural environment cannot be decoupled. However, this first generation of CHAT is claimed to remain individually focused regarding the unit of analysis because it does not highlight the AS in which human actions take place and it fails to acknowledge the collective nature of human activity (Engeström, 2001, 2009).

The second generation of CHAT is attributed to Leont'ev (1977, 1978), who elaborated on the crucial difference between an individual action and a collective activity (Engeström, 2009). This second generation of CHAT places more emphasis on the collective than on the individual nature of human activity (Figure 3.2). The Vygotskian original triad of subject, object, and mediating artefact is re-envisioned to emphasise the importance of the AS within which human actions take place. The inclusion of division of labour between participants in an AS is of critical significance in the second generation of CHAT.

Figure 3.2

The structure of a human AS (adapted from Engeström, 2001, p. 135)
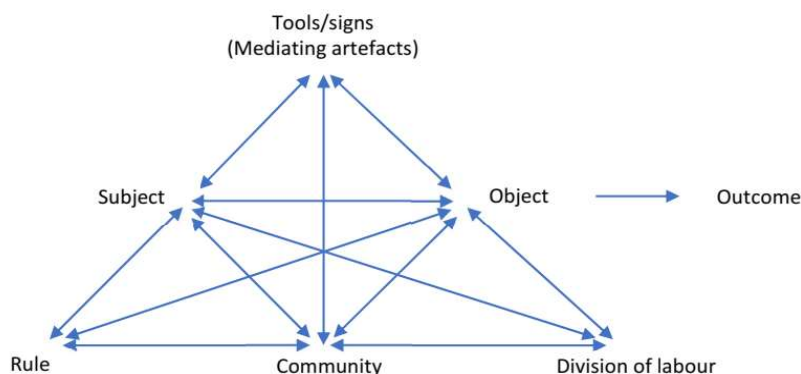
Even though the idea for the development of the second generation of CHAT is attributed to Leont'ev, a graphic model of such an expanded AS was not offered (Engeström, 2009, 2015). Therefore, the model was further developed by Engeström (2001, 2009) to illustrate the complex internal relations of different elements in a collective AS (Figure 3.2). This model consists of key elements: subject/subjects, object, artefacts, rule(s), community, and division of labour. For Engeström (2001), subject/subjects can be an individual or individuals in a societal setting who engage in the collective activity (i.e., who does the work). An object here is understood as the goal or motive of the activity that directs other elements in the AS (i.e., what problem is being resolved?). Artefacts or mediating tools, which can be culturally, socially, politically, and institutionally created and inherited, can be instruments, tools, and signs playing a mediational function for people to regulate the external world around them. Artefacts can be physical or conceptual instruments or resources used in the activity and how the subject(s) use these instruments or resources. Notably, artefacts experience an on-going evolution as social members interact with each other in the AS because artefacts help them achieve the goal. Here, Wartofsky's (1979) categorisation and Foot's (2014) further explanations of three-level hierarchy of the artefact-as-tool help clarify the characteristics of an artefact as a tool that mediates human activity. This includes primary tools (frequently used unconsciously in daily activity such as textbooks and IT applications), secondary tools (pedagogical and methodological knowledge and expertise), and tertiary tools (abstractions such as ideologies and the social cultural norms that may influence how the subject(s) operate within an activity system) (Foot, 2014; Qian et al., 2019). Simply put, tools carry in themselves historicity and culturality and they can function as rules as the result of interactions and how tools are used within the community of activity (Foot, 2014). Rule(s) is (are) how an activity is carried out (e.g., the guidelines or institutional regulations to carry out the work). Rules can be understood as "norms stemming from not only the community of significant others … but also from the broader

cultural, economic, and political context" (Foot, 2014, p. 332). Community refers to the sociocultural context/setting in which the activity takes place (i.e., the participants or players of an activity). Division of labour refers to work and power relationships in an AS. It is the distribution of responsibilities of the members involved in the activity (i.e., who does what) and how this division may be changed following the resolution of contradictions: who holds the power, or who is the decision-maker.

The third generation of CHAT was developed to emphasise the need for conceptual tools to understand interacting AS within their own web of multiplicity (Engeström, 2001) (Figure 3.3). The third generation of CHAT is expanded to stress the position of sociocultural and historical processes that embed human collective AS (Barahona, 2016). It is the network of AS that in its totality encompasses human society (Roth & Lee, 2007). As such, human activity is object-oriented and completed through collective endeavour (Barahona, 2016; Engeström, 2001, 2009). From the Marxist dialectical perspective, diverse AS result from an ongoing job diversification and collective division of labour that are both culturally and historically situated (Roth & Lee, 2007).

The third generation of CHAT implies that an AS constantly evolves due to the emergence of multiple voices, perspectives, interactions, and contradictions among its elements (Engeström, 2001, 2009; Roth & Lee, 2007). The contradictions, for example, are historically accumulated, which cannot be understood by the surface expressions of tensions, problems, conflicts, and breakdowns (Roth & Lee, 2007). Rather, the contradictions should be investigated within and between human collective AS. Change and development within and between interacting AS occur when these contradictions become the driving forces for the evolution of AS (DeVane & Squire, 2012; Roth & Lee, 2007). In this third model, the activity object is considered not as a stable but "a moving target, not reducible to conscious short-term goals" (Engeström, 2009, p. 49).

Figure 3.3

Two interacting ASs as minimal model for the third generation of activity theory (adapted from Engeström, 2001, p. 136)
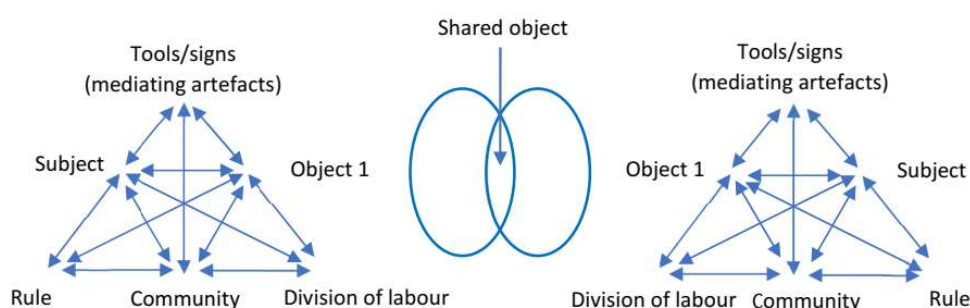
Let us take Engeström's (2009, p. 49) example of a patient to explain how the object in such interacting AS should be understood as a moving target. Initially, the patient who enters a physician's office may appear as unreflected and situationally given 'raw material' (object 1). This patient may then turn out to be a collectively meaningful object constructed by the AS because they can be a specimen of a biomedical disease category, hence a visible representation of the general object of illness or health (object 2). Finally, working with this patient may result in an understanding of their social life situation and care plan, which is considered as a potentially shared or jointly constructed object (object 3).

The notion of object in the third generation should be understood as more than just a goal or product (Engeström, 2015). This is because the object of an activity embeds the foundational contradiction between the use value and the exchange value (Engeström, 2015). In Engeström's (2015) view, objects are enduring concerns and conveyors of motives. In other words, objects generate attention, volition, effort, and meaning.

For this study, both second and third generations of CHAT are adopted as a conceptual framework to examine the beliefs and practices of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' teaching, which is the primary activity system. The activity systems by other stakeholders such as the Vietnamese government, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, and the institution where the teachers participants were working are neighbouring activity systems. The underlying assumption was that teachers' beliefs and practices about teaching were formed within sociocultural AS embedded complex components (subject, tools, object, community, rules, and division of labour). In this respect, an initial anticipation of components of the tertiary EFL teaching AS might include EFL teachers as subjects, the goal of teaching and learning as the object, teaching methods and other teaching aids as mediating tools, institutional regulations and curriculum as rules, teachers, students, and the university as the community, and teachers' and students' roles and responsibilities as the division of labour. As teachers' beliefs and practices are formed through socially constructed activity (Pajares, 1992; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011), which takes place within their own specific institutional environment with its dominant rules, cultural mediating artefacts, and collective goal-directed activity, CHAT is a suitable approach to better understand teachers' beliefs and practices. As discussed earlier, CHAT, as an analytical tool, enables an analysis of possible inner contradictions in the teaching activity within a specific situated setting (Barahona, 2016; DeVane & Squire, 2012; Tran, 2016; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009).

3.2. Contradictions

The development of the third generation of CHAT is to emphasise the importance of contradictions and multi-voicedness emerging within and between the AS (Engeström, 2015) (Figure 3.4). Contradictions within and between ASs are the tensions structurally accumulated through history (Engeström, 2011). In other words, historicity is inherent in individual activities as well as the whole system, which is the root of contradictions within and between ASs. These contradictions are a driver of transformations, which reflects the dynamics of the AS (DeVane & Squire, 2012; Engeström, 2015).

Contradictions may be evident at four different levels. Primary (level 1) contradictions are inherent in every commodity and often evident between its use value and exchange value, within single components of an AS (Sannino, 2011; Sannino & Engeström, 2018). In other words, primary contradictions emerge when the activity subjects "encounter more than one value system attached to an element within an activity that brings about conflict" (Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009, p. 509). To exemplify, the teacher may face this contradiction in their daily decision about which textbooks or teaching aids are the instruments or the mediating tools for their teaching activity.

Secondary (level 2) contradictions surface between components of the same AS, for example, between the traditional subject and the changing object or between the old tools and the emerging object of the activity. In the language teaching activity, a typical secondary contradiction might be the conflict between traditional teaching methods as *conceptual instruments* (e.g., Grammar-Translation Method) and the nature of the *object* of learning, namely the purpose of language learning for communication.

Figure 3.4

Levels of contradictions in ASs (adapted from Engeström, 2015)
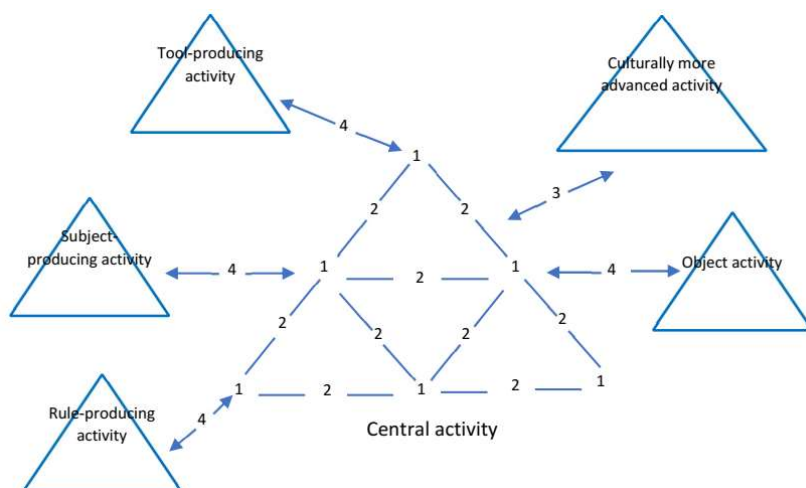
If this is the case, there is a mismatch between the mediating tools and the object within the AS of teaching and learning. Therefore, to achieve the communicative goal of language teaching and learning, there should be change within conceptual instruments.

Tertiary (level 3) contradictions emerge when the existing AS is to be reshaped, reformed, or replaced by a culturally more advanced system or a newly advanced method that operates toward a new objective (Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009). This is because there is always a collision between the vestiges of the old system and the reshaped pattern (Sinnano & Engeström, 2018). Consequently, the resulting resistance may cause the new system to be subject to modification. In language teaching and learning, take the example of English teachers who are asked or forced to apply communicative language teaching (CLT) in a language education system driven by written exams like the one in Vietnam. CLT is assumed to be a modern language teaching method within which learner-centredness and the improvement of communicative skills are advocated (Pham & Ton, 2010). However, CLT in Vietnamese EFL contexts might face resistance by institutional factors such as curricula, learning styles, or the teachers and students.

Quaternary (level 4) contradictions are observable when the current AS and the neighbour activities (e.g., tool-creating activity, subjecting-producing activity, or rule-producing activity) interact with one another (Engeström, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2018). One typical example of rule-producing activity is administration and legislation. If the routine teaching practice of a teacher is a central activity, the application of CLT might lead to changes in the traditional rules of a language classroom, hence juggling or even resistance by the teachers or learners.

Engeström and Sannino (2011) further classify contradictions into four discursive manifestations to provide more analytical power to contradiction analysis: dilemma, conflict, critical conflict, and double bind. The characteristics of a manifestation and resolutions to it can be indicated through linguistic cues (Table 3.1). Dilemma is a historical product that refers to incompatible beliefs within an individual or between social individuals (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). In discourse, expressions of hedges and hesitations such as "Yes, but …" are often used. Resolutions to dilemmas are often in the form of denial and reformulation with typical linguistic cues such as "I actually meant…" On the contrary, conflicts often refer to resistance, disagreement, argument, and criticism (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). Negative statements indicating a "No" are commonly used to express conflicts. Conflicts are often resolved by either a compromise, submission to authority or majority, dominant third-party intervention, stand-off, or withdrawal with linguistic cues such as "This I can accept." Critical conflicts refer to the social interactive situations in which an individual is faced with

contradictory motives (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). These contradictory motives, which are often personal, emotional, and moral accounts with narrative structure and vivid metaphors, cannot be resolved by an individual alone. The resolution to critical conflicts often involves liberation and emancipation by finding new personal sense and negotiating a new meaning through linguistic cues such as "I now realise that …" Double binds are repetitive processes in which individuals are faced with "pressing and equally unacceptable alternatives in their activity systems" (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, p. 374). Similar to critical conflicts, double binds cannot be resolved by an individual alone. They are often resolved by practical transformation and collective endeavour with linguistic cues such as "We will make it."

A specific level of contradiction could consist of different types of manifestations (Miles, 2020). For example, the teacher not using common materials (i.e., between subject and tools) could be experienced as a dilemma within the secondary level of contradiction. However, within the secondary level of contradiction, there might be a conflict between rules and tools (e.g., students are off task when using BYODs, watching videos instead). Miles (2020) maintains the importance of further clarifying the manifestations of contradictions for methodological interventions in the classroom. These interventions would help promote collaborative learning, hence expansive learning.

Identifying systemic contradictions helps determine the critical structural issue(s) in an activity system, which has the potential for the community to identify the learning challenge – of finding a solution to such an issue(s) (Engeström, 2009). Contradictions should be considered a necessary condition for change or transformation. The sufficient condition for them to become drivers of change is the collective awareness, acknowledgement, and endeavour to reshape the whole AS or for the transformations to happen (Barahona, 2016). The identification and analysis of contradictions make it possible for expansive learning to occur (Engeström, 2009, 2015). Expansive learning takes the form of cyclic collective transformative actions by the involved individuals in the zone of proximal development within an activity system to develop an organisational 'new' that is not yet there (Engeström, 2001, 2009; Engeström & Sannino, 2010). These transformative actions are transitions being made when the subjects of the activity are aware of the systemic contradictions (Sannino, Daniels, & Gutiérrez, 2009). Therefore, the result of expansive learning is a potentially new collective acitivity system (Engeström, 1987; Sannino, Daniels, & Gutiérrez, 2009).

Table 3.1

Discursive manifestations of contradictions (summarised from Engeström & Sannino, 2011, pp. 373-375)

Manifestation	Characteristics	Common linguistic clue(s)
Dilemma	• An expression or exchange of incompatible evaluations between people or within an individual's discourse -------------------- • Resolutions: denial, reformulation	• Expressions of hedges or hesitations (on the one hand … on the other hand …; Yes, but … -------------------- • I didn't mean that…; I actually meant …
Conflict	• In the form of resistance, disagreement, argument, and criticism -------------------- • Resolutions include compromise, submission to authority or majority, dominant third-party intervention, stand-off, and withdrawal	• "No" • "I disagree" • "This is not true" -------------------- • "Yes" • "This I can accept"
Critical conflict	• A situation of impossibility or unintelligibility • Facing contradictory motives in social interaction, feeling violated or guilty • Unresolvable by the subject alone -------------------- • Resolution often involves emancipation and liberation: finding new personal sense and negotiating a new meaning	Personal, emotional, moral accounts, narrative structure, vivid metaphors -------------------- • "I now realise that …"
Double bind	• Subjects facing pressing and equally unacceptable alternatives in an activity system -------------------- Resolution: practical transformation (going beyond words)	• "We", "us", "we must", "we have to" • Ppressing rhetorical questions, expressions of helplessness that indicate a cul-de-sac, a pressing need to do something, and a perceived impossibility of action (e.g., What can we do?) -------------------- • "Let us do that" • "We will make it"

It should be reiterated that the current study was not an intervention by nature because the teacher participants were not intentionally forced into a position where they had to make a collective decision on activity transformation. The current study focused on identifying possible contradictions through tertiary EFL teachers' espoused beliefs and observed practices of their teaching activity. Therefore, the findings of this study can be used as the first step for further interventionist research in the future if tensions are to be resolved and transformations to occur.

3.3. Principles of CHAT

Engeström (2001, 2009, 2015) provides a clear explanation of five instrumental principles of CHAT as follows. First, the primary unit of analysis is the AS, which is collective, artefact-mediated, and object-oriented and the analysis should be conducted regarding the interactive nature of AS (Engeström, 2001). Accordingly, individuals or groups might belong to different AS at one point of time (Roth & Lee, 2007). Their actions are goal-directed, relatively independent, and subordinate units of analysis. These actions and other automatic operations become comprehensible when they are interpreted against the context in which the whole AS operates (Engeström, 2009).

An AS reflects multi-voicedness. Individuals or groups have different points of view, traditions, and interests when involved in the AS. The positions of the activity participants are different based on the division of labour. In the AS, individuals or groups carry their diverse histories. The AS as an integrity carries its own multiple layers and strands of history, which are embedded in its artefacts, rules, and conventions. Through collaborative interactions between/among the individuals or groups and between the AS, the multi-voicedness is multiplied, which in turn creates either challenge or innovation.

Furthermore, an AS embeds historicity, which means it is shaped and transformed over time. Therefore, the problems and potentials can only be understood against their own historical contexts.

In addition, contradictions are sources of change and development. However, contradictions should not be understood as problems or conflicts because they are by nature structural tensions being formed through historical processes (Engeström, 2009). Contradictions within and between the AS are essential sources of either disturbances and conflicts or innovations.

Finally, an AS bears the potential of expansive transformations through identifying the learning challenge – of finding a solution to an organisational issue – in that AS (Engeström, 2009). Once the contradictions are, as explained by Engeström, made visible and aggravated and the learning challenge is identified, the individual participants of AS may pose questions or doubt about the established norms within these systems. This is the instance when innovation or transformation occurs (Engeström, 2009). As a result, collaborative envisioning and a deliberate collective change effort can be made. Moreover, there is a reconceptualisation of the object and motive of the activity, which denotes more possibilities than in the previous AS.

These five principles of CHAT promote better understanding of the complexity of AS. In the field of language teaching and learning, CHAT may provide a sound analytical framework to capture the complex sociocultural and historical contexts in which the process takes place. The following section discusses the employment of CHAT as a theoretical framework to analyse the contexts of language teaching and learning.

3.4. Cultural Historical Activity Theory in language education contexts

CHAT has been used as a theoretical framework to explore the complexity of teaching and learning environments (Barahona, 2016; Cross, 2010; Ellis et al., 2010; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). In educational contexts, including language teaching and learning, CHAT has been used as a descriptive tool to promote deeper understanding of the complex teaching and learning activities situated in a collective context (Barahona, 2016; Cross, 2010; Ellis et al., 2010; Grossman et al., 1999; Jonassen & Land, 2012; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). CHAT provides researchers with an appropriate systematic framework to identify emerging data for analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The application of CHAT in educational settings has challenged cognitive and behaviourist assumptions in mainstream SL acquisition (Cross, 2010). Accordingly, an increased awareness of the socioculturally and historically situated nature of learning requires an understanding of contextual complexities and professional roles of the involved subjects (e.g., teachers and learners) (Cross, 2010). Teachers' thought and practices should be defined, mediated, or even constructed by taking into account the context within which their teaching occurs: the community within which the activity takes place, the rules that regulate the teaching activity, and the division of labour (activity participants' roles and responsibilities) (Cross, 2010). In an AS, the individual's uniqueness is not denied but such uniqueness originates from individuals' construction of themselves and others through their engagement in an activity (Popova, 2015). In education, Cross (2010) elaborates on the complexity of the teaching practice as follows. The teacher's observable activity in the immediate setting of the classroom may not be easily understood. Rather, this observable activity must be investigated in relation to the background, experience, and history of the (ontogenetic) teacher–subject within that AS. In addition, broader cultural and historical expectations of language teachers and teaching that are embedded in other elements of the AS (the rules, community, rights and responsibilities, the object) should be critically analysed. Therefore, the AS as a whole is not merely the installation of its componential parts. An AS can be fully understood as a unit of analysis once it is examined within the broader social and cultural-historic genetic framework in which it is embedded (Cross, 2010).

In EFL contexts, numerous studies have used CHAT as an analytical framework to explore the complexity of teaching and learning practice (e.g., Barahona, 2016; Chen, Y-S., 2017; Feryok, 2012; Marwan, 2009; Popova, 2015; Song & Kim, 2016; Thompson, 2015; Tran, 2016). Descriptive analysis of some CHAT-based studies is provided in following paragraphs to further understand the historicity and culturality in EFL teachers' teaching activity.

Using the activity theory and Galperin's (1989, 1992) orienting activity as a conceptual framework, Feryok's (2012) descriptive case study investigated the development of an experienced EFL teacher by exploring how her personal experiences and actions outside the PLD classroom influenced the development of her agency. The sociocultural context in which this EFL teacher was educated and involved in the teaching career was in the 1980s in Soviet Armenia. The data were collected through semi-structured email interviews that took place over a period of six months, followed by two on-site classroom observations. The researcher paid special attention to non-verbal messages such as pauses and intonation of the interviewee in the interviews. The teacher in this study did not hold a monolithic view of English teaching and learning because she was influenced by both Armenian and Western cultures.

The teacher participant's prior schooling was found to have played an important role in developing her teacher agency. Specifically, her early experiences with her English teacher while in school mediated the development of her sense of agency. The internalised image of resolve and persistence and being similar to her teacher helped develop her agency to become a teacher of English. She was so greatly influenced by her English teacher that she chose to study English at the same tertiary institution as her teacher, where successful entry was based on a competitive examination. On her path to learning English and becoming a teacher of English her teacher was always beside her with encouragement and support. Feryok (2012) concludes that the participant's teacher's actions were a model and support and a positive image of teacher action within the Armenian educational AS that helped orient the participant to become a teacher of English and teacher trainer later on. This was evidence of developing an individual sense of agency outside of the PLD classroom.

When becoming a teacher of English and teacher trainer in the late 1980s, the teacher participant recognised more contradictions in the Armenian educational AS. First, English was taught through Russian although rich information of the English language and culture was included in the textbooks. Moreover, the English syllabus was state-mandated during the time due to the Russian influence, which did not take into account individual differences, subjective views, emotions, personality

factors, and learning styles. Parameters were set for teachers of English of her time, creating obstacles for teachers in the Soviet Armenian context. This had specific associations with the agentive actions of her English teacher and herself as a teacher. Another contradiction was that the teacher's role, the subject of the activity, changed significantly. In the Soviet Union, teachers were generally much more respected than by the time the teacher participant became a teacher of English. This was partly due to the motives of a changing society where education was commercialised; hence, education was not valuable in itself but a means to an end. This changing social AS had an impact on the teacher participant. Her participation in a TEFL programme made her more confident when she came back to work after a three-year maternity leave. Interestingly, the image of her English teacher was still vivid in her teaching practice. More importantly, what she had learned from the TEFL programme could be plausibly applied in her classrooms and she became a resource of knowledge for her colleagues to attempt new ideas and teaching approaches. She then held seminars on teaching English, sharing her ideas on PLD with her colleagues. In this way, the teacher participant took on a more influential social role for herself. Moreover, holding seminars increased her level of involvement in out-of-school PLD, meaning further involvement in the Armenian educational activity. It could be said that the teacher participant's individual exercise of agency led to social activity, being an agent of change who disseminated knowledge.

Feryok (2012) found that the PLD of an individual could have an influence on a local AS when the individual expanded the field of possible action. Specifically, the expansion of individual actions reflects both the individual agency and its contribution to social activity. Moreover, individual development of agency occurs in an ongoing pattern in which early experiences function as mediating tools for individual actions later in lived experience. Therefore, the actions in which the teacher participant was involved made use of prior learning from the outside AS (i.e., the Armenian educational AS), which was then transformed into her own. In this way, her sense of agency developed to meet multiple demands in a rapidly changing world.

Although Feryok's (2012) case study was a comprehensive account of individual development of agency, a number of issues should be pointed out. First, the analysis seemed to be heavily dependent on the analysis of the data from interviews without due attention to exploring the data from classroom observations and the analysis of documents to depict the cultural and historical context within which the teacher's agency developed. This was because what people retrospectively recount might be different from what actually happens in their daily actions. Second, though the researcher paid attention to the prosodic data in the recordings of the interviews, there was barely

a single section analysing the effect of this type of data. If field notes had been taken and analysed with due attention to non-verbal data, the findings could have been strengthened. Finally, the only orienting activity was the focus of data analysis despite the researcher claiming to draw on both activity theory and orienting activity as a theoretical framework. Therefore, the depiction of the collected data based on activity theory was not clear and the generation of CHAT used in the study was not justified. Furthermore, a graphic model of contradictions was not provided for further understanding of the participant's activity.

Song and Kim's (2016) interview-based study of the teaching motivation of two experienced female South Korean teachers of English employed activity theory as a theoretical framework. Both teacher participants shared the same AS because they both started teaching in the same province and majored in humanities in senior secondary schools. Despite having the same amount of teaching experience and being of a similar age, these two teacher participants' motivational AS were quite dynamically different. This was because these two teachers' beliefs about effective teaching methods and the responsibilities of a homeroom teacher served as the main mediator of their teaching (de)motivation. Their long-held beliefs were greatly influenced by their working environment in contrasting ways. Teacher one realised that the grammar translation method demotivated students in her new school. However, teacher two found that the grammar translation method worked well in her new school, which was contrary to her previous belief of the ineffectiveness of this method in the old school. This change in her belief about teaching made her more dedicated and motivated in her teaching practice. In short, the participants' motivational fluctuations were context-dependent. Teacher one became demotivated when moving to her new school (new AS) because her effort to apply new teaching methods was not appreciated by the AS within which she worked. Teacher two's motivational trajectory was the opposite. By taking on responsibilities as a homeroom teacher, she became more involved in the AS within which she worked; therefore, she developed both professional agency and levels of motivation.

Song and Kim (2016) conclude that although the actions of English teachers took place in AS of the same characteristics, their beliefs and the impacts of these beliefs on their teaching practice diverged. Furthermore, the motivation levels of the participants in different AS are different depending more on individual sense of agency than on the impacts of environmental factors. However, the dynamic interactions with the AS elements (i.e., teaching methods and the school community) had a significant impact on teachers' motivational change. Like Feryok's (2012) case study, Song and Kim's (2016) case study did not provide a graphic model of motivational changes

and contradictions of the teachers, even though the authors claimed the use of CHAT in their study. This might lead to ineffective CHAT-based interpretation of the findings, which was the conceptual core of their study.

Barahona (2016) explored the learning-to-teach-English process of a cohort of 25 Chilean pre-service teachers (21 females and four males) in the final (fifth) year of a Second Language Teacher Education programme (SLTE) at a private university in Chile. Employing CHAT as a conceptual framework, the focus was on these teacher students' actions, motives, mediating tools, and the contradictions within their learning-to-teach activity. As a result of national educational reform in Chile, the SLTE programme was launched with a view to improving the quality of English teaching and learning and producing highly qualified teaching staff for the country's future.

The study found that the curriculum acted as a mediator in the participants' learning-to-teach activities. The emphasis of the SLTE programme was on the acquisition of both knowledge and skills of English for effective performance in the classroom. The teacher educators expected the pre-service teachers to be competent English teachers and change agents in their future ASs (public schools). This is because at the time of the study, teachers' level of English in the Chilean educational system was very low. The objective of the programme was to train would-be teachers to teach English in English. To do this, both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge should be included in the curriculum. The pre-service teachers acknowledged that the acquisition of English was the most important element in the programme to help prepare them as fully formed teachers. The practicum part in the curriculum received great appreciation from the prospective teachers because it provided them with valuable experiential involvement before engaging in real teaching activity upon the completion of the programme. In this respect, the curriculum of the SLTE programme with its all components – national guidelines, course structure, school-based practicum as scaffolding, and discussion seminar sessions – became a pragmatic and effective mediating tool in their learning-to-teach activity.

Importantly, Barahona (2016) provides graphic models of the contradictions of the learning-to-teach activity. Drawing on Engeström's (1999) classification of four levels of contradictions, this study identifies the following contradictions: 1) primary contradictions (between individual pre-service conceptualiations of language teaching and learning and the actual classroom reality); 2) secondary contradictions (pre-service teachers vs teacher educators; pre-service teachers vs the tools (the practicum and the curriculum)); 3) tertiary contradictions (between pre-service teachers', teacher educators', and teacher mentors' views of teaching); and 4) quaternary contradictions

(between the two activity settings: school and university). A typical pre-service teacher's inner contradiction was between their beliefs about applying a communicative approach in their instructional practicum and the grammar-oriented classroom reality. Despite their beliefs about the effectiveness of communicative language teaching and learning, some of them had to submit to their supervisor's styles and followed traditional grammar-focused tasks. Secondary contradictions occurred between prospective teachers' and school teachers' views on what type of knowledge and skills should be required of a teacher of English. While pre-service teachers advocated CLT, learner-centredness, and the use of EMI, the school teachers believed an effective teacher of English should be adaptive to school realities. A good example of tertiary contradiction found in this study was between school teachers' and pre-service teachers' views on teaching methods, with the former appreciating a culturally traditional form of the activity while the latter preferred a culturally advanced form. For instance, despite pre-service teachers' attempt to apply CLT (assumed to be culturally advanced), teacher educators might demand they follow a PPP (presentation-practice-produce) lesson plan (presumably culturally traditional). Quaternary contradictions occurred between the objects of different AS: the school and the university. The pre-service teachers were engaged in acquiring practical teaching skills during their school-based practicum to be teachers of English, whereas school teachers wanted them to know how to discipline students and strictly follow the school curriculum.

Unlike Feryok's (2012) and Song and Kim's (2016) studies, Barahona's (2016) research was both theoretically and methodologically comprehensive. The findings were clearly and thoroughly communicated by employing both the second and third generation of CHAT. By doing so, the general picture of pre-service EFL teachers' learning-to-teach activity in the Chilean context was provided.

In Vietnam, a number of studies on tertiary EFL teaching have used CHAT to explore teachers' beliefs and practices (Dang, K. 2013; Tran, 2016; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). Dang K. (2013) explored the evolution of professional teacher identity of two female Vietnamese student teachers, Hien and Chinh (pseudonyms) in a paired-placement context during their 15-week practicum – a joint-AS. This study employed activity theory as a theoretical framework, specifically drawing on the concept of contradiction (third generation of CHAT coined by Engeström (2001)) and Vygotskian (1994) concepts of Zone of Proximal Development and perezhivanie to identify the drivers of their learning-to-teach process. The focus of the study was on how these student teachers appropriate mediating tools during their practicum and how they collaboratively resolved internal contradictions

in shaping their professional identity. This is part of a larger research project investigating the learning-to-teach practices of 10 pairs of Vietnamese student teachers.

During their practicum at a university in Vietnam, Hien and Chinh were assigned to teach English to second-year students. They had to collaborate in planning the lessons and teaching in the classroom. Hien was from the city, and her family members spoke English, while Chinh was from the countryside, and her family was not well-off financially. Both had been friends and worked together for three years before the practicum. Although consensus between them was easily reached, the outcome of their collaborative work was not productive due to different views on collaboration. Hien preferred critiques for improvement, whereas Chinh favored harmony with little argument within pair work or group work. Regarding personalities, Hien appeared cheerful, friendly, confident, and articulate, while Chinh was quiet and slightly emotional.

Three main contradictions were identified: subjects vs objects of activity, subjects vs division of labour within the community, and the community vs mediational tools. For the first type of contradiction, Dang (2013) found pre-service teachers held different perceptions of the object of learning-to-teach activity. Hien focused on student learning, while Chinh chose to be faithful to lesson plans. However, later in the practicum and influenced by collaboration, Chinh partially changed her object toward student learning and realised she needed to develop her role as a teacher. The second type of contradiction between subjects and division of labour was the result of the first one in that tensions in both co-planning and co-teaching occurred. In co-planning the lessons, Hien took the initiative regarding what to teach and how to teach in class with Chinh, who preferred Confucian-valued harmony, and chose to support Hien's ideas and suggestions. This represented an unequal division of labour between the two subjects of the joint AS. In the first co-teaching round, Chinh realised there was an unequal division of labour when Hien's talk time was much longer and this caused discomfort in Chinh. However, in later rounds, Chinh decided to be more active in the classroom by interrupting Hien, when appropriate, to resolve this contradiction in the division of labour in co-teaching. The study revealed a contradiction between community and mediating artefacts, specifically the participants' different levels of appropriation of pedagogical tools during the practicum presumably due to their different identities. These levels of appropriation were reflected lesson by lesson. In lesson one, for example, Chinh tried to interest her students in the lesson through an affective approach (making jokes). However, Chinh's pedagogical approach transformed dramatically in the last teaching round after working with her co-teacher Hien for a

long time. She changed her approach from being faithful to the lesson plan to creating flexibility in student learning by replacing the teaching materials and moving away from rigid lesson plans.

The contradictions in a joint AS in Dang's (2013) study were not seen as obstacles but as chances for professional learning and development (PLD), and they were resolved via collaboration exchanges between peers. Consequently, once the contradictions were resolved, there would be qualitative change in teaching professional identities. However, the findings would have been more descriptively elucidative had the second generation of CHAT been used to illustrate each student teacher's development of professional identities during the practicum.

Tran's (2016) mixed method yet predominantly qualitative study focused on PLD in a Vietnamese university EFL context regarding both EFL lecturers and leaders. In her instrumental case study, both second and third generations of CHAT were used as a framework for analysis to explore the roles of PLD in relation to the educators' personal and professional growth in the Vietnamese sociocultural and political contexts. The settings of the study were three public universities in Southern Vietnam where the quality of education is generally lower than other parts of the country.

From the CHAT analysis of university A regarding PLD, two dominant contradictions were found, including those between the subjects (lecturers) and their community (colleagues, academic leaders, policy makers, students, and PLD providers), and between rules (PLD itself, national and institutional policies) and the artefacts (funding, resources). For example, while academic leaders complained about the standards of the lecturers (e.g., qualifications and research ability), young lecturers claimed they had limited opportunities to participate in formal PLD to improve their professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, highly qualified staff (e.g., those lecturers who held doctoral degrees) were more likely to receive funding for research and attendance in formal PLD programmes than younger and less experienced peers.

For university B, the CHAT analysis revealed a more complex set of contradictions. Besides one similar contradiction to that in university A between the mediating artefact and the rules, there were contradictions between the subjects (lecturers) and the object, between the artefact and the object, between the rules and the object, and between the artefact and the community. For instance, although PLD was regulated as a mandatory professional activity to enhance lecturers' research and qualifications, the lecturers found other rules such as paperwork to prevent them from involvement in PLD activities. In addition, the contradiction occured between the artefact (reduced funding in PLD) and the object (conducting research to improve lecturers' professional knowledge and skills).

In university C, contradictions were found between the subjects and the community, between the rules and the artefacts, between the community and artefacts, and between the rules and the object. While the university ruled that the annual assessment of the lecturers' academic and teaching performance would help improve their professional standards, the lecturers themselves saw this as creating pressure or an academic burden rather than meaningful PLD. Additionally, the contradiction emerged between the subjects and the academic leaders being uncertain about their power and possibilities to make changes in institutional regulations to support lecturers in their PLD.

Generally, Tran's (2016) study indicated PLD's multiple roles and functions, crucially to foster teachers' culturally professional competencies, namely (1) *tài* and *tầm* (expertise and vision) and (2) *đức* and *tâm* (professional ethics and aspirations). Different stakeholders in the AS of higher education held different perceptions of the roles and functions of PLD. For leaders, PLD was claimed to be related to policy enactment, staff assessment, and qualification upgrading. For lecturers, PLD helped promote their self-image, teaching and professional responsibilities, and their student learning. From the CHAT perspective, PLD was perceived as either an artifact to support teaching practice, student learning, and educational reforms and innovations or the object for teachers to achieve. The researcher concluded that PLD was a fluid phenomenon and a reconceptualisation of PLD was necessary to address teachers' learning and teaching needs and national and institutional goals, hence informing effective policies to promote PLD among teachers.

In summary, despite the claimed use of activity theory or CHAT in many studies, not every study demonstrated graphic modelling, which is the backbone of a CHAT analytical framework. Furthermore, although the reviewed studies provided relatively comprehensive pictures of EFL practices in different contexts, they did not explore the teachers' beliefs regarding English language teaching and learning in general, which is the focus of the current study. Culturality was not inclusive in Barahona's (2016) study, while historicity was not efficiently explored in Dang's (2013) and Tran's (2016) studies.

3.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed CHAT as the theoretical framework in an educational setting generally and in language education particularly which was employed in this research. The chapter started by providing a historical overview of CHAT with elaborations on three generations of CHAT. The next part of the chapter detailed the contradictions inherent in AS. The five important principles of CHAT were discussed. The chapter ended with analysing examples of empirical studies in language education that used CHAT as an analytical framework. The reviewed CHAT-based studies provided

the current study with methodological insights regarding the employment of CHAT to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. Moreover, the current study is informed with the gap in examining EFL teachers' teaching activity to gain a deeper understanding of the culturality and historicity of such an activity.

To recap, the use of CHAT as a theoretical and conceptual framework to explore Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices can be explained based on Foot's (2014) elaboration on each key concept of Cultural Historical Activity Theory. *Cultural* refers to the proposition that Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices at RedStar are shaped and situated within their unique context of cultural values and resources. *Historical* points to the idea of Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs and practices being culturally impacted and evolving over time, from their early access to an FL and schooling to their early teaching experiences and present teaching practice. *Activity*, or the system of doing, adheres to the collective classroom practices and EFL teaching context modified by cultural values and historical developments within which the teachers have been operating. *Theory* means this is a conceptual framework for exploring teachers' socioculturally and historically situated activity, which is dynamically internalised (Negueruela-Azarola; 2011; Yang & Kim 2011) and collective actions (Foot, 2014).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter pertains to the course of investigation and the procedures of the data collection and data analysis. To investigate teachers' beliefs and practices, this study adopted social constructivism as its research paradigm and qualitative case study as approach.

4.1. Methodological issues in studying teachers' beliefs

Quantitative approaches have been identified as the most common strategy for exploring teachers' beliefs (Buehl & Beck, 2015). Quantitative interpretation aims to provide logical numerical inferences about teachers' beliefs. The major result of quantitative analysis of teachers' beliefs is the "development of statistical models used to evaluate the nature of group differences or identify patterns that allow researchers to articulate theoretical models of belief formation, progress, and potency" (Hoffman & Seidel, 2015, p. 108). Quantitative analysis helps explore the correlations between teachers' beliefs and their practices. For instance, in a study on 136 Korean pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about technology integration in planning their lessons through a technology course intervention, Lee and Lee (2014) found that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about technology integration were proportional to their attitudes toward computers. Particularly, the more positive attitudes toward computers teachers hold, the higher their self-efficacy. In addition, the greater ability in lesson planning was closely linked to an increased level of self-efficacy. In their questionnaire survey, Öztürk and Yildirim (2015) explored 606 practising EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning in Turkey. The teachers in this study believed that language learning occurs within an interactionist paradigm where the emphasis is on ongoing interactions between language learners and the environment. However, the teachers believed that the capacity of language learning is innate, which reflected 80% ability and 20% effort.

Quantitative approaches allow the researcher to deal with a large number of samples and manage a huge amount of data at a time. In addition, the relationships between teachers' espoused beliefs and their teaching practices can be statistically obvious at the time of research (Buehl & Beck, 2015). However, human thought and behaviours are believed to be socioculturally situated and unpredictable; therefore, a quantification of teachers' beliefs may be weak to moderate (Buehl & Beck, 2015). Moreover, quantitative research is considered by some researchers to be static because it presents the image of social reality via relationships between variables without referring to change and connections between events over time (Bryman, 2016; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). As the quantitative data are collected at one point of time, it is difficult to moderate the

relationships between teachers' espoused beliefs and their teaching practices, which are contextually specific (Buehl & Beck, 2015).

In contrast, qualitative approaches allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs that cannot be quantified as they are informed by various strategies of data collection such as interviews, observations, and analyses of artefacts (Buehl & Beck, 2015). In qualitative research, the insightful examination of teachers' developmental beliefs (genesis of teachers' beliefs) can be obtained (Fives & Buehl, 2012). To understand the complexity of teachers' beliefs, a qualitative approach appears to move beyond the advantages of quantitative studies (Olafson et al., 2015) as it provides more insights into the synergy between reported beliefs and observed behaviour (Wyatt, 2010). For instance, through his qualitative case study, Wyatt (2010) provided an insightful understanding of the development of an English teacher's self-efficacy beliefs in using group work on a three-year in-service education programme in the Middle East. Although there was an overall growth in his self-efficacy about practical knowledge regarding the learners and learning and the self, he still seemed to attempt to complete the course of teaching rather than adapting the curriculum to meet students' local needs. He showed the development in his understanding of the role of social interaction in language learning through group work; however, his self-efficacy in deploying this teaching technique in classrooms was still constrained by the school environment and administrative requirements (e.g., completion of the teaching syllabus). Through non-participant classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and semi-structured interviews, Junqueira and Kim (2013) explored two English-as-a-second-language teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback in the United States. The findings show that both teachers disbelieved the effectiveness of providing corrective feedback during classroom speaking tasks because the focus should be on communication of ideas rather than accuracy. Interestingly, however, this belief did not influence their teaching practice, as both of them showed a significant amount of in-class corrective feedback.

In summary, in studying teachers' beliefs, a qualitative approach appears to be advantageous as it allows prolonged data collection with a combined use of strategies (Olafson et al., 2015), which occurs in a natural setting (i.e., sociocultural contexts within which teachers are situated) (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within constructivism, a qualitative approach to teachers' beliefs makes it more accessible to the viewpoints of the insiders in a rich descriptive way (Bryman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, a qualitative approach provides a full and complex understanding of how teachers' beliefs shape, develop, and change and how they act upon their beliefs (Olafson et al., 2015), which seems insufficient if reliant on a

quantitative approach. Unlike in quantitative approaches, qualitative approaches allow researchers to better understand significant non-observables of human lived experiences (Slife & Melling, 2012). Therefore, a qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the insights into teachers' beliefs from more diverse angles.

4.2. Research questions

As analysed in Chapter 2, there is a gap in knowledge of Vietnamese in-service tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. The previous studies did not focus on exploring the culturality and historicity of teachers' beliefs and practices. In addition, the FL reforms in Vietnam have not included teachers' voices. In order to contribute to EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam, there is a need for research that includes in-service teachers' voices. This study was informed by the main research question: *What are Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about English language teaching and learning?*

To answer this question, the following sub-questions, which reflect the sociocultural and historical perspectives, will be addressed:

1. What is the genesis of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs?

2. What cultural and historical features are inherent in their beliefs and practices?

3. What are the contradictions and tensions in their EFL teaching activity?

4.3. Research paradigm

The current study adopted the world view as "a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices" (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 31) or a "set of principles" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 8) that guides actions (Guba, 1990; Mertens, 2010). It fits within the social constructivist paradigm because it explored how Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers understood the world (i.e., historical and cultural context of EFL teaching) in which they lived and worked (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study aimed to explore EFL teachers' diverse beliefs and practices. The ways in which they conceptualise the activity of teaching are more likely to be diverse because their individual understandings of the external world are different (Bryman, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this study, I am an EFL teacher who might share similar experiences or pedagogical assumptions with the teacher participants. However, our beliefs about how reality is shaped are not always the same. We may hold different interpretations of the socioculturally situated AS of English teaching and learning within which we are working. Each of us may be working with different types of learners,

classrooms, and institutional contexts. In other words, the same term 'teaching English' might bear multiple perspectives due to our different views and understandings.

Moreover, the social constructivist paradigm acknowledges subjectivity and focuses on exploring how people make sense of the world through their unique social interactions (Cohen et al., 2017; Denscombe, 2002). In this study, I analysed Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices through semi-structured interviews and observations, the interpretations of which might be subjective from an emic perspective (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995). However, this was how multiple realities were socially constructed and reconstructed (Bryman, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

My background and experience of being a tertiary EFL teacher in Vietnam for 20 years and as the main research instrument (Bryman, 2016) possibly influenced the research design, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the results. In this study, I sought socially constructed knowledge through interacting with the participants (Guba, 1990; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, a qualitative case study approach, discussed in detail in the following section, was employed for this study.

4.4. Qualitative case study approach

Qualitative case study is one of the most commonly used research methods (Yazan, 2015) although it bears different views among leading case study methodologists (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014, 2018). Merriam (2001) and Stake (1995) fit case study in a constructivist paradigm as opposed to Yin's (2014) positivism (Yazan, 2015). While Yin (2018) explicitly defines a case as a specific event or entity, Stake (1995) does not provide a clear definition of a case study. Instead, Stake (1995) depicts a case as an integrated system, the components of which may not fit well. However, commonly agreed among case study methodologists is that a case is bounded by time and space as boundaries within which the case is operating. Case boundaries are "the time period, social groups, organizations, geographic locations, or other conditions that fall within (as opposed to outside of) the case in a case study" (Yin, 2014, p. 237). Therefore, a case study is usually used to study complex phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2014) within their natural settings (Yin, 2014). In a case study, researchers examine cases as holistic entities and how their parts operate together (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The purpose of this study was to investigate Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices from a cultural and historical perspective. Therefore, a qualitative case study was an appropriate approach.

A case study is defined as the qualitative inquiry of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009) to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomena under

question (Stake, 1995; Woodside, 2010). This study employed semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to explore Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in their own workplace settings by obtaining a comprehensive and authentic picture from an emic perspective (Stake, 1995).

Moreover, my control of events was limited (Yin, 2009) because the participants held diverging views and experienced different events regarding EFL teaching and learning. What I could do was to seek to provide a thick description and an in-depth understanding of how my teacher participants perceived their teaching activity in their own ways. This was because the relationship between the phenomena under investigation (i.e., Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices) and their context (i.e., tertiary EFL teaching activity) is indistinguishable (Stake, 1995).

Additionally, the current study examined Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' teaching activity, which could be considered a case (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995). This activity was bounded by a wider cultural and historical context of tertiary EFL teaching and learning, which was institutionally and centrally defined (Stake, 2006). A qualitative case study approach suited my study because it aimed to improve the practice of tertiary EFL teaching and learning by exploring teachers' beliefs and practices (Merriam, 2001). I wanted my research to contribute to improving the tertiary EFL programme and teacher education by examining the in-service teachers' perspectives, which was underresearched in EFL reforms in the Vietnamese context.

The current study was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) with tertiary EFL teaching at RedStar as a case and teacher participants as embedded cases. By exploring tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices from the sociocultural and historical perspective, there would be further understanding of the sociocultural and historical complexity of tertiary EFL context in Vietnam. Specifically, the investigation into EFL teachers' beliefs and practices is an instrument to understand more deeply an important issue or phenomenon (Stake, 1995) or gain a more general picture of something else (Christensen & Johnson, 2014), that is, tertiary EFL teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context. The current study aims to attend to affordances, challenges, and possible improvement of tertiary EFL teaching in the Vietnamese context. Although the findings of this collective case study might be subject to generalisability, it practically contributes to "better understanding, perhaps better theorising about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 2005, p. 446).

4.5. Cultural Historical Activity Theory and case study

There are a number of compelling reasons to use Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as an analytical framework for this case study (Figure 4.1). First, CHAT is a theoretical and empirical framework for investigating any context-specific activity (Engeström, 2015; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). As such, the use of CHAT provided sociocultural and historical richness of the context-bounded teaching activity of the Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers in this study (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

Moreover, case-context inseparability (Stake, 2006) aligns with the intent of CHAT, which focuses on culturality and historicity (Engeström, 2015). Through CHAT analysis, the culturality and historicity of activity systems can be highlighted and deeply understood (Sannino & Engeström, 2018).

Multiple perspectives are preserved in case study (Stake, 1995) which can be ultimately compatible with CHAT's principle of multi-voicedness (Engeström, 2015). By examining teachers' different perspectives as individual agents regarding tertiary EFL teaching activity in a Vietnamese university as an entity, inherent sociocultural and historical contradictions are highlighted. Essentially, this study aimed to explore the sociocultural and historical uniqueness and complexity of tertiary EFL teaching in the Vietnamese context.

Importantly, CHAT holds great advantage to provide graphic models of teachers' beliefs and practices. This learning activity might include teachers' formal and informal learning experiences during their teaching activity. A CHAT analysis of this activity is manageable in a case study design (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) such as the current one, which aimed to provide a comprehensive depiction of how dynamic teachers' beliefs and practices developed over time.

Methodologically, the use of CHAT in a qualitative case study is appropriate as it allows for the methodological and epistemological concerns underpinning case study (Bligh & Flood, 2017). Furthermore, CHAT allows for the complexity of apprehension of the cultural and historical context under research (Bligh & Flood, 2017).

So far, very few studies on language teachers' beliefs in EFL contexts from a CHAT perspective have been reported in the literature (e.g., see Barahona, 2016; Feryok, 2012) and very few in Vietnam. Therefore, the current qualitative case study was an attempt to fill this methodological gap.

Figure 4.1

Teachers' beliefs and practices in a bounded activity system (adapted from Buehl & Beck, 2015, p. 74).
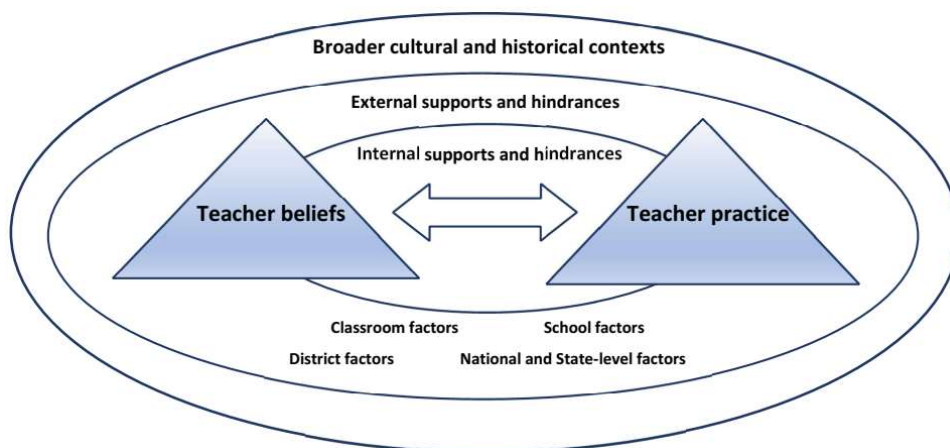
4.6. Data collection

The previous sections have provided an overview of the research paradigm and rationale for a CHAT-infused qualitative case study employed in the current study. This section shifts to focus on how the current study was conducted. It starts with the description of the research site, participants, and procedures of data collection, followed by the data analysis section, which depicts how the data were analysed with reference to the CHAT analytical framework. Ethical procedures and strategies to maintain trustworthiness are then discussed. A summary will be provided at the end of this section.

4.6.1. Research site and participants

All participants were from RedStar University (pseudonym and RedStar for short) – a university of foreign languages in central Vietnam's Beauty City (pseudonym) (Table 4.1). Of 12 voluntary participants in this study, three decided to withdraw after the first-round interviews because they no longer felt comfortable with starting classroom observations, although they had initially agreed to. Nine participants were retained in the research, participating in two rounds of interviews and two classroom observations, which totalled 18 interviews and 18 classroom observations.

This was a purposive convenience sample selected to provide different perspectives on the problem, process, or event under question (Creswell, 2013). I approached RedStar because I had a professional connection. I recruited participants with diverse professional profiles because this would help with key comparisons in the process of data analysis. The Dean of the Faculty of English and Office for Personnel and Administrative Affairs of RedStar granted access to personnel profiles

prior to the data collection phase. Then, I emailed and telephoned the participants to invite them to participate in my research (Appendix 1).

As shown in Table 4.1, participants' family members spoke or taught a FL (English, French, or Russian). Participants' demographic information was an important source of data because those who studied a FL in the rural areas may exert different experiences from those in the urban areas due to different curricula for and approaches to FL education in rural and urban areas. Participants in this research were of different years of teaching. They were either domestically or internationally trained in various disciplines, though in connection to English language instruction. The lowest qualification was a bachelor and the highest was a doctoral degree. Importantly, all participants had a higher educational background at RedStar with four having completed both a bachelor and master's degree there. They taught in either English-major or non-English-major classes. Their ages ranged from 22 (normally two years after university graduation) to the retirement age (normally 55 for females and 60 for males in Vietnam at the time of this study).

In the Vietnamese educational system, an outstanding university graduate may be invited to apply to remain as a teacher at tertiary level upon their graduation. A novice tertiary teacher can normally be 22 years of age in their first year of teaching (Vietnamese students normally start their university study at the age of 18 unless repeating classes at any level of study). Those teachers with over five years of teaching are considered experienced while those with fewer than five years are considered inexperienced. Notably, in most FL universities in Vietnam, female teachers often outnumber males, so gender was not the main criterion for participant selection for the current study.

Participants were from different divisions of specialisation in the Faculty of English depending on their majors in undergraduate or postgraduate studies, for example language skills or translation and interpretation. However, they might be required to teach other non-major subjects in case of a shortage of teaching staff. In addition, all participants were required to teach at least one language skill subject, for example listening or speaking in the semester, because the teaching staff of the divisions of language skills are smaller than the number of students, especially in the first two years of university study. Teachers from the divisions of language skills might not be qualified to teach subjects of other divisions (for example, division of language studies); however, teachers in other divisions could always teach language skill subjects.

Table 4.1

Characteristics of participants

Participant, age, gender, years of teaching	Family background	Qualification	Major	Appointed division of specialisation	Additional role	Subjects observed teaching	University of origin before joining RedStar
Chau, 30s, female, 5+	Urban	BA in ELT (RedStar)	Linguistics	Applied Linguistics		• Listening 2 • Speaking 2	RedStar
Diem, 40s, female, 20+	Urban	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in English Language Teaching (RedStar)	Language skills	Language skills	Vice head of language skills division	• Reading 2 • Writing 2	Yellow University
Diep, 50s, female, 25+	Urban	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in ELT (RedStar)	Language skills	• Retired • Invited teacher		• Speaking 5 • Writing 2	Yellow University
Huy, 40s, male, 20+	Rural	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in ELT (Asia) • PhD in ELT (Anglophone country)	Linguistics	• Management staff • Invited teacher	University management staff	• Speaking 5 • Reading 2	Blue University
Le, 50s, male, 30+	Urban	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in ELT (Anglophone country) • PhD in ELT (Anglophone country)	Linguistics and text study	Translation and Interpretation	Faculty management staff	• Reading 2 • Writing 2	Blue University
Minh, 20s, female, 2+	Urban	• BA in English Language Studies (RedStar)	Translation	Translation and Interpretation		• Reading 2 • Translation 1	RedStar
Ngoc, 50s, female, 25+	Urban	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in ELT (Anglophone)	Language Teaching Methodology	Pedagogical Methodology	Vice head of Teaching Methodology division	• Reading 2 • Writing 2	Blue University
Thanh, 50s, female, 30+	Urban	• BA in ELT (Blue University) • MA in ELT (RedStar)	Translation	Translation and Interpretation		• Reading 2 • Translation 1	Blue University
Trang, 30s, female, 5+	Rural	• BA & MA in ELT (RedStar)	Language skills	Language skills	Executive member of university Youth Union	• Speaking 2 • Translation 1	RedStar

Management staff could be in charge of a certain amount of teaching for the purpose of academic ranking. They were called "*giáo viên thỉnh giảng*" (invited teachers). As management staff were often originally from the university's faculties, it all depended on the faculties to assign the teaching load for them. Similarly, retired teachers could be invited to teach some groups of students on fixed-term contracts. However, this was not for the purpose of academic ranking; it was actually for "yếu tố tình cảm" or "*yếu tố nhân văn*" (humanity purposes). In a relatedness or relationship-driven society such as the Vietnamese one, the emotional connection is considered an important cultural norm in which people tend to maintain relationships for a long time even after their retirement. The invitation for retired staff to teach is often to help them ease the sudden shock of being discontinued or excluded from the academic world in which they had operated for years. Further historical and sociocultural information regarding individual participants is provided in their profiles in Chapter 6.

4.6.2. Data collection methods and process

The data was collected at RedStar. To assure the accuracy and consistency of the collected data, I employed the concept of 'triangulation' (Creswell, 2013; Weyers et al., 2008; Yin, 2014), which emphasises using a variety of strategies and methods/techniques in collecting data. This research adopted a triangulation of procedures of data collection through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and artefacts (e.g., lesson plans, in-class handouts, government policy documents and directives, institutional guidelines) (Weyers et al., 2008). This aimed to obtain a holistic picture of the phenomena under investigation and enhance validity of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Weyers et al., 2008). Through multiple data sources, thick description was provided and maintained. An additional source of data was from informal conversations with the participants to obtain further information related to the issue under investigation.

4.6.2.1. In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were employed because they are regarded as one of the most effective ways to gather data on the research participants' experience and knowledge, opinions, perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about a topic (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Broadly, interviews are a flexible tool for data collection, which involves a multidimensional human interaction, verbal and non-verbal, spoken and written, heard and listened, seen and shared, to produce knowledge (Cohen et al., 2017). The interviews provided me with a deeper understanding of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs about FL teaching and learning, their refinement of teaching methods, the relationships between their beliefs and teaching practice, the genesis of their beliefs, and affordances of and hindrances to effective teaching.

Additionally, follow-up responses in such interviews can be more extensive, which is of cognitive significance for analysis at later stages (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). Semi-structured interviews allow one to keep a protocol framed in advance as well as significant expansion of the topic under discussion for richer information. In this respect, pre-determined key questions were expanded by follow-up questions to help me elicit further details and clarify the issues under study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Merriam, 2009). I ensured the topic of the expanded questions did not go too far beyond the research focus by using either culturally appropriate verbal or non-verbal signals. Confidentiality of the interviewees was ensured through careful design of questions. The interview questions were piloted with two of my colleagues in Vietnam to evaluate the initial questions and formulate better ones (see Appendix 2).

The location for interviews, where distraction factors were inevitable but reduced to a minimum level, were chosen by the participants at their convenience. Common choices of interview venues were the participants' homes, coffee shops, and the office of the English faculty. Although the participants had been contacted via both email and telephone, they preferred to reply via telephone. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese (with occasional use of English, for example, when referring to technical terms) and for comfortable interactions between the researcher and participants. Interviews were audio-recorded using both a mobile phone and an audio-recorder. There were two rounds of interviews for each participant of 45 minutes each, totaling 18 interviews for nine participants. To gain an understanding of the research participants' inner world, I had to establish trust and rapport to elicit information from them by maintaining intimate informal conversations with them before entering the focus of planned interviews. I respected the participants' points of view, experiences, feelings, and voices (Merriam, 2009) by not commenting on their views and feelings and not directing them towards the expected performance for the research.

One challenge before the interviews was my feeling of being an outsider in the research setting. This was because my first foreign language was Russian. I studied Russian during the 1980s and 1990s, and in Beauty City I experienced a sense of sociolinguistic stigma between those whose first foreign language was Russian and those whose first foreign language was English or other Western languages. Decades after the country's reunification in 1975, each group was assumed to belong to separate worlds. In the 1990s, following my father's encouragement, I studied to become an English teacher. However, I wondered if I would be positioned as an outsider by my particpants whose first foreign language was English. The fact that my participants and I may have had a shared

sociocultural and educational background made me reconsider my position as an outsider. I was open to my participants. I positioned myself as their friend and this helped the interviews feel like an informal conversation. The participants were open to sharing politically sensitive views on tertiary EFL teaching.

4.6.2.2. Class observations

Class observations were carried out after the first-round interviews to identify the links between the teachers' beliefs about FL teaching and learning and their teaching practice. I obtained voluntary consent by the participants to be in their classrooms. I was the main data-collection instrument because I had to decide on the kind and importance of the data to be recorded (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). I chose to be an observer-as-participant who took the role of an observer more than a participant (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This role of an observer-as-participant allowed me to maintain as much objectivity and neutrality as possible. In addition, this role allowed me to be either an insider or outsider (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), which helped me to obtain a deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs and the relationships of these beliefs their teaching practice. A complete participant may not be able to maintain objectivity, while a complete observer may not allow for an understanding of the phenomena from the insider's perspective (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). I did not choose to be a participant-as-observer because I did not attempt any intervention in the participants' teaching practice. I always sat at the back of the classroom to observe.

The observed EFL classrooms were at RedStar where English is taught as a major or non-major subject. Traditional EFL classrooms at tertiary level in the Vietnamese context are considered large for a language classroom, possibly consisting of 30 or 40 students for English-major and up to 70 or 80 for the non-English-major classes. Some classrooms were equipped with basic audio-visual devices such as PowerPoint and CD players and some others were under-resourced. The focus of classroom observations was on teaching methods, techniques, and procedures, the mediating tools used by the teachers, and teacher–student and student–student interactions.

Each classroom observation was about 90 minutes, which was equivalent to two periods of study (a traditional teaching period in Vietnamese tertiary institutions is between 45 and 50 minutes). Each participant was observed twice – a total of 180 minutes each. The time for classroom observations was decided by the participants. To record the classroom observations, a guide was developed (Appendix 3). After each observation, I summarised briefly what had happened in the observed lessons (Appendix 4). I then wrote a full report for each of the observed lessons (Appendix 5). I took

notes of my questions for certain parts of the observed lessons and asked participants these questions in the second-round interviews. Initial codes emerging from the observations were identified after each observation, which further facilitated data analysis at a later stage.

4.6.2.3. Artefacts and tools

The third source of data was artefacts and tools (e.g., government directives and policy documents, institutional guiding documents, prescribed coursebooks, handouts used in the observed lessons, institutional tests, students' work) (see Appendices 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). This helped me demonstrate the EFL teaching activity and identify possible systemic contradictions. These documents were first accessed and analysed by the end of 2018 and continued to be reviewed until the completion of this study.

4.6.2.4. Reflexive journal

In qualitative research, a reflexive journal has been increasingly encouraged as it helps the researcher with critical reflection on their role and decisions throughout the research process (Orange, 2016; Ortlipp, 2008). By keeping a routine reflexive journal, I could critically reflect on my own assumptions as a teacher–researcher, experiences, choices, and actions to make visible the whole research process (Ortlipp, 2008). In the current study, a reflexive journal was used as a complementary and useful source in triangular data collection and analysis.

The reflexive journal helped me record my perspectives and emotional reactions towards what I saw and heard. I attended to details of participants' perspectives, for example their emotional reactions to questions or the prosodic features of their voice during the interviews that would later contribute to the data analysis phase. In addition, I took notes of the sociocultural context in which my participants were operating at the time of the current research to identify historicity and culturality of their contemporary teaching activity. My feelings when the participants shared similar experiences were noted, which helped control bias during data interpretation. Additionally, what I had observed in the lessons was recorded in the reflexive journal, for example teachers' and students' behaviour during the lessons. I highlighted the impact of my presence in the classrooms during observation. I wrote down my thoughts about the government and institutional directive documents. All this helped shape my understanding as a teacher–researcher in the current study.

4.7. Data analysis

This section explains how the collected data were analysed and interpreted. As there is no best approach to data analysis (Cohen et al., 2017), I employed different approaches regarding data

analysis in my research, the instruments of which were thematic analysis for interviews and observations and content analysis for the collected artefacts. The data were also analysed by integrating CHAT as a theoretical thematic analysis. Overall, the analysis of collected data underwent an iterative process during data collection (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). For example, the data from artefacts such as institutional guidelines and government policy documents and directives were analysed and used as prompts for the first-round interviews and reanalysed after classroom observations and second-round interviews. For example, how the institutional syllabus or subject unit description was used. In addition, I went back and forth for clarifications of merging themes by referring back to the originals of the data sources. This was done by keeping a reflexive research journal, as discussed in the data collection section above.

In analysing the data, both emic and etic views were incorporated. In some circumstances, as an EFL teacher I had the same experiences as the participants. I listened to participants' personal stories expressing their own perspectives, yet simultaneously I was guided by the literature and my own understanding and interpretations of their stories and views. In other words, even though the research was qualitative by its nature, which explored the participants' perspectives on the issue under investigation, my perspective as a researcher had a role to play in terms of bringing my own experiences as an EFL teacher in the Vietnamese context into the interpretations of data. However, the interpretation of participants' perspectives was not distorted because in the current case study I tried to tell as far as their stories went through my interaction with and observation of their doing, not my assumptions as an EFL teacher (Stake, 1995).

This study employed a case study approach; therefore, the data analysis began with detailing such aspects as the historical genesis of the case, descriptions of individual events in chronological orders, or temporal activities of the case (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013). A detailed description of each case and the setting was provided. The setting is an important issue because it depicts how an incident fits into a specific setting (Creswell, 2013). This step was followed by an analysis of themes to understand the complexity of the case. I then looked for common themes that helped provide a more comprehensive picture of the cases (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013). This research employed both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

The areas of data analysis for each case study and cross-case study included family and sociocultural background, prior language teaching and learning (apprenticeship of observation), education programmes, English teaching and learning beliefs (about language and language learning, language structure, error and error correction, use of Vietnamese and English, and cultures of English-

speaking countries), general beliefs (teacher roles and responsibilities, the classroom, teacher-centredness vs student-centredness, student roles), affordances of and hindrances to effective teaching, classroom observations, and teacher knowledge (pedagogical beliefs). The data analysis was repeatedly discussed with my two supervisors (Belotto, 2018).

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) programmes such as NVivo12 and MAXQDA, have been increasingly popular and effective in processing enormous data in qualitative research (Belotto, 2018). However, I did not use these programmes because they do not support Vietnamese, which results in the essence of participants' interview responses in Vietnamese not being effectively captured. The English translation versions of the Vietnamese originals might not successfully reflect participants' metaphorical implications through their use of prosodic features or culturally specific verbal and non-verbal expressions. Instead, I coded the data manually in a tabular format for both interview and observational data drawing on the concept of a codebook (Belotto, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). Developing a codebook was feasible for this case study because there were 18 interviews (45 minutes each) and 18 narrated classroom observations (90 minutes each). The manual coding was worth the endeavour as some data-driven codes emerged during the process. In addition, manual coding with continuous back-referrals to the recordings and transcripts helped me immerse myself in the cultural and historical world of the participants.

4.7.1. The unit of analysis

Focusing on individual action as a unit of analysis could result in overlooking collective aspects, or the multi-voicedness, of the activity (Engeström, 2015). The multi-voicedness reflects the interactions and contradictions of the stakeholders in the AS, which are crucial for transformation and development (Engeström, 2001, 2009; Fleer, 2016; Roth & Lee, 2007). The AS should be a thread that consists of strands and fibres with the former presupposing the latter (Cole, 1996; Engeström, 2001; Gedera, 2016; Roth & Lee, 2007). In other words, an AS is not simply about the individual activity; it is about the collective AS in which individual activities are essential parts. This stance is echoed in Stetsenko's (2013) argument that "*each* individual – in all expressions including psychological phenomena – is revealed as constituted by, embodying, participating, and most importantly, *contributing* to the dynamic materiality of collective history and collaborative practices" (p. 9, italics in original). Therefore, in this study, CHAT was employed as an interpretive framework to examine the entire AS of teaching EFL at tertiary level in Vietnam of a group of teachers from a university in central Vietnam. Holistically, having the unit of analysis as the collective activity of this group of teacher participants clarified the cultural historical perspectives of this

particular group and the cultural-historical underpinnings of tertiary English education in the Vietnamese context. As Engeström (1999) notes, "if a collective activity system is taken as the unit, history may become manageable, and yet it steps beyond the confines of individual biography" (p. 26). Therefore, it is important to have the collective AS of a particular group of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers as the unit of analysis such as in this study. I am interested in both the collective activity system of this group of tertiary EFL teachers and their individual historical and cultural uniqueness.

4.7.2. Analysis of individual semi-structured interviews

The interviews were first transcribed in Vietnamese to capture the participants' words in their own language. The occasional English words used by the participants were transcribed verbatim. Three transcripts were then translated into English (see Appendix 12 for a full translation of an interview) and others were partially translated. This was because I wanted to see how the computer-assisted coding went before translating all the transcripts. The three transcripts selected to be translated were interviews with three participants who were born in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s. I wanted to capture the initial cultural and historical uniqueness through their responses which I thought would significantly help with the analysis of the data set at a later stage. The interview transcripts and translation versions were then emailed to the participants for them to check, which helped ensure there were no misinterpretations. I asked a Vietnamese colleague from another university who majored in translation and interpreation to help me with translation versions, especially with the translation of dialect because I wanted to retain the essence of participants' voices. The failure of finding equivalents in English may have resulted in either longer explanatory interpretations of the collected data or intact Vietnamese originals followed by literal English translation. I also asked other colleagues and my supervisors for help with the translation of culturally situated words and phrases to maintain the essence of participants' responses.

Thematic analysis was employed in the first round of analysis which allows a process of moving from open coding to the development of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, to promote fruitful data interpretation, my analysis moved between inductive thematic analysis (analysis without attempting to fit the data in a predetermined coding frame) and deductive thematic analysis (injection of CHAT-based analysis). By using thematic analysis, I could gain insights and knowledge from the participants' perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of qualitative data analysis as set out in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase	Description
1. Familiarising with data	- Transcribing and translating 3 of the transcripts - Reading the transcriptions and noting down initial ideas - Writing initial stories of the participants - Re-reading the data and identifying rich examples from the participants' stories
2. Generating initial codes	- Coding semantically interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the entire data set - Applying data- and theory (CHAT)-driven coding - Collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for subthemes (categories) and themes	- Collating codes into potential subthemes (categories) and themes - Reading the transcripts to identify examples/data relevant to themes and sub-themes
4. Reviewing themes	- Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set - Generating a thematic table of the analysis
5. Defining and naming theme	- Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells - Re-examining the relationship between themes and sub-themes
6. Producing the report	- Selecting vivid, compelling extract examples - Finalising analysis of selected extracts by relating the analysis back to the research question(s) and literature - Translating selected extracts into English - Reporting the analysis in thesis

In phase one, I immersed myself in the data set by reading the Vietnamese transcripts three times to become familiar with and develop an overall understanding of the data. While reading, I highlighted parts of the interviews that might need further elaborations from the participants. Then I stopped reading the Vietnamese transcripts and started reading only the three English translations and input them into NVivo 12 for a coding trial (Belotto, 2018). I realised that this computer-assisted data analysis software could facilitate data storage; however, this might have led me to overlook prosodic features of the conversational language in the interviews, which to me was important in capturing the underlying meaning of what the participants said. Similarly, it appeared that reading only the English translations did not help me analyse the prosodic features such as the participant's voice, intonation, and emotional expressions to decipher their implications. That was why I decided not to utilise a computer-assisted data analysis software and manually developed a research analytic memo which was similar to a codebook (discussed earlier in section 4.7.1). I started reading

the Vietnamese transcripts, listening to the audio recordings, and taking notes at the same time. This approach was time-consuming, yet rewarding because I was coming to understand participants' meanings. If there were incomplete responses and emotional expressions, I contacted the participants for further elaboration. I took notes of my initial ideas and salient patterns to help with generating initial codes in the second phase. After that I wrote draft stories for each of the participants that explicitly incorporated CHAT components such as tool, rule, and division of labour. Unfortunately, this approach appeared to be premature and I struggled to connect with my thematic analysis. The draft stories were unnecessarily wordy and lengthy, and failed to highlight the chronology of the participants' experiences which was the essence of CHAT-based analysis of culturality and historicity. I finally developed participants' profiles as currently in section 6.2 after multiple editing and re-reading the data to enrich these stories to further understand participants' sociocultural and historical perspectives of language learning and teaching. These profiles implicitly embedded CHAT components.

In phase two, I generated initial codes that were both data- and theory-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Examples included *motivation to study a FL*, *external influence in learning a FL and becoming a FL teacher*, *the image of former teachers and learning*, and so on. To keep the essence of the participants' voices, I coded in English directly from the Vietnamese transcripts. I noted down relevant contextual hints such as time and sociopolitical context of schooling. In addition, the theory-driven coding was applied in phase two. I generated the codes from the data, for example, two open codes of *student-student emotional closeness* and *collegial closeness* were initially categorised under the theoretically driven code of *affective beliefs*. Then I reviewed and revised these codes in the context of my data to ensure they were contextually meaningful. I created the code *collectivist orientation*, a subconcept based on the cultural feature of collectivism. However, this code of *collectivist orientation* did not adequately emphasise the emotional perspective explicitly or implicitly contained in participants' words. I revised this code as *collective harmony* and I reviewed the data for further examples for this code. Finally, to check the credibility of this code, I discussed the examples with my supervisors.

In phase three, codes were collated into potential subthemes (categories) with relevant data examples. The subthemes, for example motives for learning and teaching a FL and early access to a FL and familial apprenticeship of observation, were then collated into themes such as genesis of beliefs about FL teaching (see Appendix 11). The reviewing of subthemes and themes followed in phase four. I re-examined each subtheme and theme and its data extracts to ensure the coherence.

If not coherent, I would consider creating a new subtheme or theme, or replacing codes or extracts into other subthemes or themes. This iterative process was repeated for the data set. In this study, phases two, three, and four were repeated until the completion of phase five. Phase five involved ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis told. In this phase, I aligned refined themes with the research questions and re-examined the relationship between subthemes and themes. The final phase came later and involved the integration of the analysis of the wider data (e.g., policy and curriculum documents and classroom observations) and the outcomes were Chapters 5, 6, and 7 where I strove to meet the criteria of being concise, coherent, and logical (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For the deductive analysis, I analysed the data against pre-determined coding frame and categories (e.g., those reported in the literature) such as teacher role, student role, resources used, assessment requirements, views of teaching, views of learning, and teacher-student interaction. Importantly, a list of questions based on the CHAT framework was used, which helped identify key issues from participants' responses (see section 4.7.5 below) and analysed them into CHAT components (i.e., subject, object, tool, rule, community, and division of labour). Although an interview protocol with prompt questions was used in the interviews with participants, their responses varied due to their different life experiences in relation to English language teaching and learning. Sample questions for data analysis at this stage included: What were the participants' views on the tools, object(s), rules, community, and division of labour regarding teaching activity? What were their views on effective teaching practice? What were the sociocultural and political factors that affected their teaching beliefs? What was their apprenticeship of observation? How were their teaching beliefs historically and culturally shaped? The results of the intergrated approach to reporting the thematic analysis and the analysis of CHAT elements are reported on in detail in Chapters 6 and 7 where CHAT and thematic analyses were incorporated in headings and subheadings.

4.7.3. Analysis of classroom observations

The analysis of observations was conducted in the same manner as that of interviews. Full descriptive reports of classroom observations were read in a repeated manner for emerging themes and to assure the authenticity of the interpretation. They were then analysed using thematic analysis. The stories of what had happened in the classrooms observed were re-told in a true and faithful manner to ensure authenticity and initial codes (e.g., use of textbook tasks or additional learning materials) were generated before the themes (e.g., appropriation of tools) were found, reviewed, and defined. Detailed descriptions of the lessons observed included teachers' attire, the

classroom physical arrangement, the appropriation of prescribed coursebooks, teachers' and students' tasks, the use of L1 and L2, and the teaching methods used. A CHAT framework guided the analysis of observational data. The report of findings was then produced.

4.7.4. Analysis of artefacts

Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019) was used to analyse the artefacts (e.g., the government policy and legal documents, MoET's guidelines and policy documents, the institutional documents). This provided an overall picture of the Vietnamese HE context because sociocultural and political factors were embedded within official regulations and related to the issues under research (Figure 4.2). Relevant documents were read through twice and coded according to a pre-established set of categories (Silverman, 2011), which included the role of HE in the Vietnamese context, the teachers' and students' roles and responsibilities, key initiatives and imperatives in the Vietnamese HE, the roles and responsibilities of management staff, the tools used in teaching and learning, the objectives of the instructional process, the community involved in teaching and learning, and the rules regulated by the government, MoET, and HE institutions. Emerging categories were added to the coding scheme (e.g., the sociopolitical positioning of the teaching profession, the teachers' professional identities mentioned in the documents, the partnership as part of the teaching learning community). Then the documents were re-read to ensure other relevant information was not overlooked. Findings from the analysis of artefacts are presented in Chapter 5 to provide a comprehensive picture of the social, cultural, and political context of teaching and learning at tertiary level in Vietnam. The artefacts were analysed at least three times, before the first-round interviews for prompts, after the classroom observations to understand the divergent categories between what was required in the policy documents and the classroom practice, and after second round interviews to further understand participants' teaching practices.

Figure 4.2

The process of content analysis of artefacts
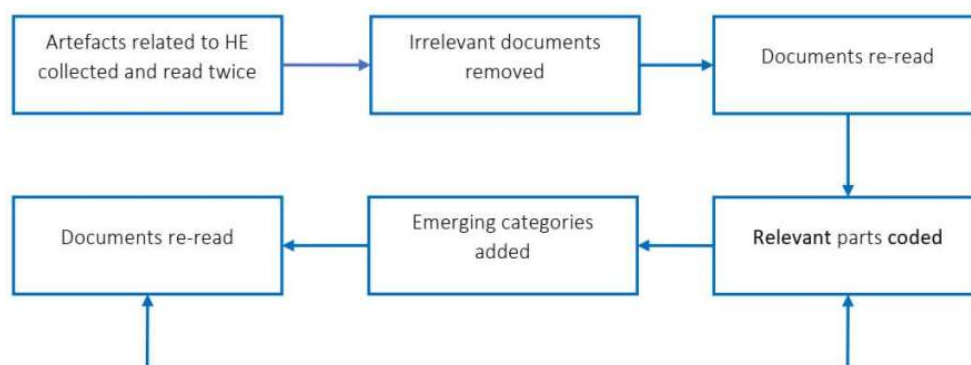
4.7.5. Conducting a CHAT analysis

To identify AS while investigating Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices from their stories through interviews, classroom observations, and the analysis of documents, Yamagata-Lynch's (2010) activity systems analysis was adapted (Figure 4.3). This was because in this activity theory case study, I was a storyteller (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) and an interpreter who provided readers with "good raw material for their own generalizing" (Stake, 1995, p. 102). The unit of analysis is the EFL teaching activity of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers.

According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), the process of identifying AS begins with the researcher's examination of the collected data to shape stories from the participants. Step two is to write narratives about how participants' beliefs have been shaped through their prior teaching and learning. In this step, the researcher ensures a thick description of the data is maintained by paying close attention to the codes from data analysis. In step three, the researcher drafts AS models based on the narratives. In step four, the identified series of AS and the narratives will be compared to determine possible discrepancies or any piece of information that needs further attention. Identifying AS is an iterative process that requires multiple stages of revisions, so the researcher should continually go back and forth between the narratives and the drafted AS to make sure that all emerging themes from the data are obtained. In step five, the analysis of both the narratives and AS is electronically finalised (e.g., by using Microsoft Visio), a diagramming and vector graphics application (as suggested by Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Steps six to eight, which are conducted from a CHAT perspective, are to examine finalised narratives and AS and identify substantiated findings before sharing these with the participants for member checking purposes and for communicating research findings to a wider audience.

Figure 4.3

Steps taken to identify participants' narratives and AS (adapted from Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 91)
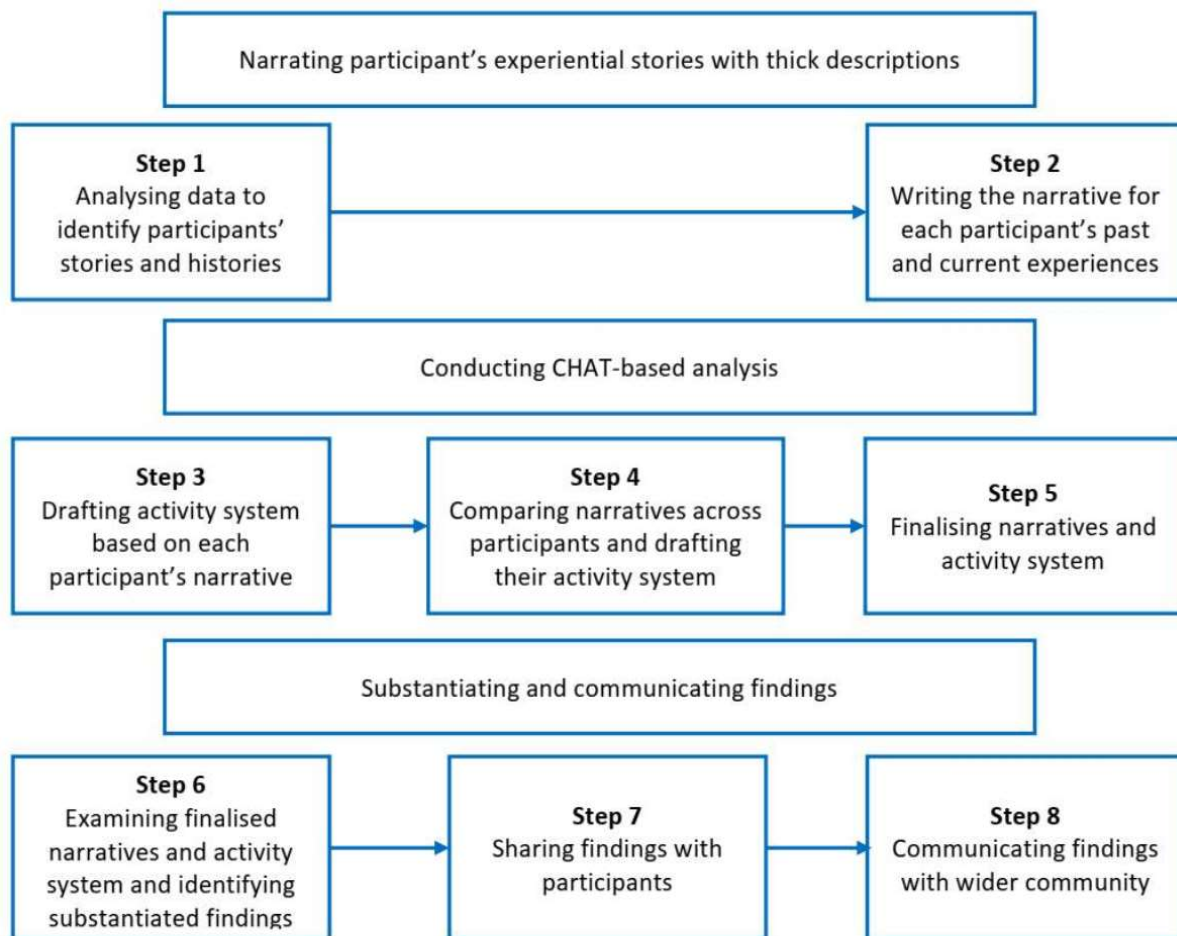
For the current study, key components of the teaching AS (subjects, objects, tools/artefacts, community, rules, and division of labour) were identified through both interview and observational data. A set of guidelines was used to prompt the analysis of the teaching AS (Table 4.3). The CHAT analysis aimed to reveal how its components interconnect and interact with each other. Accordingly, inherent tensions and contradictions were highlighted both within and between teaching AS (e.g., teachers' espoused beliefs about EFL teaching and their observed teaching AS). Therefore, the CHAT analysis of teaching AS provided a deeper understanding of what, how, and why such teaching practices took place, of the multiple voices regarding the teaching of the same subject areas, and of the roles of different agents engaging in the wider institutional AS at RedStar.

Table 4.3

Process followed in analysing the EFL teaching AS at RedStar

Components	Elaborations
Tools/ Artefacts	• National directive guidelines and documents (e.g., Education Law, Law on Higher Education, University Charter, institutionally operated training programmes); • Instructional resources (e.g., prescribed coursebooks, reference resources, online learning sources; institutional facilities, teachers' handouts, students' homework, and other materials).
Subject(s)	• Individual teachers
Object(s) and outcomes	• Improve students' language knowledge and skills; • Prepare students for tests and exams; • Improve students' knowledge of target culture; • Improve students' communicative competence for future use in employment and real life; • Nurture moral and ethical codes in educational settings; • Meet national requirements for graduates.
Rules	• Formal national and institutional policies, regulations, and guidelines; • Teachers' and students' positive attitudes toward teaching and learning; • Fulfilling requirements for training programme; • Students' regular attendance and cooperative learning; • Emotional bond with colleagues and students in teaching learning process; • Other informal rules (e.g., collegiality, culturally collective harmony) that affect teaching practice.
Community	• Institutional community: teachers (of various social and academic backgrounds and beliefs), colleagues, management staff, university administrators, students; • Teachers' personal lives: family members (e.g., what kinds of support they provide, culturally strong commitment to education of children in the family), what is expected of the teacher as a family member; • Wider societal community: social demands, connections with other social organisations, the government, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET).
Division of labour	• What is expected of teachers: legitimate roles, duties, and responsibilities (e.g., teaching, doing research, connection with students, role model, qualifications and PLD); • What is expected of students: legitimate roles and responsibilities (e.g., maintaining appropriate codes of conduct, continuous learning and self-training), regular attendance of lessons, cooperative learning, active and supportive attitude toward learning; • What is expected of relevant parties: the government and MoET (e.g., strategic educational development plans, policies regarding teaching, learning, and teachers' material life), university management staff (e.g., regulations and policies regarding teaching and learning facilities, teachers' mental and financial incentives).

4.8. Ethical procedures and considerations

This study adhered to the ethical rules and regulations concerning social research. First, this study followed the research guidelines of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) and those of Victoria University of Wellington. I applied for ethical approval from Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 13). Then I contacted and sent an invitation email to the teachers in the Faculty of English at RedStar in Vietnam to invite their voluntary participation in the study (see Appendix 1). An information sheet setting out the purpose, methods, what was being asked of participants, that they would not be identified in the research reports and their rights to decline or to withdraw was provided to the potential participants before I collected the data (see Appendices 14 & 15).

Many scholars have raised the issues of ethical conduct of social research and ethical (the right to privacy) and scientific (the right to knowledge) dilemmas (Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2017; Gregory, 2003; Kvale, 2007; Yin, 2014). To deal with these dilemmas, I first obtained informed voluntary consent from the teacher participants and students (see Appendices 16 & 17). The answers by teacher participants to any or all questions were treated with the strictest possible confidence. Personal privacy was protected using pseudonyms and careful processing of identifiable information. I worked to ensure that none of the participants could be identified through the descriptions and interpretations of the data. Those participants who agreed to take part in the research were able to withdraw at any time by simply informing me via email or telephone, without needing to provide any explanation. The archive of the data analysis was encrypted, which would be accessible only to the researcher. The artefacts used in the classroom and field notes of observations were either photographed or scanned and stored in a password-required folder on the computer, and so were the audio files of the interviews.

I ensured everything involved in the research had been made clear both orally and in written form so that the participants took part in the interviews willingly and fully informed (Gregory, 2003). The participants were provided with a clear explanation of the procedure and organisation of the interview (Cohen et al., 2017) before the interviews. During the interviews, I did not express my biases and values both verbally and non-verbally by avoiding any expression of judgment. I was aware that some information in the interviews might be culturally, socially, and perhaps politically sensitive; therefore, at certain points I sought each interviewee's voluntary consent to continue. I ensured the participants that sensitive social, cultural, and political aspects of the information provided in the interviews would be treated in a way that did not harm them (Olson, 2010). The

following sections explain how I minimised the power relationship between the participants and myself as a researcher in this Vietnamese context.

Pronominal reference in interviews with Vietnamese participants

In Vietnamese culture, the quality of the interviews may be attributed to the extent to which the interviewer is accustomed with the pronominal reference (Nguyen, 2015a; Szymanska-Matusiewicz, 2014). Vietnamese society is influenced by Confucianism in which power relationships are a characteristic custom in everyday social life (Truong, 2013) and human interactions mediated by the Vietnamese language are greatly impacted by the markedness of personal pronouns (Szymanska-Matusiewicz, 2014). In daily conversations, Vietnamese people are aware of pronominal reference to maintain societal order. Vietnamese society has been identified as one with a large power distance (Hofstede, 2011) in which hierarchical social order is favoured regardless of the professional and social status one may have. Additionally, the address system in the Vietnamese language is relational, which clearly reflects the interrelationship or kinship of the interlocutors (Chew, 2011; Lenz, 2003). One is supposed to address the interlocutor by carefully referring to his or her social or professional position, which is complicated. Therefore, in interviews with the Vietnamese participants, a researcher should be aware of the complicated pronominal reference so as not to be impolite and disrespectful towards those interviewed.

In the context of me as a researcher who interviewed my participants, I could have obtained higher qualifications than one who taught me many years ago while in the university, yet in daily conversations or interviews with him or her, I would still have to address him or her as "*thầy/cô*" (teacher) and myself "*em*". For other older colleagues who may have lower qualifications than I do, I would still address them as "*anh/chị*" and myself as "*em*". For younger ones, the pair "*mình – bạn*" (interviewer – interviewee) applies. I avoided using "*tôi*" to address myself because this can be considered too formal in a sociocultural closeness in the Vietnamese context of interpersonal interactions. The use of "*tôi*" might face implicit rejections of address on the part of the interviewee, most likely felt by their being reluctant in answering the questions. I was aware that, in the worst case, the rejection of terms of address on the part of the participant might eventually lead to the destruction of researcher–informant relations during the fieldwork (Szymanska-Matusiewicz, 2014). Additionally, I remained cognisant that Vietnamese people are likely to provide short and simple responses to questions asked (Nguyen, 2015a). I had to contact the participants via email or telephone if I needed further clarification or elaboration on such answers.

Regarding ethical procedures according to common western approaches, much paperwork must be done before conducting the research, including developing information sheets for the participants, consent forms, and confidentiality agreements, which requires a formal approach. This approach was not as effective in the Vietnamese context of interviews where formality might destroy the effectiveness and quality of the interviews. In other words, an informal approach with casual attitudes was effective regarding interviewing the Vietnamese participants in social research (Nguyen, 2015a).

When interviewing Vietnamese participants in her study on the Vietnamese perceptions of *face*, Nguyen (2015a, 2015b, 2015c) and Pham T. H. N. (2007, 2011, 2014, 2018) applied a culturally informal approach that consisted of four major measures: establishing a good relationship, bearing in mind that *face* is an important concern on the part of the participants, being aware of a lack of elaboration in participants' responses, and being an 'insider' while interviewing. Accordingly, I tried to maintain direct face-to-face contact with my participants, which appeared the most effective way to build a good relationship with them. Unlike people in western cultures who may be comfortable with relationship-building contact via emails or phone calls, Vietnamese people may prefer real-life contact, especially "if the people, by age or by professional position, are in a position of respect in society or a senior in comparison with the persons who contact them" (Nguyen, 2015a, p. 39). Second, I was aware of the feeling of losing *face* on the part of my participants, which is culturally significant in conversations or interviews with Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese people often count on a general example to talk about what they really think. Therefore, I applied Nguyen's (2015a) effective technique by depersonalising the questions in interviews or making the questions less personal. For example, instead of asking the interviewee how they would act in a certain circumstance by using a singular 'you' (*bạn / cô / thầy*), I would use passive voice or a collective 'people' (*mọi người / người ta*). Third, in interviews with Vietnamese people, I was aware of the cultural habit that they might not provide further elaborations on their answers. The simple assumption was that the answer was too clear for the insiders, hence, further elaboration was not necessary. Finally, to be effective in interviews with Vietnamese people, I acted as an 'insider' because Vietnamese people might consider one to be in an 'ingroup' or 'outgroup' (Hofstede, 2011; House et al., 2004; Yum, 1988) which is influenced by social categorisation of *us* and *them* (Brown et al., 2006). The 'ingroup' people tend to build long-term relationships among them and often share linguistic codes different from the 'outgroup' people (Yum, 1988). In this regard, Vietnamese people

tend to be more open to insiders than outsiders or strangers; therefore, I was willing to share with the interviewee during the interview. This sharing can be through language or professional roles or even the ethnic-cultural group to which the interviewer belongs. When interviewing her participants, Nguyen (2015a) intentionally expressed that she shared the role of a teacher, or a mother, or a female with the interviewees, which helped her strengthen the interviewer–interviewee bond and obtain more reliable data.

The concept of *face* should be the central focus in interpersonal interactions in a Confucian society such as Vietnam (Nguyen, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Pham, 2007, 2014). Unlike the Western conceptualisation of *face* which is about the individual's wish for approved of, the concept of *face* by Vietnamese people might exist on the condition of public judgment which is beyond an individuals' control (Pham, 2014). Public judgment can be on knowledge (Nguyen, 2015b) or by gender discrimination (Nguyen, 2015c). Therefore, in the interviews with Vietnamese participants, I was aware of the fact that the interviewee might hold the feeling of being judged by the interviewer. Let me clarify this point in the situation where both the interviewer and the interviewee are teachers. In general, teachers are considered noble in Confucian-influenced societies such as Vietnam (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014). They are viewed as the absolute source of knowledge and any failure to express high quality knowledge might lead to a feeling of losing *face* (Nguyen, 2015b). In case the interviewer is the interviewee's former student or assumed to be at the age of the interviewee, the possibility may be that the interviewee is feeling judged regarding knowledge by the interviewer and could try to show off their broad knowledge of the field under investigation. The solution to this situation may be for the interviewer to refer back to the pronominal reference in the Vietnamese language plus contextual/situational non-verbal expressions such as a smiling face and explicit actions and gestures. In my personal case as an interviewer, I used "*Dạ thưa thầy / Dạ thưa cô – Dear teacher*" to address my teacher-aged interviewees. When it came to knowledge-based questions, a lead-in phrase was effective, for example, I used the phrase "*Nếu dạy sinh viên theo cách khác thì sao thầy/cô nhỉ? – What if students are taught in another way, dear teacher?*" In this case, the connotation of collocational "*another way*" can be academically "*a different teaching methodology*", which might help clear the feeling of being judged on the knowledge of teaching methodology from the part of my interviewee.

The feeling of being judged can be more serious when the interviewee is male, as for the current Vietnamese paternalistic society, "*thể diện đàn ông*" (male face) is still operationalised (Nguyen, 2015c). Vietnamese males, especially educated ones, attach great importance to the desire for

social approval regarding their individual competence indicated through their social status and burden-bearing *"trụ cột"* position in the family (Nguyen, 2015c; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Pham, 2007). In the situation where the interviewee was male, I was careful not to make the interviewee feel he was suffering *"mất thể diện"* (face loss) by changing the way the question should be asked. For example, instead of asking "*Cách dạy của thầy/cô có hiệu quả không? – Is your teaching way effective?*" which might imply a face loss if the answer is "No", I used "*Còn cách dạy khác thì sao ạ? – How about other teaching ways?*" The latter question option might trigger a comparison or evaluation between teaching methods known to the interviewee, and thus helped my interpretation at a later stage.

In summary, interviewing is a mode of human communication that helps obtain systematic knowledge of a specific issue (Kvale, 2007). Qualitatively, it is a neutral tool for data collection and an active interpersonal interaction between people, resulting in negotiated and contextual texts (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Different approaches to interviewing serve different research purposes. Although there are theoretical commonalities in the structure of interviewing, I argued that the *hows* and *whats* of interviewing remain socioculturally specific. Therefore, I was well aware of the *hows* of interviewing before accessing my research participants.

4.9. Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the extent to which the research findings are credible and trustworthy. Kvale (2007) position validity as pertaining to the accuracy and truth of a statement. In contrast, other scholars (e.g., Bryman, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) have used the term trustworthiness as a broad term to address validity and reliability in qualitative research. In general, trustworthiness criteria can be operationalied by means of credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Bryman, 2016). To promote trustworthiness in this study, several strategies proposed by Creswell (2013) and Bryman (2016) were applied, as detailed in Table 4.4.

Credibility refers to the confidence of the findings of the research. The credibility has to entail 1) the principles of good practice in which the research is carried out, and 2) the submission of research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for the confirmation that the social world under investigation has been correctly understood (respondent validation or member validation) (Bryman, 2016). Credibility is ensured through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, referential adequacy of raw data, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Table 4.4

Strategies to promote trustworthiness (adapted from Creswell, 2013, pp. 250-252; and Bryman, 2016, p. 301)

Strategies	Purpose
1. Extended fieldwork	To enhance validity
2. Method triangulation	To deal with possibility of data insufficiency
3. Participant feedback/Member checking	To minimise threats of mistranslation and misinterpretation
4. Rich and thick description	To provide a truthful picture of the research context and clear possible misunderstandings
5. Bias clarification	To minimise researcher's bias
6. Peer debriefing	To minimise researcher's bias
7. Use of low-inference descriptors	To enhance inner content interpretive validity

For this study, I employed appropriate techniques to ensure the credibility of findings, including prolonged involvement with the research site, triangulation, and member checking. Sufficient time was invested at the research site to better understand the culture of the community under investigation and build trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), distortions are hard to avoid if the researcher is not accepted as a member of the group or agency being studied. Therefore, I had to make myself familiar with the participants before collecting the data via introductory email. I used triangulation of sources of data (in-depth interviews, class observations, and analysis of artefacts). Member checking was done both informally and formally through continuous consultation. For example, the summary, part of, or full transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants, if requested, for feedback and reaction. I presented initial findings to the participants for feedback or comments.

Transferability means providing a "thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). This is because qualitative research requires depth that emphasises the contextually unique significance of the issues under study (Bryman, 2016). In qualitative case study, thick description provides "the vitality, trauma, and uniqueness of the case" (Stake, 2006, p. 83). As discussed earlier in the section 4.7, I provided a thick description (rich

accounts), which was a database for possible judgments about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux (Bryman, 2016).

Dependability is qualitatively understood as reliability. In general, reliability in social sciences is problematic simply because human behaviour is never static (Merriam, 1988). The most useful technique to ensure dependability is to adopt an 'auditing' approach (Bryman, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By keeping an audit trail, the researcher will easily access the research records during the research process – problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, and so on (Bryman, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that by demonstrating credibility, dependability can be ensured. Therefore, techniques such as triangulation and member checking can be used to maintain dependability of qualitative research. For this study, I employed multiple sources of data;, hence, reliability was established. In member checking, the participants were provided with the initial findings and interpretations for feedback and comments. They were asked to check if these initial findings or interpretations were credible. The initial findings and interpretations were presented to colleagues for comments. In addition, I used a reflexive journal to keep track of my thought processes during the study (Given, 2008) (discussed in section 4.6.2.4).

Confirmability refers to the extent to which an inquiry reflects its neutrality. It pertains to the inquirer's objectivity. The researcher should act in 'good faith' and maintain an impersonal stance in conducting the research (Bryman, 2016). In this study, I attempted to reduce the bias by clarifying my assumptions and theoretical views before data collection and analysis. As a teacher of English who has been both domestically and internationally trained, I was aware of possible biasing assumptions including epistemological and pedagogical beliefs, teaching approaches, personal views on institutional factors affecting effective teaching practices, cross-cultural understandings in teaching a FL, and different teaching styles. I tried to make interviews and classroom observations comfortable for the participants. During the research process from research design, data collection, category development to data analysis and interpretation, I sought insightful and critical feedback from my supervisors.

Therefore, the conclusions I made in this study were generalised within the sociocultural and historical setting of EFL teaching at RedStar because the aim of the study was to work with a relatively small number of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers to obtain in-depth understanding of their perspectives and their practices during the time of the study (Cohen et al., 2017). In other

words, the current CHAT-based case study emphasised particularisation (Stake, 1995; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

4.10. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the rationale for the employment of a qualitative case study with three methods of data collection, namely individual in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and artefacts (e.g., government and institutional guiding documents, teaching materials). Information about the research site and participants has been provided. A total of 18 individual in-depth interviews and eighteen 90-minute classroom observations were conducted. Ethical issues have been discussed in detail, especially the socioculturally appropriate approach to interview and observation in the Vietnamese context. The chapter has described the process of data analysis, justifying the application of a thematic analysis approach, AS analysis method (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010), and other relevant perspectives of analysing the qualitative data from both interviews and classroom observations. Finally, the chapter has discussed the trustworthiness of the study using method triangulation of data collection and the strategies to ensure credibility of the study. Chapters 5 and 6 present the results of the study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings from this research. This chapter analyses the Vietnamese governments' and RedStar's foreign language education activities that oriented participants' English teaching activity. It highlights the political, cultural, and historical implications of governmental directive documents such as the Education Law, the government's documents on education and language instruction, and MoET's directives relevant to the current study. The chapter then describes the institutional political and historical contexts at RedStar within which the participants' English teaching activity was bound based on institutional documents such as the institutional guiding administrative documents, the curriculum, and the unit descriptions for subject areas.

5.1. Government's and MoET's foreign language education activity

The analysis of government policy documents revealed important elements of government activity in relation to higher education and foreign language education. The government's and MoET's joint activity was mediated by the demand for the country's economic development and global integration, the current low proficiency of Vietnamese English learners, the need for foreign language education reform, and the investment in education (Figure 5.1). In this activity, the policymakers and MoET's management were the subjects operating toward the object of making advanced foreign language policies and improving the quality of foreign language teaching and learning. This, in turn, helped produce competent foreign language users with prominent English users and a skilled labour force who demonstrated *Đức* (morals or ethics) and *Tài* (professional knowledge or talent). *Đức* is sociopolitically defined in policy documents as "*đạo đức cách mạng*" (revolutionary morality) or "*phẩm chất chính trị*" (political qualities). Therefore, *Đức* and *Tài* can be nuances of "*Hồng*" (Red) and "*Chuyên*" (Expert), which represent the harmony between the revolutionary morality and professional knowledge expected of the government employees.

However, this joint activity seemed to be "*bình mới rượu cũ*" (old wine in new bottles) (Nguyen, Le, & Barnard, 2015), whereby there was an addition of one new rule of importing foreign language education policy. Notably, sociopolitical ideologies with prominent Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology and sociocultural norms and values were the guiding rules.

Important outcomes concerning improving foreign language quality were the Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam (VFLC –- 2014) and the National Foreign Language Competency Framework (NFLC – 2017). These were adopted from the Western-developed CEFR, which was then locally appropriated by MoET and became a tool for HE institutions in their activity.

Although Vietnamese HE institutions have been legislated to be financially and academically autonomous to some extent, they still have to follow the rules set by the government. The community in the government–MoET's joint activity did not include teachers' and students' voices. The following sections provide an outline of the governmental activity system.

Figure 5.1

Government's and MoET's English language education activity
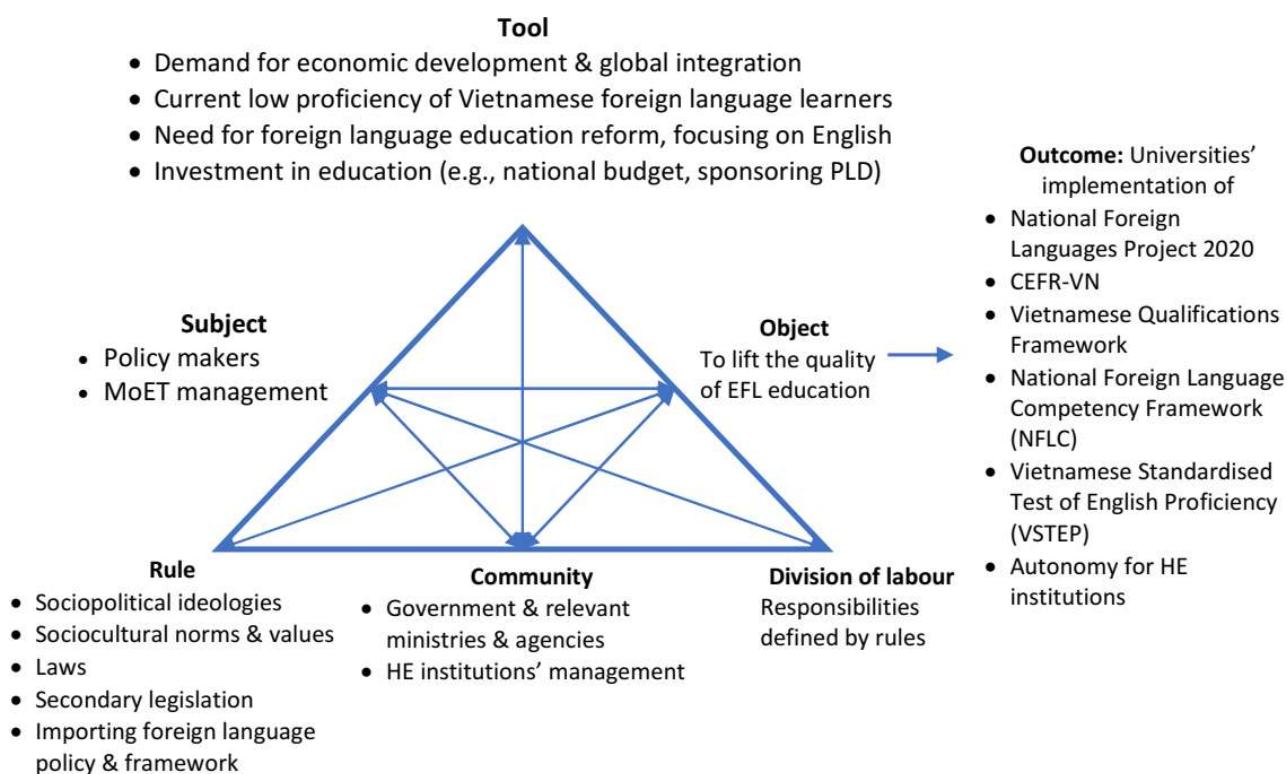
5.1.1. Mediating artefacts in government foreign language education activity

5.1.1.1. The need for higher education reform

The Vietnamese higher education (HE) system consists of different types of training institutions: colleges, universities and academies, provincial and national universities, institutes for scientific research, and foreign-invested universities. According to the Law on Higher Education (The National Assembly, 2018), the HE system is composed of state-owned public (state invested) and private institutions (domestic or foreign investors). The government encourages private and foreign sectors to invest in HE and provides ongoing support for public institutions to ensure key internal roles in reforms. In 2019, there were 237 universities and tertiary institutions (172 public, 60 private, and five foreign-invested universities). Of these, 154 offered teacher training programs (Thuy Linh, 2019) and 150 universities and tertiary institutions and nine colleges were audited as consistent with

national and international training quality (150 trường, 2021). By the end of 2020, there were approximately 1.7 million tertiary students in Vietnam (Thong Nhat, 2020).

HE has long been recognised as the driving force for Vietnam's development and enhanced competitiveness in the current global knowledge-based economy. Since the country's 1986 economic reform (*Đổi Mới*), Vietnamese HE has undergone ongoing reforms. These reforms aim to train students with political and moral qualities, professional skills, and a high competence in research, applied science, and technology to serve the Vietnamese people and the country's modernisation and internationalisation (The National Assembly, 2018). This objective indicates the Vietnamese government's strong commitment to developing Vietnam into a knowledge society navigating toward the global development trend. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the HE quality is questionable, especially the low quality of foreign language education (Nguyen, N. H., 2013a, 2013b; Nguyen, Hamid & Renshaw, 2016). Therefore, reform is pivotal.

5.1.1.2. Investment in PLD

Evident in Vietnamese HE policies were several key imperatives regarding professional development to enhance the quality of foreign language education (The Prime Minister, 2014). First, improving the quality and quantity of teaching staff would effectively contribute to the success of HE reform. Second, the policy documents associated lecturers' postgraduate qualifications with improved teaching quality. The Vietnamese government's issuance of funding policies to develop teaching staff, internationally and domestically, via joint programmes showed their commitment to enhancing lecturers' professional performance, hence quality in an internationalised context. Third, the investment has increased yearly for the last decade in the government's attempt to boost quality in response to the internationalisation of HE. Additionally, this investment was through the socialisation of HE. Socialisation in the Vietnamese refers to financial sharing in education, yet with government control over governance and learning content (Tran et al., 2014).

To boost the quality of HE, the Vietnamese government and MoET put in place an ambitious plan to train 20,000 PhDs in various industries by 2020 (The Prime Minister, 2010). For the last decade, the Vietnamese government has continued its effort to enhance quality by focusing on training university and college lecturers. Decision 599/QĐ-TTg in 2013 aimed to train cadres in foreign countries and Decision 89/QĐ-TTg in 2019 to enhance the capacity of lecturers and management staff in institutions. In the current reform of quality and to boost international integration, policymakers focus on "training a highly-skilled labour force, nurturing talents, developing skills for independent learning in learners, and inspiring learners to self-educate to enrich knowledge and

promote creativity" (The Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 2013, p. 4). Based on this government guideline, MoET further defined HE quality as meeting the pre-defined objectives of an institution and in line with human resource training demands for national and local socioeconomic developments (MoET, 2014b). In addition, for the last decade, teacher training courses for in-service English teachers from primary, secondary, and tertiary levels have aimed to improve the teachers' professional skills, hence enhancing the quality of foreign language education. To standardise the qualifications, English teaching staff are offered test preparation courses.

The improved quality of the national education system is believed to have been brought about by the government's investment in education. Financially, Article 96 of the 2019 Education Law, for example, stipulates that a minimum of 20% of the country's annual national budget is reserved for education. The government's legislation determines the central effort on educational financing, the instrumental importance of which is *"xã hội hóa giáo dục đại học"* (socialisation of HE) with the involvement of different social stakeholders. By socialisation, the government focuses on the investment in education of different stakeholders in society. However, the socialisation of education must not be politically mistaken for marketisation or commercialisation of education which is banned in the government's legal documents on education. As far as the market-oriented economy has penetrated various sociocultural aspects, the socialisation of education still bears political implications, which needs more nuanced research in the future if comprehensive HE reforms are to happen.

5.1.2. Rules for foreign language education reform

5.1.2.1. Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology – a political mediator

Vietnam is a one-party nation with the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) steering the country toward socialism. Socialism in Vietnam, principally based on Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, has a significant role in the drafting of government policy documents. Although Vietnam is a socialist republic nation, the term socialism is a complex one, and so is the socialist orientation in the government policy documents (St George, 2005). This section elaborates on the adoption of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology in the policy documents directly related to HE in Vietnam. A picture is provided of the legal framework within which the HE activity system operates.

Education and training at all levels must accord with the socialist path delineated by the VCP. Politically, all educational and training activities must be guided by Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, which are explicitly grounded in the Education Law. The formation of the Education

Law was based on dominant paradigms of Marxist-Leninist theory and the long-established Confucian experience of the government leaders (St George, 2005). References to Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, and the political role of the Vietnamese Communist Party can be found in current policy documents such as law on education (The National Assembly, 2005, 2018). These references have been made explicitly instrumental despite significant amendments since the first passing of the Education Law in 1998. In addition, the Education Law has reiterated its socialist orientation by assigning the aim of education to building a socialist Vietnam and educating Vietnamese people to be socialist citizens. However, characteristics of these citizens are not clearly defined.

The 2018 Education Law explicitly refers to Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology. Article 3 of this law reinforces that education is a socialist education based on Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology. However, the '*how*' of socialist education is not clearly ratified. The objective of general education is defined in Article 29 to form the socialist Vietnamese personality in preparation for further education, employment, or defending the Fatherland. Article 58 recaps the leading role of the organisation of the VCP within schools (often referred to as a Party cell). In addition, referenced in Article 5 of the 2018 Higher Education Law is the aim of higher education to educate learners who have ethics and political qualities. However, political qualities were not clearly specified. Article 13 of the same law stipulates the establishment and operation of the organisation of the VCP in HE institutions, even though it does not explicitly emphasise the leadership of such an organisation.

Therefore, the curricula or training programmes of HE institutions must reserve a significant number of credits on subject areas related to Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology. Analysis of RedStar's guiding documents showed that five credits are allocated for "Basic principles of Marxism and Leninism", two for "Ho Chi Minh's Ideology", and three for "Revolutionary strategies of the Vietnamese Communist Party". All are compulsory and must be taught at the commencement of any HE programme. Article 36 of the 2018 Higher Education Law stipulates that the instructional materials for these subjects are designed and imposed by MoET. Imperatively, failing these subjects results in delayed graduation from the university.

At this point, it is critical to discuss the Confucian values, "*nhân*" (humanness), "*nghĩa*" (righteousness), "*lễ*" (ritual propriety), "*trí*" (wisdom), "*tín*" (trustworthiness), "*trung*" (loyalty), and "*hiếu*" (piety), which are inherent in the highest legislation of education. Although the terms referring to these values may vary in the literature, they have similar meanings. Article 2 of the 2019

Education Law, for example, specifies that the aim of education is to educate Vietnamese into comprehensively developed citizens who possess human ethics (righteousness, ritual propriety, trustworthiness, piety), knowledge (wisdom), patriotism (humanness), and loyalty to the ideology of national independence and socialism (loyalty and piety). The purposeful retaining of Confucian values into the highest legislation in education originated from Ho Chi Minh's thought upon the founding of socialist Vietnam in 1945 (Nguyen, T. N., 2019). In his teaching to the Vietnamese communist cadres, Ho Chi Minh called for "loyalty to the country, piety to the people."

For Ho Chi Minh, the educational content must educate *"đạo đức cách mạng"* (revolutionary morality) for our cadres (Nguyen M. T. et al., 2020). The aim of education is to form and develop new socialist people who have *"đức"* (morals or ethics) and *"tài"* (professional knowledge or talent) to serve the Fatherland and the people. To fulfil the country's educational goal, the teachers, who are at the front line, must "have good moral qualities and excellent professional qualifications; a passion for the job and a sense of self-respect; focus on good combination between teaching behaviors and teaching knowledge; be excellent in politics, ideology, always keep the standards in words and actions, to really be a good example for students to follow" (Nguyen et al., 2020, p. 1023). These criteria for the teachers are clearly stated in the Vietnamese Education Law, which requires teachers to possess *"phẩm chất chính trị"* (political qualities) (The National Assembly, 2018).

The formulation of the highest legislation in education mirrors the theoretical importance of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, which is based on and oriented toward socialism and building a socialist state and people. Confucian values are purposefully retained in the drafting of the Vietnamese Education Law. Effectively, the objective realities of Vietnamese education are interwoven by daily social interactions, interpersonal relationships, and Confucian values (Pham, D. N, 2005; St George, 2005).

5.1.2.2. Importing foreign language education framework

The government adopted the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a core guideline for innovating the country's foreign language education. This framework was seen as the ultimate guideline for language education and measuring and assessing language proficiency at a micro-political level.

The CEFR was finalised and launched in 2001 by the Council of Europe after 10 years of discussions, meetings and consultations (Trim, 2011). The framework is based on positive *can-do* statements, showing what language learners can do during their learning process, and helps to distinguish three different level groups of language users: basic (A1 and A2), independent (B1 and B2), and proficient

(C1 and C2) (Trim 2011) (Appendix 18). Level groups are based on the language users' lexical, syntactical, and discourse mastery. Accordingly, A1 and A2 users are competent with the target language in terms of routine matters and can communicate in most direct contexts of exchange such as personal information, family, or work. B1 and B2 users are competent with both input and output on familiar matters such as work, school, leisure, and entertainment with a degree of fluency. C1 and C2 users competently deal with fluent and spontaneous expressions and can understand the implicit meaning of the exchanges of information.

Although the CEFR can be regarded as the global scale for reference, it is not a language-specific guideline because it can be used with the teaching and learning of any language (Pearson Longman, n.d.). By linking to the CEFR, the policy makers and curriculum designers can set up objectives and language proficiency levels in a specific course (Figueras, 2012; Trim, 2011). Hence, classroom teaching and learning can be linked to the global scale of the CEFR. For example, based on the CEFR scale, language teachers can decide on what language skills and abilities to focus during their teaching and language learners are aware of the optimal level to achieve. The advantages are that CEFR provides a clear reference of levels, sets up realistic learning targets, and relates the learning outcomes of the previous level to the next (Figueras, 2012; Trim, 2011). The consensus among professionals is that the CEFR is action-oriented and context-specific, serving as a guideline, the amendments of which are necessary for different stakeholders (Figueras, 2012; Little, 2005; Maldina, 2015; Trim, 2011). The CEFR is believed to be an effective framework for the design of language syllabuses and curricula, and the development of learning materials and exam guidelines (Council of Europe, 2001). The imposition of CEFR on language policy in Vietnam has been top-down and assumption-based rather than based on contextually appropriate needs analysis (Le, 2020; Le & Barnard, 2019).

Vietnam's Education Laws (The National Assembly, 2005, 2018) stipulate that the HE curriculum content must be modern, advanced, and encompass knowledge of basic science, FL, ICT literacy, and knowledge of specialised subject areas. Article 5 of the Law on Higher Education (The National Assembly, 2018) legitimises that the overall objective of HE is to develop human capital, increase literacy, and foster talent. One duty of the HE system is to implement scientific and technological research to create knowledge and new products for the country's socioeconomic development, national defense and security, and international integration. Universities' and colleges' curricula are developed according to institutional training objectives, which must ensure the interconnection and interoperability between training programmes and levels of study (The National Assembly, 2018).

5.1.3. Teachers' roles and responsibilities

The analysis of national documents provided insights into the cultural values and political stances underpinning the professional status and roles of Vietnamese teachers. For example, Articles 15 and 70 of the Education Law state that teachers have a decisive role in ensuring educational quality (The National Assembly, 2005). The document acknowledges the role of teachers as moral and academic models for students to follow. Articles 15 and 72 of the Education Law (The National Assembly, 2005) state that teachers must study continuously to improve their moral quality, ethics, and professional qualification to set examples for students. As such, teachers have to fulfil their professional responsibilities and adhere to ethical and moral codes. In Article 70 of the Education Law (The National Assembly, 2005), teachers are required to have good moral, mental, and ideological qualifications, the standardised level in the profession, good health as required by the profession, and a clean curriculum vitae.

Article 55 of the Law on Higher Education (The National Assembly, 2018) further defines teachers' responsibilities as learning to improve political theory and pedagogical knowledge to enhance educational quality. Another role in the national documents is that of caregiver. Both Article 55 of the Law on Higher Education (The National Assembly, 2018) and Article 72 of the Education Law (The National Assembly, 2005) stipulate that the teacher takes responsibility to protect students' rights and interests. Teachers are expected to be role models for students, and are responsible for the education of political will, morality, and ideology for students' rights in the teacher education programmes (MoET, 2011).

Furthermore, as civil servants under Vietnamese Laws, teachers must abide by the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (The National Assembly, 2008). Following this, it is regulated that teachers must duly and fully perform tasks and exercise powers as assigned, to abide by institutional rules and regulations, to maintain collective harmony at workplaces, to collaborate in performing tasks, and to strictly observe the Communist Party's line and policies and the State's laws (Articles 8 & 9, Law on Cadres and Civil Servants, The National Assembly, 2008).

The document review demonstrates that the teaching profession is greatly respected and highly esteemed. Teacher's roles are expected and extended beyond academic boundaries to include political and moral models for students. In addition, more focus is placed on cultural and ethical values expected of the teacher than on the teacher's professional identity. In other words, teachers need to be both knowledge providers and personal and professional role models for students in educational settings of all levels of study.

5.1.4. Objects and outcomes

Five important outcomes of the government's foreign languages education activity relevant to EFL activity include the 2008 National Foreign Languages Project 2020 (Project 2020), the promotion of higher education (HE) autonomy since 2014, the 2016 Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF), the 2017 National Foreign Language Competency Framework (NFLC), and the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) between 2015 and 2018. These outcomes are discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.1.4.1. The National Foreign Languages Project 2020

To reform FL education, the government issued Decision 1400 (30 September 2008), the goal of which was to promote a thorough renovation of teaching and learning FL in national curricula of all levels (The Prime Minister, 2008a). In 2010, Project 2020 was launched under the direct supervision and enactment of MoET to realise this declared mission. Project 2020's ambitious goal was to renovate FL education by implementing a new programme across all levels of the national education system. It aimed to increase language competency for Vietnam's human resources by 2015. By 2020, graduates from vocational schools, colleges, and universities were expected to use a FL independently and confidently, which was considered beneficial preparation for further study and future employment, and for the country's industrialisation and modernisation. English is the core of Project 2020 execution. Accordingly, in 2014 six CEFR-based English proficiency levels were enforced in the national education system (MoET, 2014a) (Table 5.1). This Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam (VFLC) is widely known as CEFR-VN (Ngo, 2021; Nguyen, T. N. Q., 2019) (see Appendix 18 for a comparison between CEFR's and CEFR-VN's global scale). However, a common critique was that this framework was a Vietnamised version of the CEFR (Ngo, 2021; Nguyen, Hamid & Renshaw, 2016).

Project 2020 aimed to provide the Vietnamese labour force with a competitive advantage in a highly integrated global labour market. However, it is claimed to be a failure and waste of financial resource because the top-down language-in-education policies did not take into consideration the voices of teachers, students, administrators, and other stakeholders (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2011; Nguyen, X. & Nguyen, 2019). Therefore, there were misalignments between the government's ambitious goals of raising foreign language learners' proficiency and the situational practice of foreign language teaching and learning at educational institutions.

Project 2020's proficiency benchmarks, for example, C1 for university English-major graduates were unachievable (Nguyen & Vu, 2020) and beyond teachers' ability in under-resourced areas (Nguyen,

X. & Nguyen, 2019). At a macro level, Project 2020 is far from success if its reform goals are set by a "centralised and politically deterministic approach" without sufficient theoretical and empirical grounds (Ngo, 2021, p. 118). At a micro level, there was insufficient internalisation of the CEFR's *can-dos* among leaders, administrators, teachers and students, which led to a "reductive and narrow curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching professionalism" (Nguyen, T. M. H. et al., 2018, p. 227).

Table 5.1

Minimum requirements on English proficiency level (MoET, 2014a; the Prime Minister, 2008a)

Vietnam's English proficiency level		CEFR-referenced level	Target groups
Elementary	1	A1	Primary school (grades 1–5) leavers
	2	A2	Secondary school (grades 6–9) leavers
Intermediate	3	B1	• Senior secondary school (grades 10–12) leavers • Non-language college and university graduates • Non-language college and university teachers
	4	B2	• Language college graduates • Primary and junior secondary teachers of English
Advanced	5	C1	• Senior secondary teachers of English • Graduates at language colleges and universities • Language teachers at colleges and universities
	6	C2	N/A

5.1.4.2. Promoting HE autonomy

Decentralisation and autonomy have been promoted in the government's effort to enhance HE quality, which aimed to gradually transfer autonomy and accountability from higher to lower levels (McGinn & Welsh, 1999). Decentralisation and autonomy were documented as an encouraging contributor to innovative management and operation of HE (Dao & Hayden, 2019; Hayden & Lam, 2010; Marklein, 2019; Ngo, 2019a). The analysis of the government directives and policy documents showed that the state-centralised model of HE governance has been gradually transformed toward empowering individual HE institutions. In the decentralisation process as ratified by the government's 2014 Resolution, the 2018 Higher Education Law, the 2019 Education Law, and other governmental documents, HE institutions are in principle autonomous in terms of finance, organisational structure, human resources, and academic issues. Decentralisation and autonomy

are believed by Vietnamese policymakers to empower institutions to address increased social demands for a high-skilled labour force to serve the country, ensure national security, and integrate in the globalised context. Notwithstanding, greater involvement and commitment by political forces in educational decentralisation should be observed for substantial autonomy at institutions. Sociopolitically, however, the concept of "*báo cáo cấp trên*" (report to higher levels) with its inherent Confucian-oriented hierarchy may be an invisible constraint to sufficient decentralisation of HE in the Vietnamese context. Decentralisation should be open for further research for effective HE autonomy. Effectively, the word "*báo cáo*" (report) per se does not bear a negative meaning; it is the reaction by "*cấp trên*" (higher management levels) against *"báo cáo"* that is more important. In addition, the most important element of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, has received little justification from the government bodies, which makes it challenging for the HE institutions in the reform process launched by the government (Tran et al., 2014; Vo & Laking, 2020).

5.1.4.3. Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF)

Another important outcome of the government's higher education reform attempt was the Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (The Prime Minister, 2016). Accordingly, graduate programmes belong to level 6, which must be completed in at least 120 credits. Some of the level 6 study content includes sound practical knowledge, comprehensive and intensive domain knowledge, and fundamental knowledge of social sciences, politics, and laws (Appendix 19). The learning outcomes for level 6 are grouped into three general areas: knowledge, skills, and level of independence and responsibility (The Prime Minister, 2016). However, these learning outcomes are not specified and overlap with the study content. For example, regarding knowledge, the learning outcomes encompass a sound practical knowledge and basic knowledge of social sciences, political science, and laws. To achieve these learning outcomes, the HE curricula are required to contain two groups of knowledge: general knowledge and professional knowledge (MoET, 2007), which are taught via either compulsory learning units or electives. The foreign language proficiency level required of level 6 graduates is B1-CEFR.

5.1.4.4. The National Foreign Language Competency Framework

Under Project 2020, the National Foreign Language Competency Framework (NFLC) was regulated in 2014 and 2015 for FL and non-FL teachers across levels of the national education system (MoET & MHA, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Practically, the competency levels in this framework appeared to be unachievable toward the end of Project 2020. Therefore, under the government's amendments to the national programme for FL teaching and learning from 2017 to 2025 (The Prime

Minister, 2017), changes in FL competency requirements were made (MoET, 2020, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). However, FL competency requirements for public teachers in the 2020 and 2021 policy documents appear to be simplistic and deviate from the 2014 VFLC (Table 5.2). In addition, these changes in FL competency requirements show an inconsistency in drafting FL education policies.

The standardisation of FL competency for government employees at different service levels for the period 2019–2030 is regulated in Decision 1659/QĐ-TTg (The Prime Minister, 2019). Accordingly, ambitious figures are proposed; for instance, by 2025, 50% of the government management staff and 25% of under-40 cadres at provincial and district levels will have a B2 FL competency level 4 (B2). By 2030, these figures will be 60% and 35%, respectively. Staff of other levels (e.g., communal or district level) will have FL competency at level 3 (B1).

Table 5.2

National FL competency requirements for public teachers across levels

Level	Ranking	Qualification		FL competency (2014 & 2015)		FL competency (2020 & 2021)
		2014 & 2015	2020 & 2021	Non-FL teachers	FL teachers	
Primary	1	Information unavailable	Master's degree or higher in teacher education	Information unavailable		Having ability to use a FL or a Vietnamese ethnic language in specific assigned work
	2	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education		- A2 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- A2 in a 2nd FL	
	3	College degree or higher in teacher education	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education			
Junior secondary	1	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education	Master's degree or higher in teacher education	- B1 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- B1 in a 2nd FL	
	2	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education		- A2 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- A2 in 2nd FL	
	3	College degree or higher in teacher education	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education	- A1 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- A1 in 2nd FL	
Senior secondary	1	Master's degree or higher in teacher education		- B1 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- B1 in 2nd FL	
	2 & 3	Bachelor's degree or higher in teacher education		- A2 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- A2 in 2nd FL	
Tertiary	1	Doctoral degree		- B2 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- B2 in 2nd FL	Having ability to use a FL in specific assigned work
	2	Master's degree or higher		- B1 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- B1 in 2nd FL	
	3	Bachelor's degree or higher	Master's degree or higher	- A2 or certificate of a Vietnamese ethnic language	- A2 in 2nd FL	

5.1.4.5. The Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency

Aligned with the CEFR-based national proficiency levels was a radical change in the evaluation policy. Consequently, the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) was commissioned by MoET in 2015 (Appendix 22). The construction of VSTEP involved several key universities in Project 2020 and expanded from 2015 to the end of 2018 to complete levels 1 to 5. This development was made complicated because test formats and content were intended for various target groups (Table 5.3). By the time of this study, VSTEP was still in its development. Together with VFLC, VSTEP was a breakthrough in the standardisation of a national English testing system (Nguyen, T. N. Q., 2019). Before VSTEP, English tests differed from one institution to another and were adopted or adapted from international English test formats such as TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS. The birth and judicious enforcement of VSTEP also put an end to the -decade national system of three-level foreign language tests since 1993, which had no international validation and reference (MoET, 2019).

Table 5.3

The Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency

Proficiency level	CEFR reference	Release year	Target group
VSTEP. 3-5	B1 – C1	2015	Vietnamese learners of English
VSTEP. 3	B1	2016	Senior secondary students
VSTEP. 2	A2	2016	Adult learners
VSTEP. 2	A2	2016	Junior secondary students
VSTEP. 1	A1	2016	Primary students
VSTEP. 1	A1	2018	Vietnamese learners of English

However, problems remain. First, key universities with each responsible for one part in the development of VSTEP are from different areas of the country. This might raise the issue of diverging internalisations or interpretations, hence the institutional application of the CEFR-based VFLC's requirements (Nguyen & Hamid, 2020). As a result, the test items in VSTEP might be situationally unsuitable for students in other areas. Second, at school level, the English tests focused on language knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, and mastery of reading more than on productive skills (Nguyen, X. & Nguyen, 2019). Therefore, the VSTEP's proficiency benchmarks appeared overly ambitious for many Vietnamese learners of English, especially those in under-resourced areas,

because the development of English skills is nonlinear (Nguyen & Duong, 2020). Being a school subject, English is not being learned as a language skill that requires a long process to improve. Nguyen and Duong (2020) argue for further alignment between the English curriculum and the CEFR content so that more time is dedicated to skill training in English.

Table 5.4

VSTEP.3 (B1-CEFR) versus Cambridge PET writing test

	VSTEP.3 (MoET, 2016a)	PET (Cambridge Preliminary English Test 6, 2010)
Part 1	**This task must be completed.** Your friend asked you to go to the supermarket or market to buy something for your class party at the weekend. However you cannot go to the supermarket/market with him/her. Write an email to your friend. In your email, you should - say sorry for not being able to go - tell him/her the reason - suggest another time to go to the supermarket/market Write in **80 -100 words**. Write your answer on a separate answer sheet.	**Questions 1–5** Here are some sentences about a swimming pool. For each question, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. **Use no more than three words.** Write only the missing words on your answer sheet. You may use this page for any rough work. **Example:** **0** There is a new swimming pool in our town. **Our town** .... **a new swimming pool.** **Answer:** 0 has got 1 It's six months since I last went swimming. **I** .... **been swimming for six months.** 2 The new pool is near to my home. **It's not** .... **the new pool to my home.** 3 If you can't swim, you're not allowed in the deep end. **You're not allowed in the deep end** .... **you can swim.** 4 My friend Sam wanted me to go swimming with him. **'Why** .... **come swimming with me?' suggested Sam.** 5 I didn't go swimming with Sam because I was very busy. **I was** .... **busy to go swimming with Sam.**
Part 2	**This task must be completed.** Your English teacher has asked you to write a story. Your story must begin with this sentence: *I was rather shy to talk to her.* Write your story in about **100 - 120 words**. Write your answer on a separate answer sheet.	**Question 6** A TV company came to your school yesterday to make a film. Write an email to your English friend Alice. In your email, you should • explain why the TV company chose your school • tell her who or what they filmed • say when the programme will be shown on television. Write **35–45 words** on your answer sheet.
Part 3	N/A	Write an answer to **one** of the questions (**7** or **8**) in this part. Write your answer in about **100 words** on your answer sheet. Mark the question number in the box at the top of your answer sheet. **Question 7** • This is part of a letter you receive from an English friend. My parents want me to go on holiday with them this summer but I'd prefer to go somewhere with my friends. I have to choose. What do you think I should do? • Now write a letter, giving your friend some advice. • Write your **letter** on your answer sheet. **Question 8** • Your English teacher has asked you to write a story for homework. • Your story must begin with this sentence: As soon as I saw the handwriting on the envelope I smiled. • Write your **story** on your answer sheet.

Third, the analysis of the policy documents regarding English tests revealed an adaptation of the available commercial testing (preparation) materials by well-known publishers such as Cambridge University Press or Longman (Table 5.4). This might be the result of a near translation of the CEFR's *can-do* statements into the development of VSTEP (Ngo, 2021). Finally, there is little empirical evidence on the social impact of the borrowed language policies and their localised adaptations (Ngo, 2021; Nguyen & Hamid, 2020). These researchers argue that the washback effects of such policies are so far mostly from the policy receivers (i.e., education institutions, teachers, and students) with insufficient well-researched evidence from independent policy researchers. To date, almost all validation reports on VSTEP are for internal purposes. Therefore, there is a need for VSTEP to be independently validated for regional and international recognition.

5.2. RedStar's EFL teaching activity

This section analyses RedStar's activity (Figure 5.2). The section first provides an overview of the university's establishment history and organisational structure. It then analyses the components of EFL teaching activity.

The analysis of the university's guiding documents revealed important aspects of the university's activity. This activity was mediated by the government's and MoET's policy documents, the CEFR-VN, the National Foreign Language Competency Framework (NFLC), and the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP). The key subject included the university's management who had to realise the government's and MoET's foreign language reform policies, enhancing the quality of English training, and implementing the government's goal of training a Red, Expert, and skilled labour force to contribute to the country's process of industrialisation, modernisation, and global integration.

Like the government activity, RedStar's activity was governed by laws, and the sociopolitical ideologies of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology. It is also governed by MoET's secondary legislations. The community included the government and its relevant agencies, MoET, and the university's management staff and offices. RedStar's activity objective was to make sure teachers followed university rules and translated CEFR-VN into classroom practice. The important outcome was the VSTEP-based test formats for language skills subjects. Notably, teachers' and students' voices were often absent in the university's decisions on issues such as the curriculum. The following sections highlight important perspectives of RedStar's EFL activity.

Figure 5.2

RedStar's activity

Tool:
- Government and MoET policy documents
- CEFR-VN, NFLC, VSTEP

Subject:
University management

Object
To make sure teachers follow university rules & translate CEFR-VN into classroom practice

Outcome:
Teachers' implementation of CEFR-VN-based teaching and assessment

Rule:
- Laws
- Sociopolitical ideologies
- Secondary legislation
- University administrative decisions & academic requirements
- Sociocultural norms & values
- Rearising government & MoET foreign language education policy

Community:
- MoET
- University management staff & offices
- English faculty management staff & specialised divisions

Division of labour:
Between university management, offices

5.2.1. The establishment history and organisational structure

RedStar is a public university established in the mid-2000s and located in central Vietnam's Beauty City. It is an affiliate of Umbrella University, which consists of nine affiliated universities and one school. RedStar was established by combining the FL faculties of the affiliated universities (Figure 5.3). Umbrella University was established before 1975 by the former Southern Vietnam government and consisted of two faculties. It was then abolished by the united Vietnamese government after 1975 and re-established in the mid-1990s from the existing faculties and colleges in Beauty City. The establishment of Umbrella University was an administrative grouping because the teaching staff and students belong to and are directly recruited by its affiliated universities. By early 2021, it was one of 16 Vietnamese universities eligible to offer training courses and certification about the national FL competency framework under Project 2020 and one of five universities nationally qualified for developing FL test designers (*16 trường*, 2021). RedStar enrols domestic and exchange international students from Laos, Thailand, and China who enrol in short training courses as internship programmes according to the cooperation agreements between the university and its partners in these countries. RedStar is among the country's five key state multi-disciplinary universities, being responsible for training the country's labour force in its industrialisation and modernisation.

Figure 5.3

Umbrella University's Affiliations
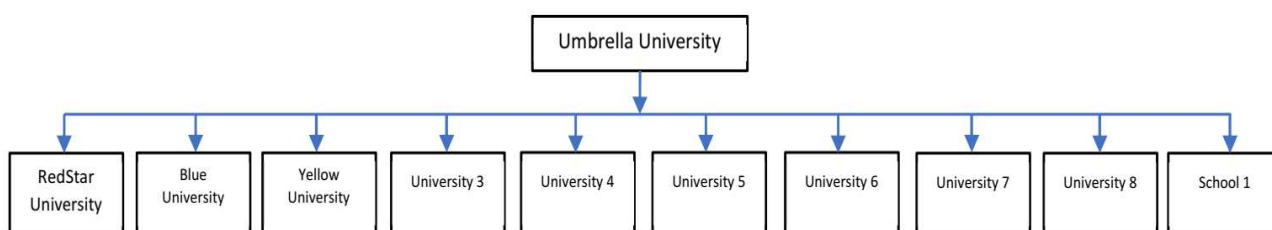
At the time of this study, RedStar had nine faculties, eight functional offices, and six centres with 300+ academic staff (four associate professors, 37 doctors, 158 masters, and 35 senior lecturers – Figure 5.4). The university's management staff, most of whom were from the Faculty of English, could teach some groups of students to level academic ranking. Being a member of Vietnam's Communist Party is necessary to be promoted as a management staff member. International teachers, mainly from the United States, South Korea, and Japan, work under volunteer programmes or cooperation agreements between RedStar and its foreign university partners.

There are no official cooperation agreements between RedStar and other affiliated universities of Umbrella University. Therefore, by personal invitation and agreement, the teaching staff from RedStar can teach foreign languages, predominantly English, to students at affiliated universities of Umbrella University. In addition, they can either participate in contracted training programmes between RedStar and other domestic educational institutions if invited by the Rector of RedStar. They can offer out-of-school private tutoring classes. These teaching commitments are considered "dạy thêm" (teaching out of school) in the Vietnamese context.

At the time of this study, the Faculty of English had more than 50 teaching staff, most of whom originally came from Beauty City. The teaching staff consisted of those from Blue University and Yellow University, part of Umbrella University. It should be noted that the teaching staff from Blue University are often promoted to management positions. Over 90% of teachers have obtained a PhD or Master's degree either domestically or internationally. Teaching staff with a Bachelor's degree are often newly retained or recruited. Their ages ranged from 22 to 55 (the retirement age for females) and 60 (the retirement age for males).

Typically, teaching staff have one year of practicum/apprenticeship in the first year of their teaching contract before becoming official teaching staff. Almost all teaching staff are retained upon their graduation from Umbrella University or RedStar. Although some might work in other institutions before joining RedStar, they all studied at this university.

Figure 5.4

RedStar's organisational structure (university's website)
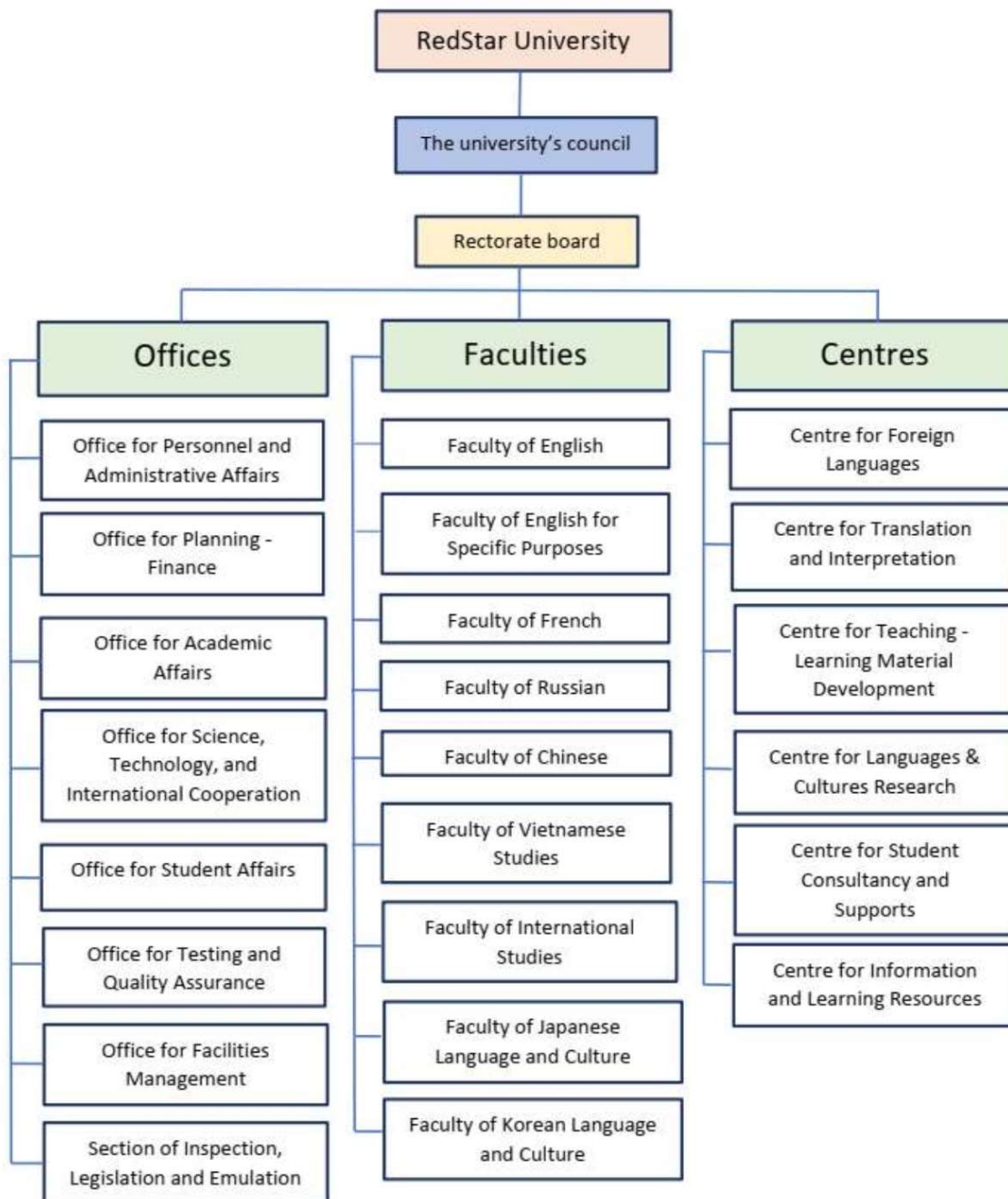
Unlike the sociocultural and political norm in Western countries in which employment positions are often publicly advertised, the recruitment of state employees in Vietnam, especially for public institutions, is more likely to be personal or sociopolitical despite being publicly advertised. An informal and common recruitment method in public organisations is common and is closely linked to a popular saying *"nhất hậu duệ, nhì quan hệ, ba tiền tệ, bốn trí tuệ"* (descendants come first, relationships second, money third, and knowledge fourth)" (Vo & Laking, 2020, p. 1088). Although there have been significant improvements regarding staff recruitment in public institutions such as universities in Vietnam lately, public recruitment has yet to become a common practice.

The Faculty of English had five specialisation divisions: Translation and Interpretation, Language Studies, Methodology of Teaching English Language, Language Skills 1, and Language Skills 2. The allocation of the teaching staff for each division is decided by the management staff of the faculty, individual teacher's wish, or their trained major. The management staff are selected by the university's rectorate board based on both their political stance (member of the Vietnamese Communist Party or not) and academic background but more focus is on the former. Although the teaching staff are academically division-based, they could teach subject areas in other divisions upon the request of the management staff. For example, a teacher from the division of translation and interpretation might be requested to teach subject areas in the division of language skills. However, teachers from language skills divisions may not be qualified to teach translation and interpretation, English language teaching methodology, and linguistic subjects. As students choose the teachers for different subject areas (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation), a teacher may or may not teach the same students for several semesters.

In terms of facilities, there is only one office for the whole faculty. In this room, there is one desk for the Dean, two desks for the two Associate Deans, one desk for the faculty's administrator, and a large long table in the centre for staff meetings. There are several computers, which teachers share. There are small bookshelves, books, and teaching materials bought by the university or donated by teachers. If students need to meet up with their teachers, the best locations are either the after-hour classrooms or the yard. As expressed by the participants during informal conversations with the researcher, some chose a café to meet with their students.

5.2.2. Rules and division of labour for institutional EFL teaching activity

RedStar operates under the Laws on Education and MoET's and other Ministries' secondary legislation such as decrees and decisions. Its activity is under the direct supervision of Umbrella University, which is in turn governed by MoET. Like other public institutions and organisations, RedStar follows sociopolitical ideologies set by the Vietnamese Communist Party that emphasise the status of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology in its training programmes. RedStar also has a Party organisation (Party cell) who issue development resolutions and govern institutional activity. The Rector is also the Party committee secretary. This centralised power positioning is aimed to centralise Party's leadership and ensure synchronisation of development lines in public organisations. That said, the Rector is the person with supreme power whose decision is "*đường lối phát triển*" (the development line) for the university.

The university's Office for Academic Affairs assumes full responsibility for recruitment of students throughout the year. For the internal classes (on-campus), the teaching staff are appointed by the Faculty of English while for the external classes (off-campus) based on cooperation agreements and/or partnership and the teaching staff are often appointed by the Rector in consultation with the Office for Academic Affairs and the Faculty of English. The required teaching hours for a teacher are 1,760 over a 44-week academic year in addition to 600 hours of research and 350 hours of community activities and other academic and non-academic commitments. Participating in professional learning and development events such as workshops, seminars, and conferences can be counted as research. The Office for Academic Affairs decides the timetable. Morning lessons are between 7.00 am and 11.30 am and afternoon lessons are from 1.00 pm to 4.30 pm. With the teacher's involvement in private tutoring classes, they are working most days of the week.

Students at RedStar study degrees to prepare them to be either teachers of English or to work in an English-speaking environment. The students enrolled in the university must pass the national senior secondary school graduation exam. Before 2015, senior secondary school students had to pass two separate exams to study HE: the senior secondary school graduation exam and the university entrance exam. In July 2015, MoET decided on one national senior secondary school graduation exam, the marks of which would be accepted for the offer of study at an HE institution of students' choice before the exam. Students at RedStar are of diverse ethnic and sociocultural backgrounds, from remote and rural to urban areas. At the time of this study, RedStar had approximately 5,000 students, 2,500 of whom were majoring in English.

As required by credit-based training programmes, students at RedStar must meet a minimum of 10–14 credits per semester. A credit is equivalent to 15 periods of class contact (45–50 minutes each) for theory subjects, 30–45 periods of practice, lab work, or discussion, 45–90 hours of practicum, or 45–60 hours of project work or assignments, or a graduation thesis (MoET, 2007). Students can choose their subject teachers based on their academic profile available on the university's website, consulting with older students, and their personal feelings and preferences. However, the number of students in one group studying the same subject must not be over 40. When the number of students enrolled in one group is fewer than five, they must enrol in another group. If students are not satisfied with the group they have chosen to study with, they can change groups within two weeks after the semester commences. Students enrolled in the English Language Teaching programme have to participate in groups in a four-week teaching practicum at a school chosen by the university's Office for Academic Affairs. Students in the teaching programme usually become

English teachers after graduation. Meanwhile, students enrolled in the English Language Studies programme can do their practicum in any organisation where English is used for business communication such as an import-export company, a travel agent, or a non-government organisation. Students in the studies programme usually become tourist guides, translators, or administrators after graduation.

Students qualify with BA degrees upon successful completion of the requirements for the graduation. Generally, they are required to achieve the competency level of C1 (CEFR) upon graduation, which is undertaken separately from the graduation exams. Those students who do the graduation thesis do not have to sit the graduation exams, yet they are still required to pass the C1 exam. The students can choose to be awarded a C1 certificate or an equivalent to C1 (TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) at other accredited institutions and submit the pass results for graduation consideration. It is a ministerial requirement that university students successfully complete military training and physical education to be eligible for graduation.

The English-major students in the classes observed in this study were in semester two of their second and fourth years. They were studying English Language Teaching, which often leads to a teaching career upon graduation. They were young adults aged from 19 to 24. Typically, students in Vietnam start their first year at colleges or universities at the age of 18. University graduates with excellent grades may be retained as teachers at the college or university where they studied.

5.2.3. Important mediating artefacts in RedStar's EFL teaching activity

5.2.3.1. The training programmes

RedStar offers FL courses and programmes in English, French, Russia, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean with different majors in pedagogy, translation-interpretation, language studies, and tourism. Additionally, it provides training programmes in International Studies, American Studies, and Vietnamese Studies. In partnership with other domestic educational institutions, RedStar offers a wide range of training programmes including short non-degree training courses for in-service teachers from primary, junior and senior secondary schools, and HE institutions, and short certificate-based training courses for both students and teachers who wish to achieve certain levels of competency (A1-C1 – CEFR). As a key actor of Project 2020, RedStar designs English language tests, provides training programmes, audits the training programmes of other educational institutions, and offers innovative teaching programmes for the country's overall FL reform.

RedStar offers two main EFL programmes, which are both credit-based: English Language Teaching and English Language Studies (Table 5.5). Both lead to a Bachelor of Arts degree upon successful completion. However, for the EFL programmes or content changes to take effect, RedStar's management staff had to seek MoET's approval, the process of which is underpinned by the sociopolitical concept of "*báo cáo cấp trên*" (report to higher levels of management). This is also a manifestation of the culture of "*cơ chế xin cho*" (asking and approving mechanism) in which higher education institutions have to ask for the approval from MoET and other relevant government bodies on matters such as budget, infrastructure, curriculum, and so on (Dao & Hayden, 2010, 2019; Vo & Laking, 2020). Notetable in this asking and approving mechanism was the popular envelope culture by which the asker is expected to pay under the table for what they desire to be approved (Vo & Laking, 2020).

5.2.3.2. The curriculum

As discussed in section 5.1, RedStar's curriculum must be approved by MoET. The university's curriculum focused on improving English skills compartmentalised into discrete skill subjects such as Listening 1, Speaking 1, Reading 1, Writing 1, Translation 1 (Appendix 7).

The coursebook and instructional materials for these subject areas are decided by a group of management staff, including heads of the specialisation divisions and the faculty's management board. This implies the absence of teacher participants' voices in making decisions on curriculum, unit descriptions, and the coursebook due to decisions being made at management level. This might result in a tension between the institutional guiding documents and participants' espoused belief of providing students with communicative and academic skills.

There is an institutional detailed unit description for each subject area, and teachers must follow the prescribed allocation of learning time and content for the subject (Table 5.6). Listening 2, Speaking 2, Reading 2, Writing 2, and Translation 1, which were observed in this study, must be completed in the first two years of tertiary study, and Speaking 5 in the fourth year. Teachers are encouraged to design teaching materials for their subject areas but this seldom happens unless they are officially contracted and paid. Points are given as recognition of professional learning and development, and financial support is provided. However, designing teaching materials may not seem appealing to teachers due to institutional modest pay.

Table 5.5

Overview of the two major training disciplines (RedStar's website)

Field of study	English Language Teaching (ELT)	English Language Studies (ELS)
Programme name	Credit-based Undergraduate Programme	
Type of training	4- year full time	
Total credits	141	139–141
General objective	Provide students with solid knowledge of fundamental & educational sciences, pedagogical skills in response to reform in secondary schools.	Provide students with political awareness, professional ethics, good health, & the ability to handle work-related issues to repsond to social needs within international economic integration.
Specific objectives	**1. Ethical qualities**	
	• Having deep understanding of Marxist-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology; • Being patriotic with a love for socialism; • Loving his/her students and career; • Having a high sense of responsibility & good ethics	
	Having basic qualities of a socialist teacher & exemplary teaching style.	Having basic qualities of a ELS graduate & exemplary style of a prospective officer.
	2. Knowledge	
	• Having relatively broad and profound knowledge of the English language, culture, and literature; • Mastering communicative skills in English and having solid professional expertise.	
	Having knowledge of ELT theories, of English education programmes & realities of ELT at schools.	Having a relatively stable professional level required of a translator & interpreter in economics, culture, society.
	3. Skills	
	• Applying knowledge of language and culture to solve problems encountered in ELT; • Having ability to teach English, carry out the tasks required of an English teacher, adaptability to innovative changes in education.	• Applying knowledge of English language and culture to solve problems encountered during professional practice and research; • Having fundamental skills in conducting research into English language, literature, or culture, and the ability to perform professionally in some other services such as tourism and museums.

As can be seen in Table 5.6, all the observed subject lessons must be completed in 15 weeks with two periods of class contact every week. The outcomes are categorised into three main areas: knowledge, skills, and attitudes and attendance. The expected proficiency level for Listening 2,

Speaking 2, Reading 2, and Writing 2 is B1-CEFR, while that for Translation 1 and Speaking 5 is not clearly stated. Similarly, teacher's roles are not clearly specified. All subjects require students to spend 60 hours on independent learning. The unique constructs of each subject are discussed next.

Listening 2

Listening 2 aims to consolidate and continue practising basic listening skills learned in Listening 1 and to equip students with listening and speaking skills in English equivalent to B1-CEFR. Of 30 periods of class contact, only one is dedicated to discussion in week 15, which is the revision of the course. However, it is not clearly stated whether the discussion is group or whole class. Ten periods are reserved for theory and the remaining 19 periods are for practice. Students must complete a listening portfolio of 10 entries in their independent learning. However, there is no detailed guideline on listening portfolio. Two mid-term tests are held in weeks 7 and 14. The format for the mid-term tests is not specified; however, a multiple-choice format is applied for the end-of-term test. Students are required to attend at least 20 periods.

Speaking 2

Speaking 2 aims to equip students with speaking skills on familiar daily topics and other socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental topics. Of 30 periods of class contact, 12 are dedicated to theory, two to assignment and 16 to in-class discussion. However, it is not clearly stated whether the discussion is group or whole class. In their independent learning, students must complete a speaking portfolio of either pronunciation and intonation or speaking practice tasks. Nevertheless, only specifications for the portfolio on pronunciation are provided, which should be completed in groups of four formed by students with the teacher's help. The groups are then divided into two pairs working together on the pronunciation or conversation sections in the prescribed coursebook. Students must self-reflect on their own pronunciation practice in week 5 and provide feedback on their group cooperation in week 12. In week 14 students self-reflect on the advantages and challenges they have faced during independent learning time. Two mid-term tests are held in weeks 9 and 10. The minimum percentage of attendance is not clearly stated even though it counts for 10% of students' final grade of the course.

Reading 2

The overall stated objectives of Reading 2 are to consolidate and continue practising basic reading skills learned in Reading 1 and to provide students with practice in reading and writing in English equivalent to B1-CEFR. Only one period is dedicated to theory, which is the introduction to the

course and pre-course test (if any). Eighteen periods are reserved for exercises and practice and the remaining 11 periods for discussion. However, it is not clearly stated whether the discussion is group or whole class. The content for independent learning is not stated. There are two mid-term tests in weeks 7 and 14. The format for the mid-term tests is not specified; however, a multiple-choice format is applied for the end-of-term test. Students are required to attend at least 24 periods of in-class study.

Writing 2

Students are required to complete Writing 1 before Writing 2. Writing 2 aims to provide students with basic principles in writing paragraphs in English and train skills in writing in different default genres. Of 30 periods of class contact, 11 are dedicated to the theory of writing and 19 to exercises and practice. Students must complete a portfolio or learning diary in their independent learning. There are two main contents of the portfolio/learning diary: weekly entries of exercises/practice assigned by the teacher and peer evaluation by a study group member. By weeks 6 and 12 before mid-term tests in weeks 8 and 13, students are required to self-reflect on advantages and challenges in writing and ways to address these challenges. Weeks 14 and 15 are for practice from PET materials. Students must attend at least 27 periods.

Translation 1

Translation 1 aims to help students master basic principles and skills in translating sentences and paragraphs, become acquainted with kinds of translation (literal versus idiomatic translation, form-based versus meaning-based translation), have improved knowledge of similarities and differences between Vietnamese and English at sentence level, and develop skills in understanding and analysing a text for an optimal approach to translation. Of 30 periods of class contact, 20 are dedicated to introducing principles and strategies for translation and 10 to practice exercises. The content for independent learning is not clearly guided. Group work is an essential part for course assessment, yet without further elaboration. The minimum percentage of attendance and student role are not clearly specified.

Table 5.6

RedStar's requirements for subjects

Subjects	Listening 2 (2 credits – Compulsory)	Speaking 2 (2 credits – Compulsory)	Reading 2 (2 credits – Compulsory)	Writing 2 (2 credits – Compulsory)	Translation 1 (2 credits – Compulsory)	Speaking 5 (Public speaking; 2 credits – Elective)
Completion time & duration	Year 1 or 2 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly	Year 1 or 2 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly	Year 1 or 2 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly	Year 1 or 2 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly	Year 1 or 2 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly	Year 4 15 weeks – 2 periods weekly
Prescribed coursebook	Frazier, L. & Mills, R. (2009). *Northstar 2 – Listening and Speaking: Students' book* (3rd ed.). Pearson.	Frazier, L. & Mills, R. (2009). *Northstar 2 – Listening and Speaking: Students' book* (3rd ed.). Pearson.	Haugnes, N. & Maher, B. (2009). *Northstar 2 – Reading and Writing: Students' book* (3rd ed). Pearson.	Haugnes, N. & Maher, B. (2009). *Northstar 2 – Reading and Writing: Students' book* (3rd ed). Pearson.	Nguyen, V. T. (2006). *Translation 1*. Beauty City, Vietnam.	Nguyen, V. T. (2006). *Translation 1*. Beauty City, Vietnam.
Responsible specialised division	Language skills 1	Language skills 1	Language skills 1	Language skills 1	Translation & Interpretation	Language skills 2
Knowledge outcomes	• Improved listening skills at immediate level in terms of both vocabulary and structures	• Improved command of vocabulary for familiar everyday conversational purposes • Understanding different viewpoints on socioeconomic, cultural, and	• Improved reading skills at immediate level in terms of both vocabulary and structures	• Understanding basic principles in writing a paragraph • Understanding and applying writing techniques including how to connect sentences in a paragraph,	• Understanding the similarities and differences between the two languages (Vietnamese and English) • Mastering the most fundamental	• Understanding principles and basic techniques in preparing and delivering an oral presentation

		environmental issues		and using examples to support the arguments or description • Improving vocabulary on different topics in written contexts	principles in translation	
Skills outcomes	• Understanding main and supporting ideas of the spoken texts in standard English, prediction, and inferring	• Able to select appropriate vocabulary to express personal ideas clearly • Able to use moderately complex structures to express stances, present and defend personal views on simple personal, family, and social issues, improve group discussion skills (listening, participating, agreeing, disagreeing, etc.) • Able to independently search information from reference	• Further mastering the reading skills learned in Reading 1 and prepare for the next levels of study	• Mastering paragraph writing process (pre-writing, writing, and revising) • Able to use connectors effectively • Able to write a paragraph about a process	• Improving skills in translating sentences, paragraphs, and simple texts with optimal translation approach	• Selecting and narrowing the topic, outlining, and effectively delivering an oral presentation

		media such as print books, magazines, and the Internet				
Attitude & Attendance	• Positive attitude toward own study via regular attendance, active participation in class learning tasks, and accomplishing	• Awareness of the impacts of cultural and socioeconomic aspects on personal, family and social issues and of the necessity of hard work and sound background knowledge to engage in English speaking activities	• Maintaining a positive attitude toward own study via regular attendance, active participation in class learning tasks, and accomplishing all assigned homework before class	• Maintaining a positive attitude toward own study via regular attendance, active participation in class learning tasks • Awareness of the importance of vocabulary and sociocultural knowledge in writing skills • Awareness of the importance of independent thinking in writing process • Awareness of the importance of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and continuous learning	• Understanding the importance of translation and the translator's ethical codes	• Required to attend the lessons regularly, maintain a serious attitude toward own learning via regular attendance and active and effective participation in class learning tasks • Completing all the assigned homework
Outcome level as per NFLCF	3 (B1 – CEFR)	3 (B1 – CEFR)	3 (B1 – CEFR)	3 (B1 – CEFR)	Not stated	Not stated

Speaking 5 (Public speaking)

To enrol in Speaking 5, students must have completed Speaking 1, 2, 3, and 4. Speaking 5's objective is not clearly stated. Weeks 1 to 7 are for the introduction to principles, strategies, and skills for oral presentation. Weeks 8 to 10 are mid-term tests (group presentations) and weeks 11 to 15 for practice and individual presentations. The minimum percentage of attendance is not specified. Speaking 5 is both product and process oriented. Students must work in groups of three or four for the whole semester, which are formed with the teacher's help at the start of term. The assessment for this course is based on students' participation in class learning tasks (10% of the final grade), the printed hard copy outline of group presentation (10% and due in week 8), group presentation for mid-term test (20% and due in weeks 8–10), and individual presentation for end-of-course test (60% and due in weeks 11–15). Students choose the topics of the presentations with the teacher's help in the first week. They can change their topics for both individual and group presentations within the first five weeks. Once submitted, the topics cannot be changed. The topics and the outlines of the presentations can be emailed to the teacher for feedback before submission. The presentations can be either informative or persuasive. Each student must speak for at least four minutes in groups and 7–10 minutes in individual presentations. Students submit the print hard copy of the complete script on the day of the presentation and they are provided with an evaluation form. They have to submit feedback on their peers' presentation.

5.2.3.3. Assessment

Subject-specific assessments are institutionally designed and regulated, and normally consist of students' regular attendance (10%), the mid-term tests (30%), and the end-of-term summative tests (60%) (see Appendix 10 for a sample reading practice test). Attendance and mid-term tests are administered by subject teachers while the end-of-term tests by the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance. Students' attendance and mid-term tests are categorised as continuous assessment.

Each subject teacher is responsible for designing and delivering the mid-term tests based on the institutional template. This template is developed by the teaching staff with discretionary invitation from the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance. This template is based on the CEFR-adapted Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam (MoET, 2014a) and VSTEP (MoET, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d). The mid-term tests are subject-specific and can be either in class under test conditions (summative) or portfolios (formative). There is no pre- or post-assessment moderation of the mid-term tests. For the end-of-term tests, the procedure is more complicated and beyond individual and departmental control with the Office for Testing and Quality

Assurance being involved. Specifically, the subject teacher has to design three different tests for the subject area they teach. The tests are then submitted to the head of the specialisation division in the Faculty of English to approve before they reach the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance. However, this approval is not for pre-moderation purposes. It is this Office who decides which tests are to be used for the end-of-term exams. The marking guides and the assessment schedules are individualised and each teacher may have a different approach to testing. The only thing teachers share is the test templates provided by the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance. However, there is neither an institutional or departmental moderation panel nor an official moderation procedure or guidance.

Not all the teachers are trained in test design and there is no specialised testing team trained and responsible for test design at RedStar. The completed end-of-term tests with students' information removed are allocated among teachers of the same specialisation division for marking. However, the last people who input students' end-of-term test results are not the teachers in charge; it is the staff from the Office of Academic Affairs who carry out this step. Accordingly, the subject teachers may not know the marks of those students they teach for the whole semester. This might undermine an effective teaching and learning environment because the teacher cannot follow up adequately with their students to provide timely academic support.

Teachers are entitled to university accounts that provide them with access to student records and the university's practice test bank. The test bank is the compilation of the practice tests, which can be downloaded and attempted before the mid-term or end-of-term tests. Only the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance staff can have full access to the test bank, and are final and confidential decision-makers of tests or test sections to be used as end-of-term tests.

5.2.3.4. Remuneration

As a public university, RedStar has to follow the governmental salary scales and steps regarding remuneration for its teachers, for example, Decree 204/2004/NĐ-CP (The Prime Minister, 2004) and MoET's Circular 40/2020/TT-BGDĐT (MoET, 2020). Accordingly, the annual lowest net salary is VND41,839,200 (USD1,819) for newly recruited teachers who have fewer than three years of experience compared to the maximum of VND143,040,000 (USD6,219) for experienced and high-level teachers. According to the government's regulations, the automatic increase from one scale or step to another is confirmed every three years with the university's office of human resources issuing a decision and is accompanied by a rise of VND6,000,000 (USD261) in annual net salary.

These scales are considered low compared to the increasing living expenses. As Munyengabe et al. (2017) found, salary directly links to university teachers' job motivation and satisfaction.

5.2.3.5. The classroom facilities

Classrooms at RedStar are arranged in either type as shown in Figure 5.5, one with long wooden student tables and the other with chairs attached to a writing table. They are not specifically designed for language learning and do not have sound-proof walls and doors or built-in speakers. Each classroom has four main doors: two are main entrances from the hallway and two open to a small balcony. There are six windows on both the right and left walls. Natural light is ensured by glass doors and windows. There are electric wall-attached fans and lights. The teacher's desk is fixed on the right side and has a computer and a CD player. The computer is connected to the Internet. Free wifi coverage is available on campus for students while teachers have access to a different wifi connection. There is a glass-covered white board and a wall clock in the middle of the wall facing the students. The white-painted part of this wall acts as a powerpoint screen.

Figure 5.5

Two common classroom floor plans at RedStar

123
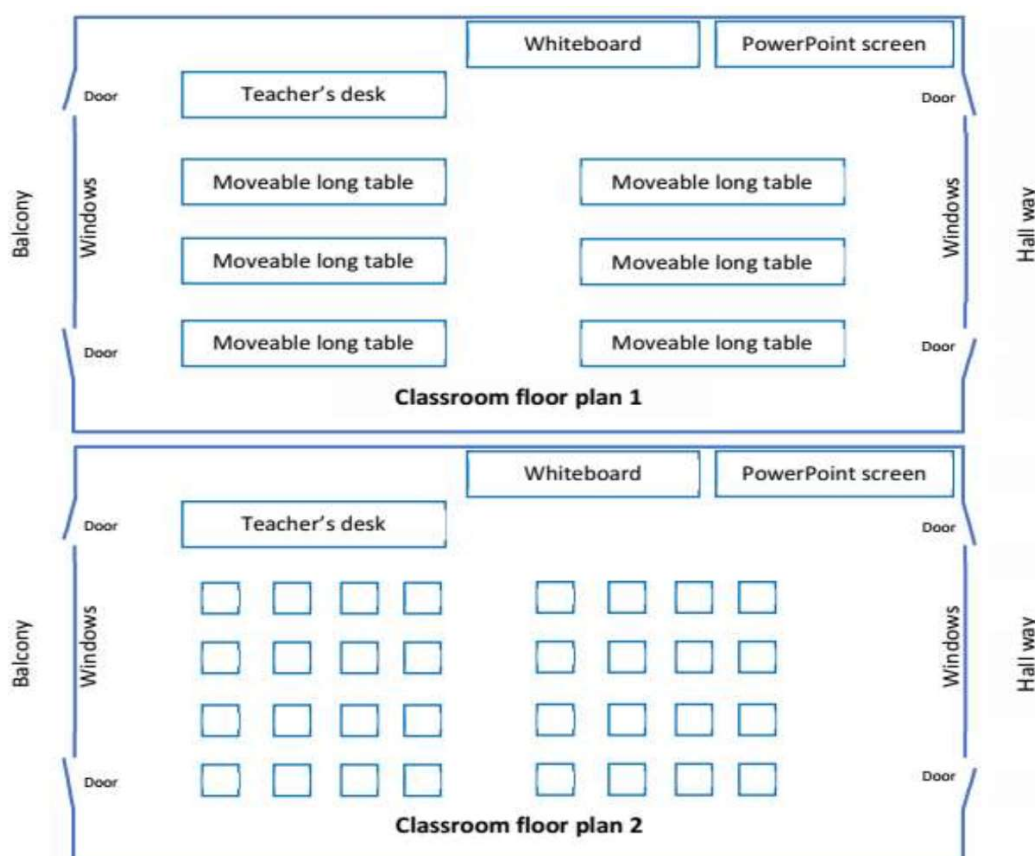
The classrooms are spacious to accommodate many students, and the doors are open while the lesson is in progress. The noise from outside is loud and audible from inside the classrooms. The students' table chairs (chairs with small tables attached to them for writing) or long tables and portable chairs are often placed or rearranged in rows before lessons by the hourly contracted cleaning staff. The cleaning and arrangement of the classrooms are completed before classes start at 7.00 am and 1.00 pm and after classes finish at 11.15 am and 4.30 pm. There are no other teaching and learning materials such as posters, maps, or print dictionaries.

5.3. Chapter summary

This chapter has analysed the governmental and institutional activities in relation to EFL teaching. The analysis of governmental FL education policies and institutional guiding documents has revealed an intricately political and sociocultural context in which tertiary EFL teaching operates. The analysis of the policy documents revealed that the top-down hierarchy was inherent in the reform process of HE in Vietnam. MoET decided on the norm for the educational reform and initiative decisions on EFL teaching and learning by imposing a national framework that was contextually localised from an international policy on language education. A national FL competence framework came into force defining the minimum output competence level for teachers and students regardless of academic specialisations. This output level is nationalised and legalised, and both teachers and students must abide by it. The explicit institutional compartmentalisation of language skills as subject areas are for the four-year training programme. The next chapter analyses teacher participants' perspectives regarding EFL teaching.

CHAPTER 6: PARTICIPANTS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF TERTIARY ENGLISH-AS-A-FOREIGN-LANGUAGE (EFL) TEACHING

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 drew on the government's policy and institutional guiding documents to provide the cultural-historic contexts for this study. The focus of Chapter 6 is on the participants' perspectives on tertiary English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teaching. The nine participants each engaged in two interviews and two classroom observations. The chapter begins with an ontogenetic profile of each participant. To highlight the historical and sociocultural contexts of their childhoods and education, the profiles are categorised into two groups: those born before and those after the 1986 "*đổi mới*" (renovation) – a political milestone when Vietnam opened its door to the outside economically. The chapter then provides an analysis of the participants' conceptualisations and practice of tertiary EFL teaching. It ends with an analysis of the participants' perspectives regarding effective tertiary EFL teaching.

6.2. Profiles of participants

Seven of the nine participants, Diem, Minh, Ngoc, Thanh, Chau, Diep, and Le were from urban "*công chức*" middle class families while Trang and Huy were from rural working-class families. *Công chức* is a politically sensitive term for state employees recruited by and seen as favoured by the government and state-owned organisations and institutions (Vo & Laking, 2020). *Công chức* work in government departments, universities, schools, hospitals, and other public organisations. "*Gia đình công chức*" is a family that has one or more "công chức nhà nước'' and the popular perception of such families is they have stable and comfortable lives. "*Công chức nhà nước*'' and "*gia đình công chức*" are assumed to have influential social and political connections, which give them social privileges. These connections become stronger and more obvious once the *công chức* in the family is promoted to management. The education in c*ông chức* families is assumed to be more advantageous and children from *công chức* families are influenced by the family's *công chức* and are expected to obtain higher education levels.

In addition, there is the perception of "*công chức chế độ cũ*" (civil staff of the pre-1975 southern Vietnamese government) that was linked to the United States. *Công chức chế độ cũ* families were likely to prioritise English in foreign language learning (Hoang, 2016). After the US-backed government of South Vietnam surrendered in 1975, those with strong connections, particularly military ones, to the former regime were forced to enter re-education camps (Hoang, 2016). Time spent in the camps was dependent on the nature and strength of these connections. In this study,

five of nine participants, Diem, Ngoc, Thanh, Diep, and Le are considered to come from *công chức chế độ cũ* families. Only one participant had a parent who spent time in the camps. Those in occupations such as teaching were not regarded as being strongly linked to the regime.

Công chức chế độ cũ families had one thing in common: the wife did not work. Therefore, the father's role in these families was financially and educationally decisive. However, the culturally pivotal role of the father was also evident in those families who parents worked. As shown in the consecutive profiles below, participants were most educationally influenced by their fathers in one way or another. Despite coming from non-academic families and without direct parental involvement in teaching, Huy and Trang were motivated to be academically successful by their family's support. Within an extended family, Le, Huy, and Trang were educationally impacted by their relatives. The educational settings from schools to universities between the 1960s and 2010s in which participants engaged remained non-transformed in spite of reforms during these five decades. All participants but Minh had very early access to English or another foreign language within the family. Unlike other participants, Huy's learning was much influenced by his friends and Trang's desire for English improvement was self-motivated. All participants but Minh had an English language teaching qualification.

All nine participants were graduates of RedStar or Umbrella University, as were nearly all of the university's teaching staff. The concept "*được giữ lại trường*" (to be retained), which is closely linked to *công chức* in educational institutions including colleges and universities, is multifaceted, and bears academic, economic, social, and political meanings. To be retained means to be offered a teaching position on graduation, moving seamlessly from their role as student to that of teacher. Just like becoming and being a *công chức*, becoming a teacher reflects the intricate network of relatedness in Vietnamese society. An individual becomes a state employee based on their family connection or connections with the employer (Vo & Laking, 2020). In this study, Diem, Ngoc, Thanh, Huy, Le, Minh, and Chau were retained at graduation, whereas Trang taught at a senior secondary school and Diep at foreign language centres in Beauty City before teaching at RedStar.

The succeeding sections present participants' profiles, each of which starts with a direct quote from the interview data. This quote distinctively shows their EFL teaching beliefs and practices. Each profile then continues with a descriptive narrative of the participant's ontogenesis from their early childhood to current teaching. Words in italics in inverted commas are participants' Vietnamese original speech and/or translation from their Vietnamese responses.

6.2.1. Participants born before 1986

6.2.1.1. Diep

> *"The teacher shouldn't show off their professional knowledge. In my teaching, I have no intention to show off my erudition, trying to shine with my excellent command of the language. I focus on students' needs. My students believe in what I'm doing for them."*

Diep was born in the early 1960s in a central Vietnamese city neighbouring Beauty City. She fulfilled her father's desire and became an English teacher. Her father was a civil servant, her mother a housewife, and her sister worked for the former southern Vietnam government. As a young child, she loved English and would listen to her sister talking to her American friends. Diep started learning English at school in Grade 6 and at the same time her father sent her to the American-Vietnamese Association for extra lessons. She experienced that "*teaching English at lower levels of schooling was traditional with exam-driven rote learning, grammar-translation methods, focusing on grammar and reading comprehension, and an absence of contextual practice for speaking English*". Her teacher's "*một chiều*" (unidirectional) teaching and prescribed coursebooks were her primary learning resources.

During the 1980s, a time of stagnation of the central economy in Vietnam, with a scarcity of learning resources, primarily relying on teachers' authoritative input and English books written by Russian authors, Diep completed her Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching at Blue University. "*The university*", as Diep recalled, "*was traditional exam-driven, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and translation*". Cooperative learning was absent. However, she appreciated the experiences while a university student because "*ai cũng khổ*" (everyone was poor) but "*rất thân thương*" (very close and connected).

Diep had taught at English language centres in Beauty City for three years upon university graduation before becoming a tertiary English teacher in the late 1980s. During this time, she explored and "*learned about the newly imported communicative language teaching approach*" on her own. At the time of this study, her teaching was described as being focused on developing language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and was incentive-based with bonus points. Although the instruction was still exam-driven, cooperative learning was encouraged. She had to "*theo sát các quy định của trường*" (follow the institutional regulations strictly); however, she adjusted her teaching approaches to specific groups of students. Because of her upbringing, she paid special attention to those students from rural or remote areas who might not have had good

learning opportunities at lower levels. She obtained a Master of Arts in ELT from RedStar in the early 2000s. By 2019, she had officially retired and was an invited teacher at RedStar.

In her view, "*learning a FL was to improve the command of vocabulary in that language*". It was to learn a social skill for work or communication, studying and working abroad, or working with foreigners. This was an inclusive life skill in a new living environment. Learning language was using it. During learning, more able students should help the less able ones, demonstrating a sense of sharing. The backbone of language teaching was vocabulary and sentence structure. In the language classroom, the target language was preferred. Language teaching was observing and should focus on both developing language skills and equipping learners with knowledge of the target culture, literature, and politics. "*Teaching was an emotional communication between the teacher and their students*".

In Diep's opinion, an effective language learner used the target language confidently regardless of their level of competence. They showed a "*positive and explorative attitude toward learning*" through regular attendance and active participation in class learning tasks, learned for the sake of knowledge not for grade, and was a critical thinker who always sought the answer to question 'why'. She viewed an effective language teacher as "*một người nghệ sĩ*" (an artist) whose performance could touch students' hearts and who did not blame their students for poor knowledge but found ways to enhance students' level of competence. An effective teacher should be fair and a co-learner in the classroom to promote excitement in a friendly environment without "*khoe khoang về kiến thức*" (showing off their knowledge). Diep claimed that whether a teacher was effective was reflected by the number of students enrolled in the subject. Effective teaching was oriented toward students' and social needs, based on teacher–student closeness and immediacy, and incentive-based. She saw "*colleagues' evaluations as contributing to effective teaching*" and she especially learned from junior colleagues regarding ICT and cultural features because many of them had studied overseas. "*Student questioning contributed to effective teaching".* Telling stories about the teacher's learning and working experiences related to the content matter helped produce effective lessons.

6.2.1.2. Le

> *"I had to take my father's advice and study English. You know, parents, huh?"*

Born in the early 1960s in central Vietnam's Beauty City, Le had early access to foreign languages because his family members could use French and English competently. His father was a civil servant of the former southern Vietnamese government, his mother a housewife, and his brother a tertiary

foreign language teacher in Beauty City. When little, his aunts taught him French, which he loved. His earliest memories of learning French were imitating the French sounds his family members spoke. He thought he would study French when grown up. Even though he did not like English, he chose to study English after receiving a letter from his father, who was in the re-education camp, when he started secondary schooling at the age of 12. Le's father advised him to study Russian or English because "*I see a bright future with these languages*," his father wrote.

Le recalled the "*instrumental grammar-translation method at lower levels of schooling*", which focused on "*pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, simple sentence patterns, and reading comprehension*" in predetermined coursebooks with the teacher's authoritative input. He depicted the instruction as traditional "*một chiều*" (unidirectional) and exam-driven with English coursebooks written by Russian authors. His most vivid image of English lessons at that time was students' "*repeating what the teacher read from the textbook*". He felt lucky to have his mother teach him English at home. However, he maintained that the way he studied English at lower levels was effective and canonical. The knowledge he had gained was deeply ingrained in his mind until his Bachelor of Arts in the English Language Teaching programme at Blue University in the late 1980s. Pedagogically, "*the approach to English learning changed at university with the inclusion of community or collective learning*" where he and his friends had opportunities to interact in pairs or groups. Still, Le saw "*teaching at university at that time as exam-driven and "hàn lâm" (theoretical)*".

Retained upon graduation, Le started teaching English at his university in the early 1990s. He admitted that during his first years of teaching, he believed that to be an English teacher was to have a high English proficiency level. However, he now realised teaching required more than language skills and competence; it was linked to "*duyên giảng dạy*" (teaching charisma). At the time of this study, Le described his teaching as exam-driven and bound with predetermined curricular learning materials. Winning scholarships to study postgraduate overseas, Le obtained a Master of Arts in ELT in one anglophone country in the late 1990s and PhD in another in the early 2000s. He emphasised that the "*Master's course opened a new horizon*" for him in teaching because he had an opportunity to connect his teaching practice with theoretical conceptualisations. It helped change his methodological views, especially the approaches to classroom management that he previously struggled with. He believed that the Master's course increased his knowledge of how a second language was learned, which made his teaching more logical and sequential. He became more adaptive to his teaching. Le admitted that while the doctoral study provided a teacher with a

deepened understanding of a specific aspect of teaching, "*nó không hỗ trợ nhiều cho công việc giảng dạy hàng ngày*" (it did not assist with daily teaching techniques).

Le believed learning a FL was essential in the current globalised era, which helped learners access global ideas, foreign cultures, and the world's scientific and technological advances to develop themselves as global citizens. At the same time, he maintained "*learning a FL was to master language knowledge and communication skills for employment*". He perceived language teaching as providing both language and cultural knowledge to prepare language learners in the current globalised situation. "*Teaching was to build independent learning skills for students*".

In Le's view, effective language learners had proactive attitudes toward learning, took the initiative in learning, showed willingness to communicate, and learned autonomously. An effective language teacher had to promote communicative language learning through methods such as "*task-based teaching*", using authentic learning materials such as articles for reading tasks or role-playing a workplace conversation. They were academically well-prepared and trained, equipped with theoretical knowledge of language teaching (pedagogically), "proactive" in controlling and updating knowledge, autonomous, reflective, emotionally inspired, and connected to the wider community.

Le believed that to be an effective language teacher one had to consider who the learners were and what they wanted, and to understand the learners' immediate and long-term needs. The teacher must be practical by "*connecting the lesson content with social needs*". Effective teaching was incentive-based and ensured by the teacher's perseverance and continuous assessment, students' positive attitudes, guided learning, teacher's reflection, staff affinity, and collegial evaluations. "*Effective teaching should be practice oriented*". Telling stories about the teacher's learning and working experiences related to the content matter helped produce effective lessons.

6.2.1.3. Thanh

> "*When I was a university student, my class was like a family where everyone treated each other like siblings. The university is now like my second family where I treat students as my children.*"

Thanh was born in the early 1960s in central Vietnam's Beauty City. Her father was a civilian employee in the defence office for the former southern Vietnamese government, her mother a housewife, her brother a tertiary English teacher, and her sister a secondary teacher. She reminisced about the early access to English through her older brother who used to sing songs by Modern Talking (a famous German duo in the 1980s) and taught her English at home. Her passion to learn

English and to become an English teacher came from her father's wish, her excitement about English songs, and her older brother's encouragement, inspiration, and image of a diligent and competent English user.

In Thanh's description, "*learning English at lower levels of schooling was very simple: rote learning with the teacher's consolidation*". The grammar-translation method focused on "*grammar and vocabulary without speaking English*". The instruction was textbook based and exam-driven with the teacher's guidance. Her vivid memory of "*learning English at school was students writing translations of Vietnamese words into English on the board*".

Thanh studied the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching at Blue University in Beauty City in the early 1980s. The instructional method was traditional and exam-driven with hand-written or black roneoed learning materials written by Russian authors. The experience from that time that impacted her teaching belief and practice was the teachers' love and strict classroom environment. She appreciates her university "*teachers' treating students as their children*". Thanh said her university teachers provided knowledge and acted as "*tấm gương cho sinh viên noi theo*" (moral models / examplar). At that time, her peers were like a second family and they showed a sense of sharing and humanity without competition among students.

While a university student, Thanh taught her cousins English. This informal teaching helped nurture her passion for becoming an English teacher. She started teaching English at a senior secondary school in Beauty City in her third year at university on a four-week practicum period. Retained upon graduation, she started teaching at her university in the late 1980s. As institutionally regulated, her teaching was exam-driven and textbook based. In the early years of her teaching, Thanh often sought academic advice from her former university teachers and her older brother. She confided they had continued to be influential in her teaching at the time of this study. Under sponsorship of an anglophone university, Thanh attended an intensive training course in curriculum design in the late 1990s. While acknowledging the value of this course and thinking about potential application in her home Vietnamese university, she admitted that it was hard to apply the course content in the Vietnamese context due to unbridgeable differences in sociocultural and educational charateristics. She obtained a Master of Art in English Language Teaching from RedStar in the early 2000s.

Thanh viewed "*learning a FL as learning both language aspects and cultures*" where that language was spoken. Additionally, learning a FL helped develop knowledge of the Vietnamese language through the comparative study of linguistic and cultural features. The immediate objective of "*learning a FL was to pass the exams and for further study in a foreign country and employment*".

Teaching a FL was mastering that language to develop the Vietnamese language and introduce Vietnamese culture to the world. Teaching a FL helped develop other aspects of social life for students such as "*cách cư xử*" (codes of conduct).

An effective FL learner was a master of the Vietnamese language. They had a good command of the grammar of the target language and were diligent. An effective language teacher was devoted to teaching and pedagogically knowledgeable, had a sense of humour, created fair, democratic, and cooperative learning environments, and maintained a good relationship with others in the workplace where "*tình cảm thân thương giữa đồng nghiệp*" (warm collegial relationships) were promoted.

Thanh viewed effective teaching as demonstrating love for teaching through good pedagogical preparation. Effective teaching required positive attitudes from the teacher and students in the integrated lessons run by a "carrot-and-stick policy". Effective teaching was democratic, reflected through a sense of sharing and cooperative learning in integrated lessons. Another contributing factor to effective teaching was a "*respectful and close relationship between the teacher and students*". To make teaching effective, there should be time for teachers to reflect on their teaching and participate in professional development and learning events. She saw "*colleagues' evaluations as a contributing factor to effective teaching*" and she especially learned from juniors regarding ICT and target cultural features because many of them had studied overseas. Telling stories about the teacher's personal experiences related to the content matter helped the effectiveness of lessons.

6.2.1.4. Ngoc

> "*Group work is mostly used in my lessons because students are more engaged. If students work in groups, they will feel more confident to share their ideas. This helps make lessons effective.*"

Ngoc was born in the mid-1960s in central Vietnam's Beauty City. Her father was a civil servant of the former southern Vietnamese government, her mother a housewife, her brother a tertiary teacher of mathematics, and her sister an accountant. As a child, Ngoc listened to her father and siblings discuss English learning. She wanted to become an English teacher because she "*loved the language and admired English teachers*". She said teachers of English appeared different from teachers of other subject areas because they had a hidden charm and attraction. Her father wanted her to become a teacher.

Ngoc remembered her early contact with English at the age of eight, listening to her siblings speaking English at home. She started learning English at school at the age of 12. Although "*English learning at lower levels of schooling was traditional "một chiều" (unidirectional)*", focusing on pronunciation and vocabulary, the environment was "*tension-free*". Instruction was teacher directed and textbook based and involved grammar-translation with the occasional use of audio-lingual methods. Her motivation for English learning was her teacher's good English pronunciation. During schooling, Ngoc's father sent her to the American-Vietnamese Association to have extra English lessons.

Her university study at Blue University in Beauty City in the late 1980s was a struggle due to the "*scarcity of learning resources and lack of real-world contexts for speaking English".* While traditional methods dominated, there was some use of cooperative learning tasks. Textbooks were blurry on black roneoed paper and there were "*no opportunities for listening practice*". While at university, Ngoc taught English to children in her neighbourhood. Upon her graduation from the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching programme, Ngoc was retained as a librarian at Blue University and contracted to teach evening English classes at the same university. These classes were for those who studied English as a second degree. After two years, she was appointed as an English teacher at her university. Winning a scholarship to study overseas, Ngoc obtained her Master of Arts in English Language Teaching in an anglophone country in the late 1990s. Despite acknowledging the valuable exposure to an English-speaking environment that helped her improve English competence while studying overseas, Ngoc did not think about changes in her teaching when coming back home.

In her teaching at the time of this study, Ngoc had to "*follow prescribed coursebooks, unit descriptions, and the timeline for each course of study*". Ngoc viewed the teaching as exam-driven. Ngoc viewed "*learning a FL as learning linguistic features: grammar, vocabulary, sound, and the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing*". Teaching was providing students with linguistic knowledge and communication skills. Ngoc believed an effective language learner was extrovert, persevered (to learn vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation), enjoyed communication (confident to speak), and had a "*đam mê học tập*" (passion for language learning). A quiet or shy person might not be an effective language learner. She ascribed to the view that "*an effective language teacher originated from an effective language learner*". They were extroverted, persevered, enjoyed communication, had a love and passion, kept up to date with their subject, had

good teaching methods, and demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy (built on the teacher's academic expertise).

In her view, "*an effective lesson consisted of four essential elements: posing questions, group work, teacher feedback, and content consolidation*". Effective teaching was student-oriented (motivating them with age-appropriate content), incorporated cooperative learning, detailed lesson planning, and the teacher's experiences. "*Close and informal teacher–student relationships would contribute to effective teaching*" by creating a comfortable learning environment. Ngoc believed "*tình đồng nghiệp*" (collegial closeness) in everyday life led to feeling comfortable in the teaching community, which helped make teaching effective. She admitted that learning from colleagues helped make her teaching effective, especially junior colleagues who were better at ICT.

6.2.1.5. Diem

> *"Đức (ethics/morality) and "tài" (talent/knowledge) are closely linked, the lack of either will lead to unsustainability of teaching."*

Diem was born in the early 1970s in central Vietnam's Beauty City. Her father was a retired secondary English teacher. Her mother was a housewife and her two sisters were tertiary foreign language teachers in Beauty City. Diem remembered her father's strictness in educating his children. Diem's early memories of learning English were from the age of seven through her father telling stories in English. She imitated what her father said without understanding the stories' content.

Diem began studying English at school at the age of 12 (Grade 6) in Beauty City. At the same time, her father gave her English lessons at home, delivered English grammar and vocabulary exercises, and demanded accuracy. All of this was a forerunner for her later learning English and being an English teacher. She felt grateful to him for this. Diem recalled traditional and exam-driven language learning at lower levels of schooling with "*the teacher and prescribed textbooks as primary learning resources*". The instructional focus at junior and senior secondary schools was on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension based on a grammar-translation method. However, she viewed this method and "*the lack of other supporting resources as an advantage because students were required to be more active in finding answers and searching for knowledge*", and less dependent on readily available sources than current technology-assisted learning. When she studied her Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching at Blue University – Umbrella University in the early 1990s, there was more room for independent and group learning, yet books were scarce and the teaching and learning were still traditional and "*một chiều*" (unidirectional) with teachers as knowledge feeders and students as receivers. In fact, the local word "*một chiều*" implies more

than the teaching method; it refers to the ultimate power of the teacher in the classroom. Her university time was a most memorable period when a small number of students who were from different parts of the country "*treated each other as siblings, sharing sadness and happiness*".

Retained at her university upon graduation, Diem started teaching English in the late 1990s using traditional and exam-driven teaching and learning methods. Teachers were authorities of knowledge and coursebooks were the primary learning resources. Diem described her early teaching as staying in a safe zone and transferring what she had experienced at university to her own teaching, which meant the teacher "*delivered the coursebook content and assigned homework for students*". Her Master's degree in ELT completed at RedStar in the late 2000s helped reshape her pedagogical view: teaching should be collective rather than individual. Diem explained that for a long time before the Master's course, she had believed teaching was individual and teachers worked independently of each other.

At the time of this study, Diem managed her classroom based on institutional regulations and policies (e.g., descriptions of units, syllabi for subject areas). "*Moderate friendliness*" between teachers and students was observed. She emphasised the importance of students having respectful attitudes towards the teacher and their learning. She referred to the Internet as a reliable source of knowledge for teachers and students.

For Diem, an effective language learner demonstrated an aptitude for language with "*instinctive skills*" and a "*serious attitude toward learning*", which she depicted as regular attendance and good exam results. A perfunctory attitude toward learning was unacceptable. An effective language teacher was the designer of learning strategies, "*a guide who created a family-like, disciplined, and yet tension-free*" learning environment, and was a good listener. An effective language teacher should show a high level of perseverance and forbearance.

Diem perceived teaching as a teacher learning process. This helped students recognise their purposes for learning, especially for the employment pathway that was determined since the commencement of their tertiary EFL course, for example, to become an EFL teacher. Diem subscribed to the view that "*learning should be clearly staged with the basic stage focusing on grammar and communication skills and the advanced stage on deeper understanding of the target culture*". Telling stories about the teacher's personal learning and working experiences or related to the content matter helped produce effective lessons. Effective teaching could be seen in lessons in which practice exercises reflected the integration of theory and skills. There was a "*teacher–student knowledge community connection*", a sense of knowledge sharing, a sense of humour, cooperative

learning in groups, and a communicative orientation. She considered "*colleagues' evaluations as contributing to effective teaching*".

6.2.1.6. Huy

"*We nurture the emotional connection and interaction with our students. Robots don't. The teacher's emotion leads to students' emotion. Our devotion and enthusiasm will create a real learning environment. Robots can't. And this is key to being a teacher.*"

Huy was born in the late 1970s in a rural area of Beauty City to a non-academic family, Huy expressed that his friends influenced his learning. However, his parents were always supportive of his schooling. His parents were farmers and ran a small shop. Huy started learning English at the age of 12 in his "*trường làng*" (village school): he used this phrase to denote underprivileged educational conditions in suburban and rural areas in Vietnam. The teaching was "*traditional with rote learning and poorly equipped classrooms*" being the norm. "*The grammar-translation method was instrumental in a chalk-and-talk learning environment*" for the exam-driven educational setting. As a school student, his aunt taught him English at home and he felt luckier than his peers for this. He proudly said his aunt was an impetus for his study. He reiterated his "*aunt's follows-up created a prolonged connectedness between them*", by which he felt empowered in his learning journey. Huy confided the very poor learning environment built up the sense of responsibility and careful attention in his learning because schooling was not affordable for many children in his neighbourhood. Towards the end of secondary schooling, he was selected among other outstanding students to participate in the English language competitions. Huy attributed his opportunity to study at a well-known senior secondary school in Beauty City in the early 1990s to the knowledge of English while preparing for these competitions. While in senior secondary school, he took out-of-school English classes with a respected English teacher in Beauty City. Although these extra classes were grammar- and vocabulary-based, the lack of supporting materials made his teacher's handouts especially precious and worth embracing. The extra classes motivated him anew because he realised what he had learned in his village school was not enough.

Because his parents could not afford for him to attend a university in a large south Vietnamese city, far away from home, Huy had to study at Blue University in Beauty City in the late 1990s, majoring in English Language teaching. His memories of "*the university were of more self-study with the teacher as a guide*". He had a chance to be tutored by English-speaking teachers, one of whom was his teaching role model and who viewed teaching as caring, creating a communicative language learning environment, and showing students "*một con đường*" (a way) to explore knowledge.

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Despite these teachers, and "*the teaching and learning were generally exam-driven*". Retained upon graduation, he started teaching English at his university in the early 2000s. He admitted to feeling like a big failure in his early years of teaching because he cared more about "*trình diễn bản thân về trình độ tiếng Anh*" (self-performance of the knowledge of English) than about his students. Under scholarships, Huy obtained a Master of Arts degree in ELT from an Asian university in the late 2000s and a PhD from an anglophone country in the mid-2010s. Huy confessed that although he completed his Master's course successfully, he did not have a deep understanding of English language teaching theoretical concepts because he did not have many real-life professional encounters to connect with these concepts. Likewise, for him, "*ở một mặt nào đó, bằng Tiến sĩ làm giảm năng lực giảng dạy vì nó tập trung vào kỹ năng nghiên cứu chứ không phải kỹ năng giảng dạy*" (a PhD degree, to some extent, degraded the teaching capacity because it was about research skills not teaching skills). At the time of this study, Huy was a member of the management staff at Umbrella University and invited to teach English at RedStar.

Huy described the teaching at RedStar as institutionally regulated, exam-driven, and textbook-based without much room for innovation. He viewed "*learning a FL or English particularly as building up skills through well-organised continuous self-training and habit formation from the easiest to the most difficult level of grammatical and lexical provision*". Teaching a FL was organising optimal learning tasks and providing a roadmap for individual learners. Teaching was "*nuôi dưỡng cảm xúc với sinh viên*" (nurturing emotional connections with students). Teaching was a collective activity in which each teacher was responsible for one stage of a student's learning journey.

An effective language learner, Huy believed, showed a "*đam mê cháy bỏng*" (burning desire), clear motivation, perseverance, and determination. They should be quick-minded, extrovert, not scared of making mistakes, and "*không sợ mất mặt*" (indifferent to loss of face). This view differed from his past belief that an effective language learner had to have a good memory and an innate aptitude for language learning. An effective FL teacher was learner-oriented, understood students' learning needs, and did not teach just to show off their knowledge. An effective teacher always had two questions in mind: "What do learners really need?" and "What can I do for them?" They demonstrated the "*duyên giảng dạy*" "teaching charisma" to motivate their students, which was more important than their professional qualification and level of expertise.

In Huy's view, effective teaching practice was, in addition to academic connection, about caring, with close teacher–student emotional bonds and teachers' considerate feedback and real-life experiential stories. "*Sự hiệu quả trong giảng dạy không nhất thiết được đảm bảo bằng bằng cấp*

của giáo viên" (a teacher's certification did not necessarily ensure the effectiveness of their teaching). Effective teaching was context-based. "*Teacher's academic and emotional attachment to students, and collegiality contributed to effective teaching*". Effective teaching methodologically followed this procedure: consolidation of learned knowledge and skills, input of a manageable amount of new knowledge and skills, and further practice.

6.2.2. Participants born after 1986

6.2.2.1. Chau

> "*I often tell my students that they need to study hard to get good marks and beautiful academic transcripts for a better job.*"

Chau was born in the 1980s in central Vietnam's Beauty City. Her parents were university teachers. Her father, who was fluent in English, influenced her education. Chau's earliest memory of English was her parents playing *Beatles* songs. Her parents taught her single English words such as *book* and *bag* as part of everyday life. At the age of eight, she learned simple English at school and simultaneously with students from her father's university: "*copying and rote learning individual English words*". She confessed to disliking studying English, but she "*learned it because it was a "xu hướng của xã hội" (social trend)*".

When her father earned an overseas study scholarship, Chau lived and went to school in an anglophone country from when she was aged nine to 15. During this time, she learned English from her father at home and from an ESOL teacher at school. She was not impressed with her year of English learning with the ESOL teacher because the lessons did not help improve her English knowledge. Although acknowledging the natural acquisition of English through being in an English-speaking environment, Chau attributed her improved knowledge and usage of English to her father's tutoring while overseas. When she was 15, Chau returned to Beauty City to complete senior secondary school. "*English teaching at senior secondary school was traditional, grammar-focused, and exam-driven*". It was teacher dominated and characterised by "*rote learning and a scarcity of resources*". Her senior secondary school English teacher seemed disappointed with Chau's poor English grammar despite her six years of studying in an English-speaking country. English language instruction seemed to be more systematic in Vietnam. Her greatest motivation for "learning English was to win the national English competition for "*tuyển thẳng vào đại học*" (exemption from the national university entrance exam)*" and she won the incentive award.

The English Language Teaching programme at RedStar in the late 2000s was somehow different to her senior secondary school experiences. At RedStar the focus was student-centred with cooperative learning in groups and students using their initiative. She had more opportunities to express herself. However, "*teaching was generally traditional with more teacher than student talk and learning resources were limited to coursebooks and CDs*". Her purpose in learning English at this point was to find a job. "*The higher the marks, the better the job*". Her parents and social expectations influenced her motivation to learn English.

Retained upon graduation, Chau became an English teacher at RedStar in the early 2010s. Despite "*having to follow institutional regulations and instructional resources, which were "nặng về thi cử" (exam-driven)*", Chau saw her teaching as flexible, student-centred, and based on cooperative learning in groups. She did not always use the prescribed coursebooks but told her students to because there might be content in it used for the exams. Chau saw herself as "*the guide who provided students with the path*" and let them go on their own. She explicitly told her students they should strive for good grades for a better future job.

In Chau's view, "*learning a FL was to learn its linguistic and cultural features*". The most common purpose of learning a FL was to communicate with those who spoke that language in the contexts of study, work, travel, or entertainment. However, "*the priority was learning to pass the institutional exams for programme completion*". Teaching a FL was to create opportunities in the classroom for students to gain linguistic knowledge of that language and to use it in practice and real contexts.

For Chau, an effective language learner had an orientation toward the FL (nature vs nurture), was confident in taking risks and making mistakes, and had a sense of hard work, self-study, and collaboration. An effective language teacher was professionally knowledgeable, had skills of knowledge transmission, was aware of students' levels, was skillful in classroom management, and was able to facilitate learning. In addition, they should be technologically literate to motivate students and create online learning tasks.

Effective FL teaching was associated with "*clear objectives and a teacher's positive emotional feelings toward students, especially those who were hard-working and showed positive attitudes towards learning*". It was incentive-based teaching with bonus points, which paid more attention to "ngoan" (obedient or hard working) students. "*Effective teaching was well-structured with staged learning tasks such as vocabulary or warm-up tasks followed by a guided task (e.g., cloze information gap) before pair or group work*". Telling stories about the teacher's learning and working experiences or related to the content matter helped produce effective lessons. Chau maintained

this helped engage students, although sometimes telling stories was time consuming. She affirmed that the "*teacher's reflection during the lessons by observing students' emotional reactions contributed significantly to effective teaching*". They could change the nature of a learning task (e.g., from individual to group work).

6.2.2.2. Trang

"I often tend to give good marks to "ngoan" students (well-behaved and obedient)."

Born in the early 1990s in a suburb of central Vietnam's Beauty City to a family she described as underprivileged, Trang's parents were farmers, and her sister and brother were students. She saw academic achievement as a way to escape poverty. She said to herself she would repay her parents' sacrifices by studying hard. When she was eight years old, Trang was exposed to the English language through her uncle playing songs by the Irish boy band *Westlife*. Having no idea of English, she tried to transcribe the English sounds into Vietnamese sounds. She then sang the songs again as Vietnamese sounds.

Trang began learning English at school in Grade 6 (12 years old). "*Translate the following sentences into English*" was the typical instruction in the English lessons at lower levels of schooling. The approach to teaching and learning was "*traditional with the teacher being the authority and the students memorising English vocabulary and grammar*". With coursebooks as the primary resources, the grammar-translation method dominated along with "*học vẹt để thi cử*" (rote and exam-driven learning). As her family could not afford out-of-school tuition, she studied English on her own. However, from the age of 13, Trang created her own extracurricular learning through her unpaid job as a tourist guide for international travellers to her city. Trang was later motivated through participation in an English Speaking Competition where she won the consolation prize.

While studying her Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching at RedStar in the early 2010s, she experienced increased teacher–student interactions within a learning environment that promoted speaking opportunities for students and a sense of sharing. However, "*teaching and learning in many subject areas such as listening and reading were still traditionally exam-driven*". She recalled vividly the day she studied the first English listening lesson when her teacher brought an old CD player into the classroom. As a university student, she was motivated by images of successful young teachers of English. There were two images of success she held onto: one was that of a dynamic teacher of English, normally seen among young teachers of English, and the other of the charming Vietnamese female teachers who showed "*loving care for their students – teachers as loving*

mothers". During her university study, because her family could not afford the tuition fees for her siblings' out-of-school English classes, Trang taught them at home.

After university graduation, Trang taught for some time in a suburban senior secondary school in Beauty City, which she found to be restrictive with little freedom to choose how to teach her students. She needed to "*teach for the national and school exams*". There were conflicts between her efforts to create an open learning environment in which the teacher and students maintained easy-going relationships and the "*unwritten codes of conduct for teachers at the school*" where she taught. Her management staff and colleagues told Trang that her communicative language teaching methods were inconsistent with the behavioral norm of that school. She said the other teachers complained of her class "*making too much noise which showed a lack of discipline*". Trang would have liked to make changes to how English was taught and learn at that school, but her innovative ideas were not welcomed. Her management staff and colleagues told Trang not to move beyond the implicitly normed boundaries of being a teacher. These boundaries even defined appropriate gestures and types of body language used in the classroom. Knowing she intended to quit teaching at the senior secondary school, her mother said she was luckier than her peers because she had a job right after university graduation. Despite being unhappy, Trang obeyed her mother and continued teaching at that senior secondary school. Owing to both personal and academic connections with RedStar during her teaching at senior secondary school, Trang was recruited as an English teacher at RedStar in the late 2010s.

Trang viewed "*learning a FL as learning the target culture and simultaneously perfecting the Vietnamese language*". Learning a FL was not only about learning vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns; it was about learning about the context of use. "*Learning English was to master language knowledge and for employment"*. Teaching should adapt to students' learning styles and levels of competence, providing less able learners with knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures and more able learners with a holistic approach to language through the provision of linguistic knowledge such as phonetics and phonology, morphology, and syntax.

In Trang's view, "*an effective language learner must demonstrate a great passion for the language and persevere with knowledge exploration*". An effective language teacher was a co-learner in the classroom, "*hòa mình vào bài giảng*" (immersed themself in the lesson), and shared the teaching role. They had strong expertise in the target language and social knowledge. However, "*they were not an authority of knowledge*". They should be extrovert, innovative, a psychologist who

understands students' needs, knowledgeable about both the subject matter and social issues, and demonstrates a high level of self-efficacy.

Trang viewed effective teaching as being outcome-oriented and well-structured and promoted cooperative learning with a sense of sharing. In addition, effective teaching was reflected through contextualised lesson planning based on "*multiple intelligences*" (Trang's words) such as different teaching approaches for different groups of students. One-size-fits-all lesson planning was unfeasible because students have distinctive personalities, socioeducational backgrounds, and learning environments. Warm-up or brainstorming tasks should be included to open students' minds and thinking. The teacher should be a guide who opens the door to knowledge for his/her students. They should "*maintain a continuous connection with their students, for example, through social media*". Students should be active and productive with the teacher's guidance. The same content matter had to be flexibly used for different groups of students who had different learning styles. "*Effective teaching was incentive-based and reflective*" and drew on colleagues' evaluations and learning from students' and her own mistakes, based on which teaching methods would be appropriately adjusted to suit students' abilities. Telling stories about the teacher's personal learning and working experiences related to the content matter helped produce effective lessons.

6.2.2.3. Minh

"Grammar and sentence structures are indispensable in language lessons."

Minh was born in the early 1990s in central Vietnam's Beauty City. Her parents were university teachers. She acknowledged her father's influence on her education. Minh's earliest memory of learning English was as an eight year old, learning single English words from the picture book *Let's Go*. Minh depicted her English learning throughout lower levels of schooling as exam-driven and centred on grammar and vocabulary with national textbooks and the "*teacher's input as primary resources with the objective of passing the senior secondary school leaving and university entrance exams*". When Minh studied for her Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies at RedStar in the early 2010s, there was more room for self-study and cooperative learning although the grammar-translation method was dominant with teacher lecturing and student receiving. Minh recalled a majority of lessons in which students kept silent without posing questions for learning. At this time, she won a scholarship for a one-year internship as a student in a northern European country where English was used as the medium of instruction. This was when she learned that practicality (i.e., applied learning tasks) of the lessons and student-centredness were the most important aspects of teaching. In her host university abroad, the teacher–student relationship was so close that students

could contact their teachers directly via phone or email. On her return to Vietnam, she learned from her Vietnamese university teachers' methods as she was determined to become an English teacher. She was retained as an English teacher at RedStar in the late 2010s.

Her teaching at the time of this study, as she admitted, was exam-driven with prescribed coursebooks that needed "*thay đổi tí*" (translates into "minor changes" in English, yet in the Vietnamese sociocultural context, "*tí*" means the opposite). She preferred to use group work, presentations, and bonus-point incentives in her lessons. Minh used "*a private chat group on Facebook to establish a question and answer forum for each group of students*" she was teaching. Although students could directly message her through Facebook messenger, Minh stressed there should be "*proper decorum in teacher–student relationships*". In the classroom, Minh believed the teacher's verbal closeness and engaging attitude was particularly important. The connectedness between the teacher and students should be reflected through their dynamics in teaching and learning. She held that it was the "*teacher's responsibility to keep students motivated*". Minh especially stressed that comprehensible Englishes were admissible in teaching and learning, without focusing on British or American English. For her, native-like English pronunciation should not be a priority in EFL teaching and learning. This belief was influenced by the subject of sociolinguistics she learned while abroad.

In her view, "*learning required disciplined routine, passion and perseverance*" and involved students creating a community of learners. "*Teaching was an interactive activity*" to provide students with appropriate learning directions; however, "*an indispensable component of the lesson was grammar*". She said her current teaching was greatly influenced by her former Vietnamese university teachers, whom she considered model teachers methodologically.

An effective language learner was viewed by Minh as self-motivated and self-interested, which led to vigorous self-study. Minh said this would help them be more responsible in cooperative learning when needed. She maintained "*an effective language learner was confident in learning from others and independent of the teacher's input*", was a risk-taker who did not fear making mistakes, and had a sense of sharing. An effective language teacher, in Minh's view, was a dynamic agent who was a good listener and critically learned from others to create multidimensional teaching and learning environments in which their students could access different learning methods and resources. They were practice-oriented and student-oriented to focus less on theory, being creative, innovative, and flexible. They had "*cách dạy*" (teaching tactics) to touch students' hearts.

Her view of effective teaching was "*a higher level of student autonomy, the better*". Students' opinions had to be appreciated in relation to teacher lecturing. Students had to prepare the subject content in groups prior to class discussion. There should be more student than teacher talk. The use of both Vietnamese and English in the lessons could contribute to their effectiveness. The translation from English into Vietnamese in the classroom could be regarded as an effective instructional technique because the ultimate purpose of teaching was to transfer the subject content, not only the language per se. "*Using only English in the classroom could be a sign of language abuse*", hence, to some extent, halting the process of language learning. Repeated mistakes made by the teacher might affect the lesson's effectiveness. "*Effective teaching was incentive-based and dependent on the extent to which students posed questions in the lessons*". No questions or reactions from students could be a failure of the teacher's instruction. Colleagues' evaluations, especially from seniors, were valuable in making teaching effective.

6.2.3. Section summary

In summary, all participants were originally from Beauty City or close by and completed their tertiary study at Blue University or RedStar, two affiliates of Umbrella University. They were influenced and helped by family members in learning English, with Diem, Thanh, Chau, Huy, and Le being taught by their family members, and while Minh, Ngoc, Trang, and Diep were not, they showed a love for English. Six of those persuaded to become English teachers by their families were born in the 1960s and 1970s (Diem, Thanh, Le, Ngoc, Diep, and Huy) with only Chau being born post 1986. Trang's inner motivation to become an English teacher was to show filial piety toward her hard-working and devoted parents. Whether the participants were studying English before or after "đổi mới", they experienced a similar educational context driven by exams, dominated by the traditional grammar-translation approach. Ngoc, Huy, and Le obtained their postgraduate degrees in a foreign country while others completed their postgraduate qualifications at RedStar. Seven participants, except for Diep and Trang, were retained as English teachers at the university where they had studied. Participants viewed an effective language learner or teacher largely from the lens of personal qualities. They emphasised the teacher–student academic and social–emotional connection. In addition, teachers' personal learning and work stories were perceived by most participants as contributing to effective teaching. The next section moves beyond the profiles to examine teacher beliefs and practices with particular reference to the classroom observations, teaching materials used, and the interview data related to the observations and resources.

6.3. Participants' beliefs and practices of tertiary EFL teaching

This section reports on the participants' views and practice of tertiary EFL teaching drawing on the analysis of two rounds of interviews (pre-observation and post-observation) and on classroom observations (Appendix 11). These findings are discussed under two themes: governmental and institutional practices and sociocultural influences on teachers and teaching. In addition, historical perspectives of EFL teaching are specified in subsections where appropriate.

6.3.1. Governmental and institutional practices

Governmental and institutional practices posed both affordances and hindrances for participants' EFL teaching activity. The six major issues identified by participants related to their teaching were: low "*lương bổng*" (salary and additional earnings), outdated but required institutional coursebooks, examination-driven teaching and learning, the primacy of basic language knowledge, "*dạy miết*" (teaching ceaselessly), and PLD.

Low "lương bổng" (salary and additional earnings)

Operating as a 'supplementary' educational system, classes outside of schools and universities (moonlighting) have been common in Vietnam for a long time and burgeoning in recent years (Dang, H. 2013; Dang, Rogers & Halsey, 2016; Marginson, 2011). With the exception of Minh, the participants talked about the government's salary policy as impacting on their teaching. "*The government salary scales for teachers are generally low. I know most teachers have to find something else to do,*" Thanh said. Chau shared that she felt so stressed because of the "*low salary*" that she wanted to quit teaching. However, "*thinking about seeing my students' lovely faces and knowing that many of them desire to learn*" pulled Chau back to the classroom.

The government's low salary scales and the need for additional earnings created stress for the participants. Le sometimes felt unable to provide for his family financially and wanted to give up teaching to do something else.

> *I was once contracted to write the institutional coursebook on translation. It took me several months to complete and how much was I paid? Three million Vietnam Dong [equivalent to $150 USD]! … I felt sorry for myself. I couldn't help my family.* (Le)

Trang took a part-time job because her salary was insufficient to meet her living costs and to assist her parents pay tuition fees for her siblings.

I'm aware that this [doing a part-time job] can effect my teaching, but no way. It's too low for daily expenses. I was once reprimanded [by the management staff] and the evaluation on my teaching was not positive. I wish there was a way out. (Trang)

Diem, Thanh, and Ngoc viewed their teaching salary as stable but low compared to other professions and insufficient to meet the rising cost of living. To meet the shortfall, they accepted 'moonlighting' contracts to teach classes outside of the university. However, all participants agreed that the teaching profession was less competitive with less pressure than other jobs.

Outdated but required prescribed coursebooks

All participants emphasised the importance of institutional curriculum documents such as the unit descriptions and the prescribed coursebooks for the subject areas because they provided a framework for consistency across different occurrences of subject areas taught by different teachers. They regarded it as imperative to follow these documents despite viewing them negatively. They described them as "*chán chết*" (boring to death – Trang), "*chưa đủ*" (not enough/shortcoming – Chau, Diem, Ngoc, Diep, Le, Thanh, Huy), "*hơi gò bó*" (a bit constraining – Chau) or needing "*thay đổi tí*" (minor changes – Minh). Furthermore, Minh and Trang noted the coursebooks were the same ones used when they were students at RedStar. Similarly, Huy, Le, Diep, Diem, and Chau expressed their concern about achieving the national objective of standardising the EFL teaching and learning at tertiary level if these prescribed coursebooks continued to be used. Huy clarified, "… *learning tasks in the coursebooks for language skills subjects don't often align with the requirements in the [national] framework. For example, the coursebook doesn't provide a learning task on essay writing while this is required in it [framework].*" He added that the outdated coursebook content might not be appropriate for the current teaching and learning context. However, Trang, Minh, Ngoc, Huy, and Le said it was the job at management level to bring about changes in the institutional guiding documents in order to improve instructional practice.

I adapted learning activities from other sources for the coursebook content. It's "chán chết" (I am bored to death) to follow the prescribed coursebook for the whole semester, but anyway we must because if not [disappointed voice], the evaluation on our performance will be impacted. If I had power and money, I would first change our faculty's curriculum because it is too outdated and "dàn trải" (unfocused). (Trang)

Being aware of the shortcomings of the prescribed coursebooks, participants opted for diverse approaches to such required texts. While Diem and Thanh used the set texts and curriculum documents, Diep, Ngoc, Chau, Minh, Huy, Trang, and Le chose to adapt, modify, or ignore some

content. Minh, Trang, Ngoc, Thanh, and Le held that the management staff should assume the responsibility for an improved and innovative institutional framework for better delivery of subject areas. While Minh, Ngoc, and Thanh used the phrase "*nên xem lại*" (should reconsider) to refer to this responsibility, Trang implied the design of the institutional framework was based on power, not on collective academic evaluation. She said if she had power, she would make content changes to this framework to provide students with more practical language skills (e.g., writing a resume in English and English for workplace communication). Le (departmental management staff) claimed he did not have the power to change it. However, participants cautioned the appropriation should be done in a way that the prescribed content was sufficiently taught, otherwise one would be "*nói chết*" (severely criticised – Thanh) or "*tách biệt*" (isolated – Le). These concerns signal the participants' recognition of the potential for detrimental professional consequences from stepping away from the set texts.

> *Teachers and students "phải" (must) abide by [the prescribed coursebook] because the content for the assessments is taken from mandated instructional materials. If we don't, it's a bit "tách biệt" (isolated), you know, not like everywhere else.* (Le)

> *Certainly, we "phải" (must) follow the same coursebook. If not, "hắn nói chết" (in a subtly assertive voice - a central dialect which means that "We will be severely reprimanded by the management staff). I will follow about two thirds or three quarters [of the content]. The remaining [the content/sections of the coursebook] can be adapted from other sources to prepare students for the exams.* (Thanh)

The observational data showed a congruence between participants' beliefs and practices regarding the appropriation of the prescribed coursebooks. Of 18 classroom observations, there were 14 minor modifications, 10 substitutions of the coursebook content and/or learning tasks, six minor additions, and five strict adherences (see Appendix 20 for a detailed description of appropriation of prescribed coursebooks). Modification means using the prescribed coursebook content with a different type of learning task (e.g., in Ngoc's Reading 2 lesson, students worked in pairs to identify main ideas of the text instead of individual reading as prescribed). Addition refers to the use of an additional learning task to support the prescribed coursebook content (e.g., in Diem's Writing 2 lesson, students peer checked an individual-written short paragraph about who they wanted to be in future to support the prescribed task of describing job characteristics). Adherence requires keeping intact the prescribed coursebook content and types of learning tasks. Substitution denotes complete replacement of the prescribed coursebook content and types of learning tasks (e.g., in

Diem's Writing 2 lesson, students undertook a writing practice (B1-CEFR) from RedStar's institutional test bank instead of writing descriptions of a place students visited).

Minor modifications were common, for example, in Trang's and Chau's Speaking 2 lessons, Ngoc's and Thanh's Reading 2 lessons, Diem's Writing 2 lesson, and Diep's Speaking 5 lesson (Appendix 19). The adaptation was aimed to facilitate either students' taking the initiative, collaborative learning, or dynamism. In Trang's Speaking 2 lesson, which focused on the topic of less common jobs (e.g., mountain climbing guide), for instance, each student was asked to interview six other students about their choice of future job instead of the prescribed teacher–student question–answer warm-up activity describing pictures of offbeat jobs (Table 6.1). Trang's modification might be based on the sociocultural unpopularity of some "offbeat jobs" in Vietnam such as mountain climbing guide. Similarly, in their Reading 2 lessons, Ngoc and Thanh converted individual into paired work on reading for main ideas. Notable was that participants' modifications still followed the coursebooks' content and structure of tasks.

Replacing the prescribed content or learning tasks was the second most common approach in the observed lessons. Participants tended to replace the prescribed unit with exam preparation (Appendix 20). For example, Chau's Listening 2 lesson (90 minutes) focused on a B1-level listening practice test instead of the prescribed Unit 5 (NorthStar 2 – Listening and Speaking, pp. 73-88). In addition, substituting the prescribed content with exam preparation tasks was observed in Chau's Speaking 2 lesson, Diep's Writing 2 lesson, and Le's, Huy's, Minh's, and Ngoc's Reading 2 lessons. However, the substitution of prescribed content and individual translation tasks in Trang's and Minh's Translation 1 lessons was possibly intended for students' collaborative learning through pair or group work. Minh provided students with two teacher-selected texts for pair translation in the classroom, whereas students in Trang's class worked in groups for the whole semester and presented their translation versions of self-selected texts in the classroom.

Additional learning tasks were added to provide students with further practice of the prescribed content. It was observed that participants incorporated different language skills in their lessons this way. Students in Trang's Speaking 2 lesson were required to work in pairs and write a short report about their individual interviews with six peers. Students then orally reported their peers' choices of future jobs. Likewise, in her Reading 2 lesson, Diem added two additional learning tasks: one was peer feedback on homework (a vocabulary exercise related to the prescribed topic of advantages and disadvantages of living in the city and country), and the other a group discussion after the

prescribed reading exercises which were reading for main ideas and details based on the text "The farming life for me" (NorthStar 2 – Reading and Writing, Unit 2, pp. 26-28).

Furthermore, supplementary tasks were evident in Thanh's Reading 2 lesson (pairs writing a short summary of 5-6 sentences of the reading text on serious games in the coursebook, and Diem's Writing 2 lesson (peer assessment of individually completed homework on who the students would like to be in future to support the prescribed content of writing a descriptive paragraph about a job) (see Appendix 20 for more examples).

Table 6.1

Trang's Speaking 2 lesson

Coursebook plan (Frazier, L. & Mills, R. (2009). *Northstar 2 – Listening and Speaking: Students' book* (3rd ed.). Pearson.)	Observed lesson
- Task 1: Warm-up (class discussion) – Describe the pictures of some offbeat jobs - Task 2: Vocabulary – A 12-question information matching exercise (individual work) and a 10-question multiple-choice exercise to improve vocabulary related to jobs (pair work) - Task 3: Create (pair work) – Prepare for a job interview by outlining questions and answers - Task 4: Grammar (pair work) – Practice with descriptive adjectives related to jobs (e.g., tiring, creative, high-salary, unusual) - Task 5: Pronunciation (word stress – individual work) – Practice pronouncing job-related words (e.g., dangerous, tiring, educated, difficult, interesting) - Task 5: Small talk (pair work) – Showing politeness and interest in conversations about jobs - Task 6: Workshop (group work) – one group (job seekers) consult with another (job counsellors) - Task 7: Alternative speaking topics (small group work) – Why do you think some people like offbeat jobs? How do you think people get started in their offbeat jobs in the first place?	- Task 1: one student interviewing six peers about what they wanted to do as future jobs - Task 2: students working in pairs and writing short reports on their interviews; then reporting their interviews orally pair by pair - Task 3: students preparing interview questions and taking turns in pairs to role-play a job interview - Task 4: students working in groups to discuss characteristics of some jobs - Homework: Looking at unit 2 in coursebook for next lesson (Topic: Building a better community)

The least common approach to the prescribed content and learning tasks was adherence. For example, Diem and Thanh kept intact part of prescribed content in their Reading 2 lessons (Unit 2 and Unit 6 of NorthStar 2 – Reading and Writing, respectively) in the observed weeks. Adherence was evident in Thanh's Translation 1 lesson (using the content in the coursebook) and Huy's Speaking 5 lesson (students' group presentations on self-chosen topics as prescribed in the institutional unit description) (Appendix 20).

Having recognised shortcomings in the prescribed coursebooks, Chau, Ngoc, Thanh, and Le had previously attempted to design teaching materials for their respective subject areas. However, they were not sufficiently supported by the university either financially or emotionally. Le and Thanh were once enthusiastic about designing a web-based learning application for a translation course but felt the financial support from RedStar was insufficient. The extra payment did not help Le support his family and it was not worth it for him, while Thanh said the design required a huge amount of time for modest payment. However, Chau was motivated to design teaching materials for her speaking classes not by the institutional financial support but by her students' thirst for learning reflected by their excited engagement in class learning tasks.

Although the participants expressed the view that the purpose of their current EFL teaching was to produce a skilled labour force for Vietnam's economic development, neither the interviews nor the classroom observations provided any examples of how this translated into choice of, use or reference to materials designed to help students for the labour market. However, the participants were concerned about the future EFL teacher training programs due to the government's unappealing salary policy. Huy feared that talented students would rather choose other "*nóng*" (trendy) courses such as business administration, banking, and information technology with well-paid jobs upon graduation, than English language teaching and translation courses. Thanh observed that a number of students appeared to choose EFL teacher training programmes either because their low university entrance marks did not meet the requirements for other preferred courses or because they did not know what to study. Ngoc, Diep, Diem, and Chau predicted there would be fewer enrolments in EFL teacher training programmes because of the current government's salary policy.

Test-driven teaching and learning

Preparing students for the institutionally formatted tests and examinations was mentioned by participants (except for Trang and Minh) as an important objective of teaching. Across the 18 interviews, the word "exams" occurred at least 60 times with Diem, Diep, Le, Chau, Ngoc, and Thanh

stating that the purpose of teaching and learning language knowledge was to pass the exams. Diem maintained teaching should be to equip students with test-taking strategies. Although test-taking strategies were not observed in Diem's lessons, these were praticed in other participants' lessons (see Table 6.2 for an example). Similarly, Le emphasised the need to prepare students for different types of examination questions. The teachers felt pressured into using what they saw as impractical coursebooks because the content might be in the exam questions, which were often beyond teachers' control. Thanh, Ngoc, and Diep used additional sources such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) for their students to practise the cloze test formats in class. Good exam results made "bảng điểm đẹp" (beautiful academic transcripts – Diep, Chau, Thanh), which were a necessity for good future jobs and further studies (Chau, Diep, Thanh, Le, Huy).

Table 6.2

Test-taking strategies practiced in Chau's Listening 2 lesson (B1-CEFR)

	Description of task	Strategies practiced
Task 1: Multiple choice	- Seven pictures with each accompanied by a three-option question - Each question is based on a short monologue or conversation - Each recording played twice - Students worked individually	Predicting (teacher elicited vocabulary related to pictures before playing the recordings; students predicted content of the recordings before listening)
Task 2: Multiple choice	- Six three-option questions based on a short monologue about a tourist destination in Vietnam - The recording played twice - Students worked individually	Note-taking (students took note while listening for the first time)
Task 3: Cloze gap fill	- Six questions based on a short monologue recording played twice (Topic: Story Writing Competition) - Students worked individually	- Predicting types of words to fill in the gaps - Note-taking (students took note while listening for the first time)
Task 4: True-False	- Six question based on a short conversation between a lecturer and a student about a course of study - The recording played twice - Students worked individually	- Guessing (teacher asked students what the focus/content of the conversation could be by connecting ideas in the given statements)

The observational data suggested that equipping students with language knowledge and preparing them for institutional exams received more attention than preparing them for further study or employment. This was evidenced by the amount of class time spent on preparing students for the

tests or exams. Across the 18 observed lessons, 10 were focused on practising or preparation for tests/examinations (Appendix 20). While all those teaching a course submitted examination questions, the Office for Testing and Quality Assurance, not the subject teachers, made the final decision on which tests or test questions were to be used for the end-of-term exams. In the Vietnamese education system, it is usual to devote considerable time to revision. This revision is focused on test formats (mainly paper based), types of test questions (mainly multiple choice, true-false, gap fill), and review of content learned (i.e., the topics for the tests).

The primacy of basic language knowledge

As the institutional tests/exams focused on language aspects, participants viewed that provision of basic language knowledge was the core component of teaching and learning. They perceived teaching as providing students with language knowledge such as grammar, pronunciation, sentence structures, and language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). For them, language knowledge should come first in the teaching and learning, which laid a sound foundation for communicative skills development later in the learning process. Participants' beliefs about the objective of teaching and learning a FL seemed to be affected by their schooling experience in a traditional instructional setting, which focused on developing knowledge of grammar of the target language. Le expressed a good command of language knowledge would help students sustain communication in the target language. Chau, Diem, Diep, and Minh emphasised grammar and sentence structures were indispensable in language lessons. Furthermore, Diem, Trang, Thanh, and Huy specified the learning process should be appropriately staged to achieve ultimate learning effectiveness. Accordingly, "*the first fundamental stage in learning a FL is to acquire a good command of basic language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, followed by focus on the target culture, that is English-speaking cultures*" (Diem). Chau shared that she often started her lessons with a vocabulary activity. Her story helped depict the context and explain her emphasis on mastering grammar in English teaching and learning.

> *My English teacher at high school criticised me for not being able to configure verbs in conditional sentences despite my studying in an Anglophone country before. I came to understand that grammar was indispensable in English learning. Requiring students to acquire English naturally in an English-as-a-foreign-language environment, without exposure to or explanation of grammar, appears to be impossible. We need to master that [grammar].* (Chau)

It appeared that the participants viewed the first and second years of tertiary level as still being the starting point in EFL learning; this was despite most of their students having studied English for nine

years during their earlier schooling. It should be noted that the proficiency level required for a senior secondary school leaver was B1 (CEFR) (see Table 5.1). The observational data did not show the teaching of English-speaking target cultures. Nevertheless, Chau, Diem, Diep, Huy, Le, and Thanh questioned the effectiveness of the compartmentalisation of language skills into separate areas such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the institutional curriculum. Paradoxically, the prescribed coursebooks were skill-integrated such as listening and speaking, and reading and writing while teachers were assigned to teach only listening or speaking. This compartmentalisation of language skills in the curriculum had been in operation at RedStar for over a decade. This was why Chau described her feeling of "*hụt hẫng*" (feeling lost) when she had to finish her listening lesson, which could be otherwise continued with a speaking practice for students to familiarise with communication contexts. Participants emphasised the necessity of teaching skill-integrated lessons in which two or more language skills were integrated such as listening and speaking (Chau, Diem), reading and writing (Huy), translation and speaking (Thanh), or listening and writing (Diep).

Due to the compartmentalisation of language skills in the curriculum, skill integration was evidenced in only two lessons: Trang's Speaking 2 and Translation 1 lessons (Appendix 4). In Trang's Speaking 2 lessons, students were required to work in pairs and write a short report of their individual interviews with six peers about their choice of future jobs. For her Translation 1 lesson, Trang had groups of students choose two texts, one in Vietnamese and the other in English, from any available source, write short summaries of these texts in the same language as the source text, and translate the summaries into the opposite language. Students in Trang's lesson chose to write the summary of an article on social life in *Dân Việt* newspaper (Vietnamese People) and translated the summary into English. This was a step away from the grammar-translation approach to translation lessons.

"Dạy miết" (teaching ceaselessly)

"*Dạy miết*" (teaching ceaselessly – Thanh) was viewed by participants as resulting in academic concerns. They said they were required to teach many groups of students on different subjects (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in a four-month semester, which might result in either ineffectiveness or feeling burnt-out (e.g., Diem, Diep, and Trang had 8 groups each, Minh and Chau had 10 groups each, and Ngoc, Huy, Thanh and Le had 11 or 12 groups each). Thanh and Ngoc were so "*ham dạy*" (keeping their nose to teaching) that they either ignored or did not have time for PLD participation. Thanh clarified, "*… many times I don't know why I teach too many hours in a week. If there is a workshop during the week, I try to participate because I have to*". In the Vietnamese culture, keeping one's nose to one's teaching bears both academic and financial connotations with

the latter being the most keenly felt. Chau stated she felt lucky if she had to teach a few groups of students a semester because that was when she had a more profound connection with her students. Additionally, some participants had other institutional responsibilities. Trang, for example, was an executive member of the Youth Union, a non-academic but time-consuming role. Therefore, she felt sometimes she did not invest sufficient time to her teaching and this negatively impacted on her teaching effectiveness. She confessed she was sometimes criticised by the management staff for neglecting her teaching. Huy and Le admitted their management roles were time-consuming, which affected their time for lesson planning. This could explicate the participants' minor adaptations of the prescribed coursebooks as discussed earlier. Consequently, Ngoc, Thanh, Chau, and Huy claimed they were sometimes "*dạy cho hết giờ*" (teaching to fill the time) without engaging with students in knowledge exploration. Ngoc commented that "*many times I feel so exhausted because of balancing between teaching and other commitments that I didn't quite engage in my class teaching. Many times I taught just to fill the time.*"

Participants' perceptions of PLD

Participants acknowledged the importance of PLD in their teaching. They used the term "*kiến thức bị cùn*" (knowledge is blunt) to refer to the need for PLD. Participants held that teachers need to innovate their teaching practice (Trang, Minh) by keeping up to date with contemporary advances in the field of language teaching by reading research articles (Le, Thanh, Ngoc). Diem, Thanh, Diep, Huy, Chau, and Trang viewed PLD as good opportunities for colleagues to share valuable teaching experiences on classroom management or sharing effective teaching techniques such as how to teach paragraph writing (Diem). Meanwhile, Minh, Ngoc, Le, and Thanh appreciated the exposure they had to different educational contexts when they participated in PLD events overseas (e.g., a short training course in curriculum in an anglophone country). They were engaged in these events because they were not bound with other daily commitments as when participating in similar events in Vietnam. However, they confessed it was hard to apply what they learned from these PLD events because of sociocultural differences (e.g., the application of a communicative language teaching approach to the writing lessons that still focused on language aspects). Participants felt demotivated by PLD events such as workshops or intensive training courses when the content was repetitive (Diem, Chau), monotonous with a constant focus on teaching methodologies such as content-based teaching (Diep, Le, Trang), impractical due to incompatibility with the Vietnamese context such as teaching techniques for second language learners while Vietnamese learners are foreign language learners (Chau, Huy), lacking depth such as how to compose poems in English (Chau, Ngoc), and unsystematic despite their content being relevant to Project 2020, for example the preceding

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workshop was about test formats while the susequent one was about the CEFR's global descriptions (Trang, Le, Ngoc, Chau). Trang recalled attending a series of institutionally organised workshops under Project 2020 with the content being more focused on the adaptation of CEFR into the Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam than on how to align these competence levels with classroom teaching and learning. However, at other workshops, the content was focused on how to adapt available test prepration materials in classroom learning. Le, Chau, and Ngoc mentioned a national MoET-sponsored one-off workshop that equipped teachers with test-design skills, which were otherwise better implemented through formal courses. Trang used the Vietnamese phrase "*cưỡi ngựa xem hoa*" (to scamper/not going into details) to denote that these PLD events were not useful.

> *Many workshops have repeated topics but we have to attend as this could affect the evaluation on our academic performance. Attending these [workshops] is just "cưỡi ngựa xem hoa" (skimming).* (Trang)

> *I remember participating in a workshop and after that everyone was able to compose a poem. But I don't know what that was for.* (Ngoc)

Furthermore, participants found it challenging to participate in PLD events due to intensive teaching loads and non-academic involvement/commitments. Diem, Thanh, Ngoc, Chau, Huy, and Le shared they had to "manage time" or "try" to attend workshops or conferences. This means that they had to attend PLD as governmentally or institutionally required. Thanh, Chau, Huy, and Le wished their teaching load could be reduced so that all teachers had time for PLD. Similarly, Thanh, Ngoc, and Le expressed that it would be much better if they were freed from daily teaching when participating in PLD events because workshops or conferences were often organised during class time. Pragmatically, managing time or trying implies their status of being fully "booked" with non-academic commitments or the imperative rather than motivation to engage in PLD events.

A perceived solution to the tension between excessive teaching load and PLD engagement was building an informal PLD community and practice for themselves. Trang, Chau, and Minh, for example, often took the initiative in discussing academic issues (e.g., teaching strategies and techniques and classroom management) with colleagues of their age during break time between teaching hours or at meetings within the specialist divisions. Likewise, Diep, Diem, Ngoc, Thanh, Huy, and Le considered monthly meetings within the faculty as good opportunities to learn from each other. This collaborative PLD was believed to be an effective channel of sharing among colleagues and included discussions on academic issues such as teaching ideas and techniques

(Diem, Ngoc, Le, Minh, Diep) (e.g., how to integrate pronunciation in speaking lessons, how to group students together so that each member actively participates in group work), peer observation (Minh) (e.g., head of specialist division and colleagues providing feedback on lessons they observe, discussing a lesson after observing a colleague's lesson), and collegial assessment and evaluation (Minh, Trang, Huy) (e.g., evaluation by head of specialist division and management staff on academic performance at the end of semester).

Another type of informal PLD identified by the participants came from experiential learning over years of teaching experience (Minh, Trang, Huy, Thanh, and Diem), which some believed to be more important than qualifications (Huy, Minh). Trang and Diem claimed that they learned from every lesson by reflecting on their own teaching methods and techniques such as reviewing what was effective or ineffective about learning tasks and what should be done in the next lessons. Similarly, Thanh reflected through a diary of the lessons while Le did action research for his own teaching. Le shared that many years ago he did a quick survey after having noticed similar mistakes in his students' translation exercises. He found that many students used Google translation which he viewed as "*buồn cười*" (ridiculous) and translation software as emotionless. He then collaborated with an IT colleague to create an application for translation which was basically an open corpus to which teachers and students could add useful examples. Unfortunately, the application was not further developed due to a lack of institutional financial support.

6.3.2. Sociocultural perspectives of teachers and teaching

Teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context are influenced by Confucian sociocultural values (Hallinger & Truong, 2016; Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Nguyen et al, 2006; Phan & Locke, 2016). The sociocultural perspectives of the participants in this study can be categorised under four major themes of teachers and teaching, including the overarching goal of collective harmony, fear of the detrimental consequences of teachers' mistakes, viewing teaching as role modelling, and the role of family and friends as "*chỗ dựa tinh thần*" (the source of spiritual and emotional support).

The value of "hòa thuận" (collective harmony)

The Confucian value of harmony is highly valued in social interactions in collectivist societies such as Vietnam (Hallinger & Truong, 2016; Jones et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2017). *"Hòa thuận"* - collective harmony is perceived as an important characteristic of higher education in Vietnam because it contributes to organisational stability, through the strength of staff members' commitment toward their colleagues and the university (Hallinger & Truong, 2016; Tran et al., 2017). In this study, the

participants valued collegial emotional closeness. They also conceptualised collective harmony in a classroom context as teacher-student immediacy, which was dependent on students' obedience and hard work. Noted was that the participants' conceptualisation of collective harmony was around keeping "*dĩ hòa vi quý*" (a soft answer turns away wrath). This meant avoiding immediate confrontation by not arguing but rather explaining things later in a less confrontational way.

Collective harmony amongst colleagues was perceived by the participants as essential for professional relationships and effective teaching across a department. Some participants saw their colleagues and students as a second family. To maintain collegial harmony in this 'second family' meant avoiding confrontation or conflict (Thanh, Diep, Diem). Having similar personal talks with colleagues that might happen in families was seen as a way of resolving conflicts. Diem tried to avoid gossip or rumours among colleagues because these could affect collegial harmony. She said, in case of conflicts, she would rather talk to her colleagues "*like siblings rather than talking behind someone's back*". Thanh, Diep, and Le would like to see everyone as family members who supported and shared with each other when needed rather than "*bằng mặt không bằng lòng*" (witting speech, unwitting heart), which means they say one thing but people know it means something else. This suggests that below the surface were disagreements. As presented in Chapter 5, the teaching staff at RedStar came from Yellow University and Blue University with those from the latter often promoted as management staff. As such, there might be unspoken conflicts of interest among colleagues in the same department (Thanh, Diep, Le). Thanh observed that sometimes the ex-Blue University teachers did not show due respect to those from Yellow University, a non-teacher-education university. For her, such behaviour had the potential to harm collective harmony.

> *Emotional connection is important. I want everybody to be closely connected, which helps make our teaching effective. This emotional bond makes the school the second family and keeps us motivated. Any conflicts between colleagues should be resolved … like between family members.* (Thanh)

> *The emotional bond with colleagues helps me balanced and feel comfortable although this bond isn't direct. Good emotional relationships between colleagues lead to more effective teaching.* (Ngoc)

> *A good emotional relationship with colleagues will naturally lead to comfortable teaching. Normally, teachers are grouped into the same specialist division because have the same personalities and share the same professional views. If I come to the faculty's office and see*

nobody there, I know there's something happening and I feel uncomfortable and that day is not a good day for me personally. (Le)

Huy emphasised the importance of collective harmony.

After many years of teaching, I realised that the emotional connection is important in creating a comfortable teaching and learning environment. I really like the English word 'collegiality', which emphasises the emotional connection between colleagues. You know, it's hard to maintain this, "chín người mười ý" (nine people ten minds). However, if each person could "dẹp bớt cái tôi" (reduce one's ego), we will feel connected. Vietnamese culture …. hard to detach emotion … emotional disconnection may lead to academic disagreement. We should be on the same boat. (Huy)

In addition, collective harmony could be built up through meetings within the specialist divisions or the faculty when staff could share academic and social concerns (Ngoc, Diep, Diem, Thanh). It could also be cultivated through gatherings on special occasions (e.g., the Vietnamese Teachers' Day (20 November), International Women's Day (8th March), and New Year's Day) (Thanh, Diep). The grouping of teaching staff into a specialist division based on similar personalities and professional views helped create collective harmony (Le). Likewise, going out for a cup of tea or coffee (Huy, Trang) and sharing academic and social issues with colleagues of their ages (Minh, Trang) contributed to collective harmony.

Diem was the only one of the nine participants to view collective harmony as hierarchical positioning. She contended the positioning of colleagues in academic settings should adhere to cultural familial positioning in Vietnam, which is age-based. Consequently, she believed "*cô là cô*" (teacher is teacher) and "*chị là chị*" (sister is sister), although many of her colleagues were much younger than her and had obtained higher qualifications. The perception of using the appropriate addressing system between colleagues reflected the Confucian virtue of "*lễ*" (ritual propriety) (see Chapter 2).

All participants emphasised the importance of collective harmony between the teacher and students with its manifestation being "*sự gần gũi*" (immediacy, closeness, or emotional connection) between the teacher and students. Le described teaching as incomplete and even a failure without this immediacy. They emphasised the importance of building rapport and emotional relationships with students. Huy asserted that a "*giáo viên sinh học*" (a biological or human teacher) could never be replaced by a robotic emotionless teacher (e.g., online learning software or virtual online tutor) because "*tình ngư*ời" (the human emotional bonds) could never be built and nurtured between a

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robot and students. Diep, Ngoc, and Minh held that the teacher-student immediacy might be created through creating an environment where students felt confident to ask questions. Students' asking questions about learning and social life was an indication of trust and eased learning anxiety (Diep). Ngoc, Thanh, and Diem maintained the sense of sharing (e.g., of study and social life) among students meant the students were fostering an emotional connection with their peers. However, Diem, Minh, and Trang, contended that teacher-student immediacy should be measured to implicitly teach students how to maintain proper classroom behaviour such as respectful attitudes towards teachers. If the teacher was too "*gần gũi*" (close/friendly) to students, the students might not respect the teacher (Trang).

> *If we keep a distance with our students, it's hard to motivate them to learn and they will never dare ask us anything. Students' asking questions after class hours proves that we have created a closeness with our students. If we give our students loving care, they will be much more motivated in learning.* (Diep)

> *It's like we help them in their learning with our intimate connection, which leads to a change in their learning psychology and attitude. This will improve students' sense of sharing and hence their willingness to pose questions.* (Ngoc)

Huy emphasised that teaching was not *"trọn vẹn"* (complete) if teacher-student emotional connection was not established and maintained.

> *During my first years of teaching, I didn't do anything except demonstrated my language knowledge regardless of my students' feelings. Looking into their disappointing eyes made me change. I became close to them. There's mounting English learning software and this helps learners improve their vocabulary and grammar and it gives immediate feedback, which is good. But what does it lack? - Emotional connection with the learners - no human interaction. I think that the teacher needs "cái duyên" (teaching charisma) and the essence of teaching lies in the emotional bond with our students. Our care about students will make our teaching naturally effective. Now, I am practising this way.* (Huy)

Vietnamese values could be seen in how Chau, Trang, and Thanh emphasised students' engagement as connected to the concept of "*ngoan*" (obedient and hard working). For them, "*ngoan*" contributed to teacher-student emotional connection. Interestingly, during the observations, Minh and Le demonstrated how valuing ngoan impacted their response to students. Minh told the students at the back who were disengaged in the reading tasks to leave the classroom if they wanted to. Similarly, Le appeared to be angry when his students had not completed homework which was

supposed to be used as a writing task for the new lesson. The participants' concept of obedience and hard work appeared to be influenced by the hierarchical harmony within Vietnamese families. This familial hierarchical harmony is reflected through the participants' conceptualisation of teaching as caring (Diem, Ngoc, Diep, and Thanh). Teaching as caring in Vietnamese culture means providing students with "*sự chỉ bảo*" (instructions on how to behave and what to do) – a cultural feature that bears the significance of role modelling of a superordinate (e.g., teacher) and obedience of a subordinate (e.g., student) in a hierarchical society. Diem and Thanh considered "*sự chỉ bảo*" to be for the teacher to offer corrective guidance (e.g., manner of conduct), whereas Ngoc and Le viewed it as the guidance based on the teacher's stories of study and work experience.

> *For hardworking and "ngoan" (well-behaved and obedient) students who actively participate in the lessons, I often tend to have emotional bias in marking their work.* (Chau)

> *I consider students my children who need "chỉ bảo" (guidance). I had a student who had a negative learning attitude, but with my guidance he successfully completed the programme and found a good job in a foreign company in Sai Gon. We still keep in touch.* (Thanh)

Diep referred to "*canh cánh trong lòng*" (deep and abiding concern) about students' performance and results because if they did not excel academically, their future would not be bright. Similarly, Thanh regarded her students as her children; therefore, despite some students' possible negative learning attitudes, she would still treat them with loving care and encourage them to study with a mother's love. Thanh and Diep each shared that they once had to go to a student's house and discovered that disengagement in learning was affected by family issues. They helped these students with learning materials and still kept in touch with them. Teaching as caring was perceived to be tied to the concept of "*như gia đình*" (family-like) classroom (Thanh, Diem). Thanh had described her 1980s university class as like a family and she saw her students as her children. However, she sometimes felt powerless because she could not run a class as a family because of some students' perfunctory learning attitudes. Similarly, Diem depicted her small university class as a second family where classmates lived and studied together as siblings with loving care in a supportive environment. It appeared that there were circumstances in which Thanh and Diem could not manage their classes based on this nostalgic concept.

The observational data demonstrated a congruence with participants' espoused beliefs regarding promoting this immediacy or closeness. While verbal immediacy was observed through cheerful and informal teacher-student talks before the lessons started (Chau, Thanh, Diep), non-verbal immediacy or closeness was more evident with participants' class behaviours such as greeting

students by waving students to sit down instead of the traditional practice of stopping in front of standing students to greet them (Chau, Trang, Minh, Thanh) (Appendix 4). In addition, students' continuing to talk cheerfully after the teacher was in the classroom evidenced a comfortable teacher–student relationship (Chau, Trang, Thanh, Ngoc, Diep), which contrasted with the Vietnamese traditional classrooms where students remained silent waiting for the lesson to start. The participants' in-class behaviours suggested an informal distance with their students and opted for what might be seen in some countries as a very formal learning environment but in Vietnam was perceived as relaxed. The participants saw such an informal learning environment as easing students' anxiety and motivated them to share knowledge and ask questions (Diep), and to be confident to use the language (Chau, Ngoc, Huy).

In summary, the participants valued collective harmony in their classroom reflected through teacher-student immediacy and between colleagues. This conceptualisation appeared to be influenced by their belief of building and maintaining a 'family-like' working environment. As such, disagreements, conflicts, or confrontations should be minimised or resolved in a culturally sensitive way that help save face and promote collective harmony. It appeared that the participants viewed collective harmony as one of the important objectives of their teaching activity.

The fear of detrimental consequences of teacher's mistakes

A teacher in the Vietnamese context may face invisible pressure rooted in sociocultural norms such as face saving. Despite viewing making mistakes in teaching as inevitable (Trang, Diep, Diem) because the teacher was not a "guru" (Trang), the participants asserted that they only made basic technical mistakes such as spelling and pronunciation (Minh, Diem, Chau, Trang, Ngoc, Thanh, Le). Chau was confident she had never made content mistakes. Diem admitted her lecture was sometimes "lệch một chút" (a bit off track or deviated), while Ngoc, Thanh, and Le used the phrase "*chưa chính xác*" (not yet accurate). This local expression actually means inaccurate and shows that the speaker is not really ready to accept mistakes. Socioculturally, the word "*chưa*" is often used as a negative element in a statement to save face for the one who makes mistakes. Participants' tendancy to soften their errors or mistakes was probably because teaching in the Vietnamese context was viewed as role modelling and in the EFL the teacher was expected to be error-free; therefore, making mistakes could be detrimental (Minh, Ngoc, Chau, Le). The fear of detrimental consequences of teachers' mistakes was so strong that "*prevention is better than cure*" (Le). The teacher's repeated mistakes would have a negative influence on students' learning because they saw the teacher as a role model who always demonstrated academic professionalism in teaching

and students expected the teacher would never make even a simple mistake (Minh). Minh asserted "*I assure myself that a mistake is made only once*". Le commented that within the institution, "*we can fix our mistakes but "hơi nặng nề" and "họ nói chết" (might be severely criticised)"* if the teacher made mistakes in teaching and designing the tests. The teacher's mistakes might result in negative academic consequences such as a poor end-of-term performance evaluation by the management staff hearing rumours (Le, Thanh, Diep).

> *I often make spelling mistakes. I don't think I have made other "lỗi chuyên môn" (professional/technical mistakes).* (Chau)

> *If I make a spelling mistake, I'll ask my students to help me check it in the dictionary. Students often see us as role models, so our repeated mistakes will have a negative influence on their learning. The fewer mistakes, the better.* (Minh)

> *If what I said was "chưa chính xác" (inaccurate), I would correct myself. What really matters is recognizing and correcting mistakes. However, basically, we need to "hạn chế" (minimize) our mistakes.* (Ngoc)

While tending to keep the teacher's image of perfection by trying not to make mistakes or controlling mistake making in teaching, participants expressed the view that learning involved making mistakes. Making mistakes meant learning was taking place (Diem). Diem said she often told her students that making mistakes was normal and this was to "*ease the pressure in the classroom and create a "dễ thở" (comfortable) learning environment*". The patient "*giơ cao đánh khẽ*" (soft criticism/a slap on the wrist) approach to students' mistakes (Thanh, Huy, Le) showed the teacher's care for students' learning (Huy, Ngoc, Diep). Huy, Ngoc, and Diep asserted this approach was influenced by their former teachers. The participants' conceptualisation of students' making mistakes was interesting, given that many of their students would becomes teachers who were influenced by the sociocultural concept of keeping face in teaching.

Participants espoused that checking and correcting mistakes should be a chance for students to learn from each other. Minh and Trang, for example, advocated that the feedback sessions in their lessons were conducted in a way similar to a sharing session or group discussion for the sense of autonomous learning to be gradually built up. Minh argued that students should learn from their own and peers' mistakes. Feedback provision in the observed lessons was discussed in detail in section 6.4.2. The observational data did not identify mistakes being made by participants. Although participant-student interations in the observed lessons appeared to be natural and comfortable as in Trang's Speaking 2 and Diep's Speaking 5 lessons when students interacted with the teacher and

peers in a relaxed and cheerful way, it should be acknowledged that the researcher's presence might have influenced them to be more aware of not making mistakes in teaching. Moreover, participants tended to favour a *"giữ thể diện"* (face-saving) view on teachers making mistakes which was assumed to be academically and socially negative. This could be why the participants perceived well-structured lessons as contributing to effective teaching as discussed in section 6.4.2 below.

Viewing teaching as role modelling

A common theme of the interviews was that of former teachers as role models. Minh and Trang saw their former university teachers, who were dynamic and academically successful, as pedagogical role models for their teaching. Minh said she tended to follow former teachers whose teaching styles she felt were effective. Diep acknowledged she was influenced by her English teacher from senior secondary school who was very open with students' questions and taught students with loving care, and by one of her university teachers who had studied overseas and applied a communicative language teaching approach to his teaching such as the use of group work for speaking lessons. Diep's teacher would focus on how his students expressed their ideas in English rather than on accuracy in English usage. Similarly, Huy said he favoured his university English-speaking teacher's broader approach to learning which included assigning out-of-class project-based learning tasks. However, Huy did not provide a specific example of how he applied this in his teaching.

> *When I was a university student, I often looked up to young teachers. They were dynamic and charming and had broad language knowledge. The way they taught was attractive, different from teachers of other subject areas. I dreamed of being an English teacher like them, being as confident and successful as they were, and now I'm a teacher [smile].* (Trang)

> *I still recall good memories about my English teacher at the secondary school. She was different from other teachers, you know, Vietnamese teachers. She was open and "dễ thương" (charming – a local expression that emphasises both extrinsic and intrinsic beauty). She'd never reprimand her students for not remembering English words or not doing the exercises. She cared about students' feelings. I think teaching should be like that.* (Diep)

Telling personal work and study stories was believed to be effective role modelling, resulting in positive learning behaviour and attitudes with students being more motivated and engaged in the lessons (Diep, Diem, Trang, Chau, Le, Thanh, Ngoc, Huy), and connecting classroom practices with real-life encounters (Trang, Ngoc, Chau, Le). Such stories were about the possible consequences of the teachers' mistakes (Trang, Ngoc), success and failure of former students (Le, Trang), social

encounters for students to link with their learning content (Huy, Le), or memories of English lessons in the past to inspire less able students (Trang, Diep).

When I tell stories about my experiences, students seem to be focused, engaged, and motivated. Telling stories is also a good way to link classroom learning with real-life encounters. Students can learn from both success and failure stories. In translation lessons, for example, I often tell stories about my part-time job as a freelance translator. I emphasised that it's not only about language but also about other things such as ethics in translation, the technical issues, the communication with the clients, and the networking. (Le)

I often share with my students about my learning experiences because I think they will be more motivated. I tell them about the times when I was a volunteer interpreter in Beauty City's Culture Festivals. I just wanted to talk to English-speaking people to improve my English. It seems that my students are excited and motivated. (Trang)

However, the content of the 18 observed lessons (e.g., the eight lessons focusing on exam preparation) did not allow opportunities for participants to tell such stories.

The role of family and friends as "chỗ dựa tinh thần" (the source of spiritual or emotional support)

Interestingly yet socioculturally understandable was the participants' perception of their family members and friends as important parties in their support network, whose roles were emotional supporters. This showed that family was important in the participants' development. Minh was buoyed up by her parents' wise advice whenever she felt stressed due to issues such as low salary or uncooperative students. She also sought academic advice from her sister – an English teacher. Similarly, Trang's parents were the emotional and spiritual support when feeling overwhelmed by sociocultural pressure suchs as hierarchical relationships. In the same way, Chau's parents' consolatory advice on how to deal with work pressure pushed her ahead. Ngoc had her husband and children to share housework while Le's wife did all the housework so he could be "*toàn tâm toàn ý*" (wholehearted) in his teaching. In addition, Diem and Huy sought peace of mind through gathering with their friends when they felt burnt out, for example, going out for a drink and realising that the supportiveness in educational setting made them feel motivated.

Family is the greatest motivation for me to become who I am now. When I want to quit teaching because of work pressure, I talk to my mother. She gives me valuable advice. She always says "đừng đứng núi trông núi nọ" (the grass is always greener on the other side). My parents are my "chỗ dựa tinh thần" (emotional support). (Trang)

My parents often encourage me and share with me their experiences. They tell me stories about their first years of teaching, saying that "khó khăn mới trưởng thành" (facing challenges makes you stronger) and "tre già măng mọc" (old generations will resign and young generations will follow). You know, Vietnamese parents … but I feel happy about that. (Chau)

The first notable importance in the above responses is the sociocultural feature of compromise when it comes to social conflicts. "*Đừng đứng núi này trong núi nọ*" and "*tre già măng mọc*" are two traditional pieces of advice from older generations that value "*tính ổn định*" (stability) in social positioning in Vietnam. The second significance is that the takers of these pieces of advice are considered to be "*ngoan*" (obedient) and show "*hiếu*" (filial piety). As shown earlier in section 6.2, the participants were strongly influenced by their family members. Therefore, it is socioculturally assumed to be disobedient to ignore such advice from their parents.

Participants mentioned the institutional management staff, but not as academic support or significant others in their community. Thanh, Trang, Minh, and Ngoc, for example, expressed that the most obvious link between them and the management staff was through the curriculum. Notably, participants did not mention the government's management staff as significant others in their teaching. This implied that participants tended to limit themselves to their immediate community or teaching context. This could be because teachers' voices were often unheard in the government's language policy development and institutional academic decision making. As a result, participants might think that their suggestions or voices would be ignored although they viewed their input as essential for improvement. Thanh and Trang said that suggestions for change were at higher management levels. On the one hand, this disconnection may impact the alignment between government policy, insitutional decisions, and classroom practice. On the other hand, teachers, who are supposedly change agents of the government's language education reform, could possibly follow their own way and essentially conform only superficially to the government's reform policies.

6.4. Perceived factors contributing to effective EFL teaching

This section analyses the findings about participants' views of effective EFL teaching, which was conceptualised around three main factors: teacher's characteristics, teaching strategies and techniques, and the social function of the university.

6.4.1. Perceptions of the characteristics of effective EFL teachers

This section discusses two important perceived characteristics of effective EFL teachers: a sense of connectedness and "*đức-tài*" combination.

Sense of connectedness

A sense of connectedness was perceived as the most dominant characteristic of an effective teacher, which helped participants understand and maintain a good connection with their students. Diep, Huy, Ngoc, Thanh, Trang, and Le maintained that a good emotional connection would naturally result in effective teaching and learning. Huy exemplified this with his recollection of his early years of ineffective teaching because of his attempt to maintain a perfect image of an English teacher who had a good language knowledge without paying sufficient attention to or building emotional connections with his students. A good sense of connection could be created by the teacher's informal talk with students (Diep, Ngoc, Thanh), going out for a cup of coffee with students (Trang, Le), or simply the teachers' sociable and outgoing attitude toward students (Trang). Ngoc and Diep advocated warmth in the language classroom through verbal and non-verbal emotional expressions such as friendly talks and facial expressions toward students that would essentially make the lessons less formal and more effective and dynamic. Minh viewed connection as creating a comfortable learning environment and motivating students to ask more questions without which the lessons would be clearly monotonous and unidirectional. For Thanh, Diep, and Le, a sense of humour was another prompt of connection and asserted that a very formal teaching style might not be a distinctive characteristic of a language classroom.

"Đức-tài" combination

The combination of "*đức/tâm*" (ethics/morality) and "*tài*" (talent/professional knowledge) was closely associated with immediacy and role modelling in teaching (Diem, Diep, Thanh, Minh, Huy, Le). Ethics was perceived as "*lo cho sinh viên*" (care for students – Diep, Diem, Thanh) or "*giúp đỡ mọi người*" (to help everyone – Minh, Huy, Le, Thanh). The concept of *đức/tâm* should be culturally perceived as "*duyên*" (charisma) in teaching (Huy, Le) that was accumulated over time and naturally led to an emotional connection and trust between the teacher and students (Huy, Le, Diep, Thanh). Diem even considered teaching and becoming a teacher as "*nghiệp*" (karma). She believed most English teachers wanted to become English teachers because they loved the language, loved the teaching job, and loved working with students. She said *duyên* was integral in becoming an English teacher, which meant "*nghề chọn người*" (one is naturally chosen for a certain profession). As such, *duyên* could be understood as having a vocation.

> *Many teachers I know have enormous specialised knowledge, but they don't have a "tâm" (ethics/soul) in teaching, which impacts effective teaching; hence learning quality decreases. When I was a student, I felt bored and disappointed with some of my teachers whose teaching*

appeared to fill the time. But I know they are very energetic in their private tutoring after school I was determined to become a teacher so I observed my teachers, and I thought about my teaching in the future. (Minh)

My older brother shows great "tâm". He is willing to help students, even many whom he doesn't teach. I'm doing the same way. I'm willing to answer students' questions, even late at night. (Thanh)

Teaching is also a "nghiệp" (karma), which means our "duyên" with teaching profession. I don't know, but when I was a child … maybe I was influenced by my father and my siblings who are teachers. I feel like it [teaching profession] is for me. (Diem)

When I was a high school student, whenever our English teacher was on sick leave, I often pretended to be the teacher and taught grammar to my classmates … funny … but I think it could be a "duyên" [smile]. (Diep)

Equally important was sound professional content knowledge as perceived by all participants. Sound professional knowledge was perceived as a good command of language and social knowledge. This helped maintain sustainability and flexibility in their teaching (Diem, Le) and helped the teacher to figure out suitable "*cách dạy*" (teaching tactics) for their students (Minh, Chau, Huy, Trang). For Huy, the most effective teaching method took place when "*we understand our students best, sense the context best, and are fully aware of our competence*". However, there should not be any "*chứng tỏ mình*" (showing-off or boastfulness – Diem, Diep, Huy) of their professional knowledge.

I think sound language knowledge and being methodologically trained are not enough [to be an effective teacher]. A teacher needs to have "cách dạy" (teaching tactics) … knows how to deal with different types of students … when to be very strict and when to be soft … I think it's more about human interaction than "sách vở" (bookish) teaching methods. (Minh)

The combination of ethics and professional knowledge was so important in the teaching profession in the Vietnamese context that both were legitimised in the government's policy documents. However, while the *đức* quality for teachers seemed to be politicised in these documents with the integral "*cách mạng*" (revolutionary), participants' perception of "*đức/tâm*" referred to natural human interactions or connections.

6.4.2. Teaching strategies and techniques

Effective teaching is based on context-specific strategies and techniques. Participants in this study identified three of these, including well-structured lessons, incentivisation, and appropriate positioning of theoretical input and practice exercises.

Well-structured lessons

A common belief about effective teaching among participants was that of delivering well-structured lessons. A reading lesson, for example, should consist of three stages: pre-reading (guessing the content from the headings), while-reading (skimming the text for specific information), and post-reading (writing a personal reflection on the text) (Diem). Trang viewed an effective lesson as including students' brainstorming ideas followed by controlled learning tasks (e.g., a writing task), while for Huy reviewing the previous lesson should be the first learning task, followed by a new content and consolidation. In Ngoc's writing lessons, she often asked her students to do group tasks that were followed by whole-class sharing and finally she provided further feedback on students' work, basically on their use of language in context. Minh and Ngoc believed that an effective lesson should start with taking students' attendance, followed by grammar consolidation and exercises for individual completion, and end with a class or group feedback session.

> *… taking attendance, consolidating grammar, giving students exercises to do in about 15 minutes, collecting work completed by three fastest students to give feedback on the most common grammatical errors, asking about 5 or 6 students to build sentences with the corrected errors, class giving feedback, and teacher giving feedback.* (Minh)

> *I often photocopy a reading text with questions that I've never done before. My students and I do the reading tasks at the same time, but I pressure myself to stop about 5 minutes earlier than them. Then we both check against the answer keys and work together on our mistakes. Inevitably, we both make mistakes. If I choose incorrect answers where students get the correct answers, I'll ask them to explain their choices. We're both happy with this way of learning, which empowers student learning. The problem is not to be right or wrong, but what and how to learn from our own mistakes.* (Diep)

The observational data showed participants delivering their lessons in a traditional well-structured way with specific timed stages for learning tasks despite diverging from their espoused lesson structures (Appendix 4). In addition, as highlighted in section 6.3.1, although participants adapted

the mandated coursebooks with 14 modifications and six additions, these modifications and additions were minor and appeared to replicate the structure of tasks in the coursebooks.

Incentivisation based on learning behaviour

Minh, Trang, Chau, Diep, Le, and Thanh believed an incentive-based approach would contribute to effective teaching. This approach was similar to the carrot-and-stick approach (Thanh) and the incentive was generally "*điểm tốt*" (bonus marks) for continuous assessment. This approach was believed to be a good psychological motivator for student engagement and self-reflection in learning (Diep, Minh, Chau). Despite possibly being considered a "*thiên vị cảm xúc*" (emotional bias – Chau) or favouritism, the offer of bonus marks spiritually supported student learning. To some extent, this incentivisation implies that those participants focused more on students' behaviour than on content learning. Furthermore, this might trigger the question of equity in teaching and learning.

All participants believed that the incentive-based approach should be applied to those students who were "*ngoan*" (well-behaved, obedient, and studious), a common cultural and emotional concept in the Vietnamese traditional educational context. This concept is further associated with a hierarchical pattern within the Vietnamese family in which being obedient to one's elders is the behaviour of a good child. The participants rewarded behaviour over learning.

> *I often give 'ngoan' (well-behaved) students bonus marks for their active participation in class activities. This is "đánh giá thường xuyên" (continuous assessment). I think it's important because some students may not do well in the final exams, and these bonus marks can compensate.* (Chau)

> *I tend to favour "nghe lời "(obedient) students by giving them good marks.* (Le)

"*Ngoan*" was evidenced by showing a positive and disciplinary attitude toward learning through regular class attendance (all participants), respect towards the teachers and peers (Diem), active and initiative participation in class learning tasks (all participants), diligence and perseverance reflected through a rigorous training process (Minh, Trang, Ngoc, Thanh, Diep, Huy, Le, Chau), and paradoxically a sense of independence in and passion for knowledge exploration (Minh, Trang, Diem, Ngoc, Le, Thanh).

> *… [I favour a] positive learning attitude which is reflected through regular class attendance, active participation in class activities, and respect towards the teachers and peers. Those*

students with positive learning attitude always receive teacher's recognition. Less able students with positive learning attitude can still improve competency. (Diem)

An effective language learner shows great perseverance. Although learning doesn't mean "gạo bài" (rote learning), a learner must persevere because learning an FL requires high level of vocabulary memorization. (Trang)

Therefore, those students who held an uncaring attitude (Thanh) or a perfunctory attitude (Diem, Diep) to learning were unlikely to succeed. Trang, Thanh, Diep, Chau, Huy, and Le believed that with this uncaring or perfunctory learning attitude, students would face challenges in their further study or future employment. While other participants attributed this learning attitude to psychological or family problems, Chau explained that it could be the results of "*tiêu cực*" (social negatives) such as "*nâng điểm*" (changing the grades), "*không học cũng tốt nghiệp*" (graduation-based-on-relatedness), or "*không học cũng có việc*" (having a job without learning) in contemporary Vietnam. She believed that these negatives could demotivate both teachers and students.

Although the observation data did not show participants offering bonus marks as a motivational strategy, it supported their perception of "ngoan". Students engaged actively and interactively in the assigned learning tasks by forming pairs or groups following the teachers' instructions. In Trang's Speaking 2 lesson (peer job interview) and in Chau's Speaking 2 lesson (group discussion on the positive and negative aspects of games and playing games), students made the classroom like an open market. Similarly, students in Ngoc's Reading 2 lesson took the initiative in negotiating the answers in a reading-for-main-ideas exercise in the coursebook without waiting to be called by the teacher. In Ngoc's Writing 2 lessons, students paired up immediately and enthusiastically discussed the warm-up topic of "fake products" before the pair writing activity. Furthermore, students were active in peer or group checking/feedback, which was frequently used in the observed lessons (see Appendix 21 for detailed notes of feedback provision in the observed lessons). This was evident in Diem's Reading 2 and Writing 2 lessons, Le's Reading 2 lesson, and Ngoc's Writing 2 lesson. For example, in Diem's Writing 2 lesson, students peer checked homework tasks. In addition, peer assessment was assigned as homework in Ngoc's and Le's Writing 2 lessons.

Appropriate positioning of theoretical input and practice exercises

The appropriate positioning and integration of theoretical input and practice exercises was believed to enhance teaching effectiveness. It was commonly agreed that the lack of either was a hindrance to effective language teaching. Although participants held different views on the integration and

proportion of theory and practice in their EFL lessons, most of them advocated less time for theory and more time reserved for practice (Chau, Trang, Le, Ngoc, Diem, Diep, Minh).

For younger learners, the lessons may focus more on practice. However, for older learners whose cognitive level is higher, practice without theory doesn't work because they will always ask why. So, it's best to provide them with theoretical points first, but I don't explicitly explain the theoretical grounds behind a practice exercise. I prefer an integration of theory and pratice which requires students to figure out themselves. (Chau)

Theory is important, but with a limited class time, it should be compressed so that students have more time for applied tasks. In reading [lessons], for example, we can't spend the whole period or even half a period to explain reading strategies in second language reading. I often provide theoretical points after we have completed reading exercises. (Le)

However, participants' perception of practice appeared to be confined to adding extra exercises from other sources (e.g., Preliminary English Test or the institutional practice tests), which prepared students for tests and exams as observed, for instance, in most Reading 2 and Writing 2 lessons (Appendix 20). This addition indicates the exam-focus of the institutional activity (see section 6.3.1). It should be noted that all observed lessons were focused on language skills improvement as mandated by the curriculum for the first two years of tertiary EFL study. Therefore, this might explain why theoretical input was not evident in these lessons.

6.4.3. Social function of the university

Only Trang, Diep, and Le referred to the connection between class learning and the wider community as a component of effective teaching. This implied that many other participants might either focus more on knowledge transfer (language knowledge and skills) or be unaware of the necessity of connecting their teaching with the wider community. Diep claimed that university training on English language skills did not meet social needs in that the knowledge students gained was not comparable to rapid social development. Similarly, Le often doubted the employability of graduates trained by the current curriculum, which was disconnected from social needs. They claimed that there was a lack of space for training on "*kỹ năng mềm*" (soft skills) required of graduates. Trang described Red Star's practice and suggested changes that could be made at management level.

I'd like to see a close connection between universities and wider community. When I was overseas, I saw many old people coming to read in the library. Later on, I knew that the university

libraries are open for everyone. I think we should have the same model which connects the university with wider community so that the university no longer stands alone. If standing alone, the university doesn't know how fast the society develops. The fact that we [Red Star] still use the old learning resources for our students means that there isn't such a connection. We don't understand social development needs. We should also build connections with social enterprises.
(Trang)

6.5. CHAT analysis of participants' beliefs and practices

This section provides a CHAT analysis of participants' beliefs and practices of EFL teaching activity at RedStar (Figure 6.1). As the subject, the participants were produced through familial and school apprenticeships of observation and their domestic and overseas PLD participation. The findings revealed that participants' teaching activity was mediated by the university's guiding documents such as curriculum, unit descriptions for subject areas, institutional prescribed coursebooks, and assessment requirements. Other mediating artefacts included pedagogical experiences accumulated through formal and informal PLD, and social media. Government salary, though creating a contradiction, was also an important mediator of participants' teaching activity.

Of note was that the university's administrative decisions and academic requirements were based on the outcomes of government and MoET activities, which became important rules for participants' activity. Additionally, participants' activity was regulated by Vietnamese sociocultural norms and values, of which maintaining collective harmony and teaching as role modelling were the most influential rules. Pedagogical rules such as sound professional knowledge, well-structured lessons, incentivisation based on learning behaviour, and the appropriate positioning of theory input and practice exercises, were crucial for effective EFL teaching. Likewise, the teacher's characteristics such as a sense of connectedness and *đức-tài* combination appeared to be important rules to make teaching effective.

The community consisted of the university's offices and management staff, the management staff and specialised divisions of the Faculty of English, participants' former teachers, colleagues, and students. Family appeared to be the most influential in participants' activity. In-group connections and friends were also inclusive. The division of labour led to the feeling of burnout because the participants had to teach ceaselessly and have other commitments.

Figure 6.1

Teacher participants' EFL teaching activity
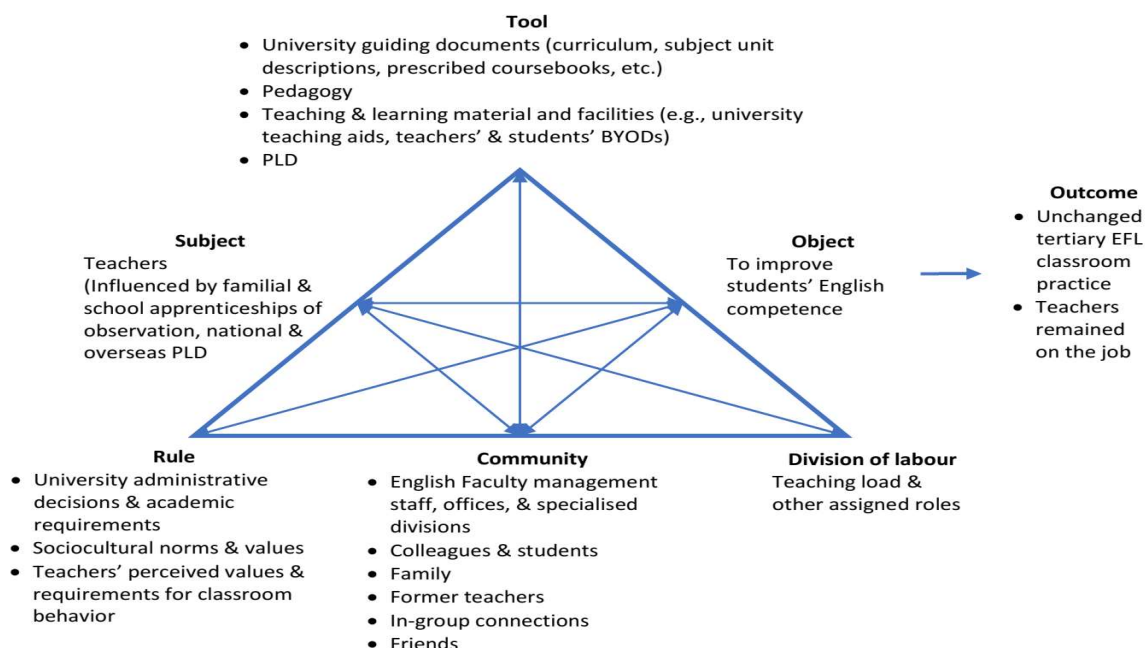
The objects of participants' teaching activity were to enhance the quality of English education, provide students with language knowledge and skills for further study and/or employment, maintain sociocultural values of education in the Vietnamese context, and connect the university with wider society. The two main outcomes of participants' activity were unchanged tertiary EFL classroom practice and remaining in the teaching career. However, similar to the university's activity, the outcome of producing competent English users needed further examination.

6.6. Chapter summary

This chapter has provided insights into the perspectives and practices of nine Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers. Overall, the findings showed how complex historic-social-cultural-political contexts impacted on participants' EFL teaching beliefs and practices. The genesis of the teachers' beliefs lay in their early access to English and their apprenticeship of observation at home and at school, and their practices tended to reproduce or continue those they had experienced in their own education. The analysis of findings showed that individual activities were much influenced by collective culture. Although multiple perspectives were perceived by participants as contributing to effective EFL teaching, their instructional focus appeared to be more on behaviour than on student learning. That said, to some extent, participants' teaching was based on rule and predominantly teacher-controlled with little evidence of student self-directed learning. Participants' views on PLD indicated a preference for in-group informal over formal PLD. In the next chapter the findings will be analysed through Cultural Historical Activity Theory and in relation to the literature.

CHAPTER 7: CULTURALITY AND HISTORICITY OF VIETNAMESE TERTIARY EFL TEACHING ACTIVITY

7.1. Introduction

The current research aimed to gain a deepened understanding of tertiary EFL teaching in Vietnam. Despite language education reforms, the quality of EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam has not yet met ambitious national policy goals. Likewise, Vietnamese EFL learners' competence continues to be lower than regulated national levels. Although increasing contemporary research in the field has focused on the tertiary EFL education classroom in Vietnam, there has been little attention to the culturality and historicity of in-service tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices.

Framed within Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2015), the analysis presented in this chapter draws on the core concepts underpinning Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. Prevailing sociocultural and political ideologies and historical features that influence these beliefs and practices are analysed. The overarching research question and three sub-questions are addressed:

What are Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about English language teaching and learning?

1. What is the genesis of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs?
2. What cultural and historical features are inherent in their beliefs and practices?
3. What are the contradictions and tensions in their EFL teaching activity?

7.2. Culturality and historicity within and beyond ontogenetic participants

Studies over the last decade have provided evidence of the impact of Lortie's (1975) coined apprenticeship of observation on teacher beliefs (Borg, 2013; Cancino et al., 2019; Dao & Newton, 2021; Moodie, 2016). In this study, participants' beliefs about and practices of EFL teaching were shown to be influenced by a familial/kinship apprenticeship of observation, school apprenticeship of observation, and the sociocultural feature of "*tính kế thừa*" (inheritance/continuity).

Familial/kinship apprenticeship of observation

Family involvement in children's educational and career choices has been well researched (Ceka & Murati, 2016; Dubow et al., 2009; Freire & Giang, 2012; Iacopini & Hayden, 2017). Extended family can provide its members with both tangible support (e.g., income, childcare) as well as intangible support (e.g., emotional development, counselling, instruction and academic achievement, and a sense of belonging and protection) (Bengtson et al., 2002). Parents, whose roles are expectancy

socialisers (Frome & Eccles, 1998), can help children set up learning routines (Ceka & Murati, 2016), provide their offspring with educational counselling (Iacopini & Hayden, 2017), and orient them toward possible career pathways (Freire & Giang, 2012). Vietnamese parents are found to have a high degree of control over their children's education and career choice and this control commences from their childhood (Freire & Giang, 2012). Stories narrated by participants in this study revealed strong family involvement in terms of home learning environment, advice, emotional and spiritual support, and implicit traditional family values through participants interactions with family members. In political terms, family role and involvement in children's education were legitimated, for example, in the 2019 Education Law. In sociocultural terms, parental involvement is extended beyond educational support and counselling; it is Vietnamese parents' wish to see their children with "*công việc ổn định, yên bề gia thất*" (having a stable job and getting married) (Nguyen & Phan, 2012).

In this study, participants' English teaching beliefs were influenced by family interactions with more able others, for example parents, siblings, or relatives (Figure 7.1). In Vietnamese family culture, an older child or a more able member takes care of and teaches their younger siblings or a less able other (Nguyen & Phan, 2012). This cultural familial connection reflects two Confucian values found in this study: generational hierarchy (e.g., children's obligation to obey parents) and family decision making (e.g., children's education is decided by parents) (Ngo, 2020; Setsuko, 2015). Not only were the older group of teachers born before 1986 (Diem, Diep, Thanh, Ngoc, Huy, Le) greatly influenced by family rigidity and patriarchal hierarchy (Hoang, 2011), but the younger group born post-1986 (Minh, Trang, Chau) were also still affected by this feature of family culture. The most prominent in this study was the father's role as an education influencer who decided for the children what to study and who to become. The home learning environment was primarily built and encouraged by the father (e.g., Chau, Diem, Le, Ngoc, Diep). Some participants experienced English lessons with a teacher-father. In addition, there was evidence of extended family's involvement in participants' education (e.g., Huy was taught English by his relative, and Le was taught French by his aunts and English by his mother). The traditional English learning within the family was evident in participants' beliefs about English teaching with a focus on the provision of basic language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary.

Participants' kinship apprenticeship of observation together with socioeconomic backgrounds impacted on their motivational beliefs about learning English and becoming an English teacher. As Jæger (2012) found, the socioeconomic status of family members can impact a child's cognitive

development and educational success. Most participants from urban areas (Diem, Diep, Thanh, Ngoc) studied to become English teachers because of the image of social persuasion (Bandura, 1997), while those from rural areas (Huy, Trang) did so due to their family's financial situation. However, both groups of participants were influenced by the hierarchical collectivism in Vietnamese family culture centred on physical, spiritual, and educational relatedness (Dang, 2006; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Nguyen, T. N., 2019). Consistent with Tran's (2018) findings, in this study, participants as children became English teachers because one or more family members were teachers. In addition, children are considered "*có hiếu*" (showing filial piety) if they obey their parents by following their parents' readily planned future orientation, in case of this study, becoming teachers because of parental aspirations, inspirations, and expectations.

In sociohistorical terms, there was a close link between participants' kinship apprenticeship of observation and their career choices. Until the end of 1990s, the teaching in Vietnam was considered an "*ổn định*" (stable) high-prestige occupation, meaning that a teacher was not well-off but not struggling; teachers were viewed as successful and as having achieved a good social status and financial stability. Having one or more teachers in their families influenced participants in terms of social learning (e.g., Huy, Le, Thanh, Ngoc, Diem, Minh) in which they were oriented by both observational and direct learning experiences with their family members (Dubow et al., 2009). Therefore, familial achievement-oriented behaviour (e.g., being strict or supportive in the home learning environment, being respected by obtaining advanced academic degrees) and the provision of achievement-oriented opportunities (e.g., sending children to private English centres for extra tuition), contributed to the construction of the belief that English language achievement was socially valued (Dubow et al., 2009).

Literature has shown that the teacher's role of moral modelling has been inherently shaped within Vietnamese individuals since their early schooling (Phan, 2004a; Phan & Phan, 2006), and this role would be further nurtured and anchored if one becomes a teacher. Coming from families that had live-in teachers, it is understandable that participants experienced kinship apprenticeship of observation, which could be both an internal and external motivation for them to play such a role of moral modelling in their current teaching activity – the 'being' and 'becoming' (Phan & Phan, 2006). However, as this familial behavioural observation was the frontstage (Lortie, 1975), the other half of which – the backstage, which was the socioculturally situated classroom settings – was unseeable until one entered the teaching profession. Teaching experiences over time seemed to lead the participants in this study to believe that the observed behaviours during their childhood

learning were not only about imparting language knowledge, but also about showing loving care to learners and practising humanness. Consequently, participants opted for an informal-distance and emotional immediacy with their students.

Despite a socially common perception of family involvement in children's schooling across levels of study, there is little literature on how a kinship apprenticeship of observation impacts the being and becoming of teachers in the Vietnamese educational context. Such research is important in understanding the development teachers and contributes to an ontogenetic analysis of why teachers do the things they do, and why they think and do what they do in their cultural present (Cole & Engestrom, 1993; Cross, 2010; Ngo, 2018).

School apprenticeship of observation

Teachers' past positive and negative learning experiences are preconceptions and have a strong hold on their classroom practices (Botha, 2020; Cancino et al., 2019; Nishino; 2012). These experiences are internalised to be a valuable resource for their teaching practice (Bailey et al., 1996; Cancino et al., 2019; Dao & Newton, 2021; Kennedy, 1991; Moodie, 2016). In this study, participants' interviews and observations provided testimony to the imprints of their past learning experiences on their teaching beliefs and practices. Similar to their familial apprenticeship of observation, some participants (e.g., Trang, Ngoc, Thanh) became English teachers because of the positive image of their former teachers. In addition, participants appeared to remain loyal to their past traditional learning in which knowledge of grammar and vocabulary was the focus of their lessons. There was also a strong evidence of test-driven teaching in the participants' lessons. However, these replications of past learning experiences appeared to misalign with the current government objective of producing a labour force who are proficient users of English in a variety of settings. In manner, the openness and friendliness of the past learning environment experienced by some participants (e.g., Diep, Thanh) were translated into their current classroom practices where informal behavioural management was replicated.

Other participants (e.g., Trang, Minh, Huy, Le) filtered their negative learning experiences (e.g., grammar-oriented lessons or focus on teacher's knowledge performance) by the anti-apprenticeship of observation (Cancino et al., 2019; Moodie, 2016; Rahman et al., 2020) in attempting to direct their students away from these experiences (e.g., by using communication-oriented lessons or promoting student-centredness). Similarly, most participants used learning techniques such as pair and group work in their lessons in contrast to their memories of traditional one-way teaching and learning. The negative learning experiences appeared to lead to their belief

that teaching should be communication- and employment-oriented such as for Le who claimed to be often sharing his working experience with students. Unfortunately, the observed lessons were so focused on exam preparation that no such stories or experience sharing were evident. However, this belief was substantially bound in an institutional system governed by the concept of "*ở lại trường*" (retention upon graduation). The retention in this study indicated very limited exposure of the teaching staff to other tertiary EFL settings outside their own. There appeared to be few opportunities for those outside Umbrella University to join RedStar's homostatic system in which pedagogical innovations and diversity were not evident.

The tradition of retaining selected students on graduation increased the likelihood of participants' reproducing the teaching they had experienced. As reported, they regarded their former teachers as role models. On the positive side, this showed a continuity in the teaching activity within which positive learning experiences were maintained and it does not take time for the retained teachers to build or familiarise themselves with a teaching activity system. However, on the negative side, these experiences might not be appropriate for transforming teaching and learning for the needs of a new generation of learners, and for a changing society and economy. This continuity seemed to be so experientially strong that participants ranked qualifications behind "*cách dạy*" (teaching tactics), which was conceptualised as consisting of knowledge and teaching charisma. In sociocultural terms, the retained teachers were constrained by the Confucian value of "*thứ bậc*" (order and ranking – Vo, 2020) because those who retained them were often their former teachers. Therefore, participants were expected to respect them by upholding this order and ranking and the sociocultural and political "*tính kế thừa*" (inheritance/continuity) within the system. The observation of these two sociocultural features in turn maintained another Confucian value of "lễ" (ritual propriety). To the best of my knowledge, up to date, the impacts of *ở lại trường* (i.e., selected students being retained as teachers) on teachers' beliefs and practices have received limited research attention.

"Tính kế thừa" (inheritance/continuity) within the Vietnamese educational system

Both participant groups, born pre-1986 (Diem, Ngoc, Thanh, Diep, Huy, and Le) and post-1986 (Minh, Trang, and Chau) reported experiencing similar traditional teaching strategies during their time as students in which teachers were authority holders and knowledge feeders, and students were unquestioning knowledge receivers. This suggests that the approach to English language teaching and learning remained unchanged across different time periods and social contexts. In pratice, the compartmentalisation of language skills and subject areas compounded the continuity.

Minh, Trang, Ngoc, Thanh, and Le implied that it was challenging to propose changes to the curriculum and teaching resources. This was due to a cultural amalgram of respect for those who had developed the existing curriculum, and valuing continuity and harmony.

Enacting continuity honours the predecessor's contributions (e.g., spiritually and materially) regardless of whether they are fit for purpose for the successors or for the contemporary context. Therefore, it is seen as disrespectful to deny the predecessors' legacy and future reform should be based on this platform of continuity. Positively, this takes the legacy of the old system into account in the transformed system to reduce the likelihood of rejection of reforms (Pham, T. H. T., 2016). Negatively, however, this means that trying to bring about change may be a waste of time and energy due to the political conservativeness of continuity. Despite the participants' view that textbooks were outdated and not fit for the purpose of enhancing students' competency, they could not completely replace these, even with a collective endeavour if any, because textbooks were chosen by their predecessors. However, there may be budgetary constraints on the ability to purchase up-to-date CEFR-aligned textbooks (Vo & Laking, 2020). Therefore, maintaining continuity appeared to present a challenge to systematic change.

Further strong evidence of *tính kế thừa* in the EFL teaching activity system at RedStar was the retained teachers themselves. Similar to other public organisations, the recruitment of university staff is still commonly based on the informal unwritten rule of nepotism and cronyism (Vo & Laking, 2020). Therefore, it appeared that the *kế thừa* in the recruitment of teachers seemed to aim at minimised volatility of this system. For decades, there were evidently no new employees at RedStar's Faculty of English who orginated from a different insitutional culturality and historicity. In addition, the insitutional cultural-historic context, influenced by the Confucian-valued collectivism, which emphasises hierarchical human relationships, appeared to hinder changes and enactment of participants' beliefs (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012). Resonating with other studies (Pham & Hamid, 2013), the findings in this study suggest that participants had to follow, either consciously or unconsciously, the traditional transfer of language knowledge. Ontogenetically evident in this study was participants' similar experience of a teaching and learning environment in which language knowledge was the instructional focus, despite presumably diverse cultural-historic contexts of their university studies from the 1980s to the 2000s. Arguably, the historicity of the EFL teaching system in Vietnam, at least at RedStar, was evident in the institutional operation. Therefore, the participants were highly likely to replicate the same actions and operations notwithstanding

different cultural-historic contexts in which they studied and taught. They appeared to focus more on their teaching than on learner agency and autonomy.

Within the cultural-historic present at the time of this study, the borrowed CEFR with its glocalisation as CEFR-VN and the Vietnamese Foreign Language Competence Framework appeared to have insignificant impacts on participants' teaching activity due to discussed pedagogical inheritance. Presumably, these cultural-historical artefacts were expected by the government to bring about pedagogical changes, hence students' improved English competency and a skilled labour force. From the activity system perspective, with these new cultural artefacts and other available cultural mediational means such as advanced information technology and language teaching materials, there would be expected changes in the nodes of EFL teaching activity system such as rule, community, division of labour, and essentially subject and object. However, participants' practice in this study appeared to remain pedagogically unchanged, possibly because of institutionally inherited English curriculum and assessment policy (ie., attendance, mid-term tests, and end-of-term exams), which did not help realise intended outcomes of the governmental reform. Paradoxically, this curriculum had been approved by MoET before Project 2020 was launched in 2008 and it remained unreflective of the government's changes in cultural-historical artefacts to reform English education in the country. This explicated that the government's policy dumping without implementation guidelines (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015) did not necessarily lead to institutional adaptation, or rather the culturally situated glocalisation of macro policies. Therefore, participants' practices were not reflective of or expected by policies (Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005).

The similarity between the two age groups of participants (i.e., born pre-1986 and post-1986) regarding FL teaching and learning across different sociopolitical contexts formed a common belief later on: teaching FL should be bottom-up starting with a focus on mastering basic language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary. It was found that all participants focused their teaching on equipping their students with an improved command of English grammar, vocabulary, and language skills. Underlying this belief is the Confucian educational ideology that accurate knowledge should be provided by the teacher, followed by students' memorisation to impede any possible errors when students return this knowledge in future contexts such as examinations (Nguyen, G. V., 2014). The improvement of other academic skills such as critical thinking or information processing skills, was not practically observed in participants' lessons. Arguably, the lack of these academic skills in participants' pratice was because of the aforementioned constraints of an institutional

assessment system that did not make the teaching of these skills imperative. Undoubtedly, with multiple choice cloze as the most dominant test items, this practice was understandable. This meant that either students had to equip these academic skills on their own or there should be a change in the institutional curriculum that would make these skills explicitly inclusive.

Figure 7.1

Apprenticeships of observation in participants' beliefs and practices
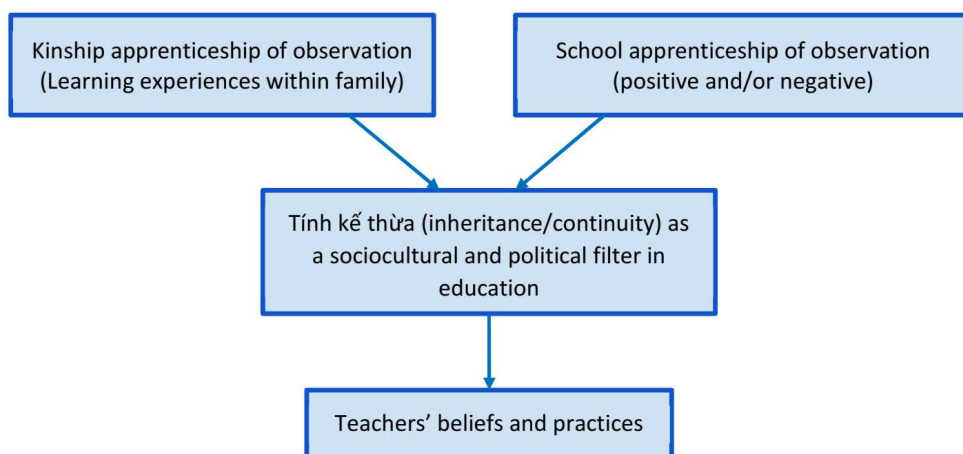
A further plausible explanation for this lack might be the participants themselves, as subjects who appeared to hesitate to move beyond the institutional curricular boundaries because of professionally detrimental consequences of it or maintaining collective harmony in doing the same thing in the system. In addition, participants seemed to exercise their teacher agency by contesting the government's English education reform policies and attempting to survive within the intricate EFL teaching activity system as found in other studies (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). In other words, participants brought into the activity system, or the current mediated space, their own personal ideologies of EFL teaching that were not necessarily indicative of microgenetic occurences such as the government's language reform policies (Cross, 2009).

Taken together, participants' beliefs and practices in this study can be conceptualised in the model as demonstrated in Figure 7.1. In this model, *tính kế thừa*, with its historicity, acts as a social, cultural, and political mediator in shaping teachers' beliefs and practices. The (anti)apprenticeship of observation is initial assumptions that are likely to transform into firm beliefs about language teaching (Rabbidge, 2017). Therefore, it is important to understand language teachers' genesis of beliefs from their own cultural and historical perspectives. As Holland et al. (1998) argue, "the sediment from past experiences in which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded one in the present" (p. 18). At this point, it might be

argued that the historical activity system (i.e., past learning experiences) became a tool of participants' teaching activity system in their cultural present of here and now.

7.3. The Vietnamese functional Confucian system of tertiary EFL teaching

The findings suggested that the Vietnamese cultural values were evident in Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' AS, which were largely reflected through the components of rule and community, as similarly found in previous studies (Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Pham, 2007; Pham, T. H. T., 2011, 2014, 2016; Phan, 2004b; Truong, 2013). Based on the findings, this study proposes a Vietnamese functional Confucian model of tertiary EFL teaching that consists of government and institutional supervision and control, hierarchical collectivism as a mediator, and face loss and perfectionism in teaching as role modelling.

7.3.1. Governmental and institutional supervision and control

Educational reforms have been attempted on the institutional autonomy of higher education in key aspects such as finance, personnel and organisation, and academic activities (Dao & Hayden, 2019; Vo & Laking, 2020). However, the progress shows stagnation due to a culture of centralised supervision and control with insufficient local voice (Dao & Hayden, 2019; Marklein, 2019; Pham, T. H. T., 2016). The influence of Confucian hierarchical collectivism is still evident (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Nguyen, T. N., 2019; Tran, 2016) with top-down policies and rules being inherent in government and institutional guiding documents. Marklein's (2019) remark provides a comprehensive picture of the operation of higher education:

> While the changes emphasise the "right of a higher education institution to determine its own objectives and select a way to implement its objectives", the Communist Party-led government remains a central figure in key decisions, a carry-over of the Soviet-style approach in which the university operates as a state agency under the control of the government.

The review of government and institutional guiding documents in this study indicated limited institutional autonomy in academic affairs regarding curriculum designs, one of the key factors in boosting higher education quality (Marklein, 2019). Specifically, RedStar can design its curriculum and offerings of programmes only in consultation with and comformity to MoET's frameworks (Dao & Hayden, 2010, 2019; Vo & Laking, 2020). Furthermore, they had to follow MoET's assessment policy (i.e., the Vietnamese Foreign Language Competence Framework and the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency). However, interestingly found in this study was that RedStar's curriculum had remained unchanged for years. This might lead to a question of whether

or not there was scrutiny of government academic supervision in the EFL activity system. It appeared that this supervision was to secure the inclusion of political subjects such as Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Ideology, Scientific Socialism, and History of the Vietnamese Communist Party, and other non-English subjects such as military training and physical education as core and compulsory in any higher education curricula. Furthermore, this was to ensure that MoET's assessment policy was practised at the institutional level. Therefore, together with the lack of teachers' voices in the process of institutional curriculum design and assessment decisions as evidenced in this study and other studies (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018), the government-institution-classroom connection appears to be very weak in realising the object of enhancing the quality of EFL teaching and learning. In other words, how language education policy is effectively practised at insitutional and classroom levels remains a big question (Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020).

MoET's supervision and control over the curriculum design essentially resulted in the institutional restraint of curriculum-related aspects including assessments (i.e., tests and exams), which in turn guided teachers' and students' classroom behaviours (Pham, T. H. T., 2014, 2016). Resonating with other studies (e.g., Pham, T. H. T., 2016), participants' priority in this study appeared to be curriculum coverage. Observational data showed that all participants but Trang were managers of class learning tasks with very little evidence of promoting students' independent learning. It appeared that they were under constant pressure to complete the prescribed lessons or lesson contents, to focus on the quantity not on the quality of teaching and learning (Pham, T. H. T., 2016). Nguyen and Stracke's (2020) finding was also replicated in this study, in that the Vietnamese tertiary EFL classrooms were still test-driven and teacher-managed with little evidence of student agency.

As a result, participants in this study appeared to follow what could be termed as survival mode (Korthagen, 2010) in their teaching rather than learning from teaching experiences to improve their teaching as espoused in the interviews. Interestingly, this teaching mode should be prevalent during the first few years of teaching when the teacher experiences the struggle for classroom management and feelings of frustration (Korthagen, 2010), although most participants in this study were considered experienced tertiary EFL teachers. This might be due to the fact that their teaching activity was more rule- than tool-mediated. As observed and analysed, government and institutional tools such as guiding documents and curriculum became rules (Foot, 2014). There were, for example, adaptations of the institutional prescribed coursebook; however, most adaptations aimed for exam preparation. Congruent with other studies (Nguyen & Stracke, 2020), participants in this

study were restrained by the institutional classroom rules of providing students with sufficient preparation for tests and exams. Another possible explanation for participants' survival mode of teaching was the lack of an experiential model of reform with new objectives injected (Moodie, 2016); therefore, they resorted to what they had observed from past learning experiences as students rather than making decisions based on the classroom contexts and student background as espoused.

Further evidence of governmental control over institutional operation was the imposition of state salary scales for employees. This is because university is considered a public service delivery unit and they cannot offer the teaching staff higher pay (Vo & Laking, 2020). Harman and Nguyen (2010) argue that even though salary reforms in Vietnam are constantly implemented, the low government-controlled scales for teachers' salaries are still an impediment to improving tertiary education quality in general. For academic transformation at public HE institutions, there should be progress toward institutional financial autonomy (Vo & Laking, 2020). Consonant with findings in other studies (Harman & Nguyen, 2010; Munyengabe et al., 2017; Vo & Laking, 2020), participants in this study were dissatisfied with low state salary scales. It is noteworthy that participants' choice of and long retention in the teaching profession was not because of salaries but possibly because of factors such as the positive image of teaching profession, the opportunities to offer private tutoring classes owing to their social status of being university teachers, job security, and valuing their relationships with their colleagues and students.

7.3.2. Mediating function of hierarchical collective harmony

Despite the dynamics of an activity system, it appeared that Confucianism-influenced structural hierarchical relationships could be observed among the subjects in the system, between the government leaders, the institutional management staff, and the teaching staff. Institutionally, hierarchical respect and obedience to superior others, which is part of a large power distance culture (Hofstede, 2011) was still evident in this study, as found in previous studies (Nguyen, Warren, Fehring, 2014; Truong, 2013; Vo, 2020). The participants appeared to avoid direct confrontation with the superior others by holding back their views or softening their critique towards high-level academic decisions. In addition, they followed the prescribed coursebook and subject-specific unit descriptions decided by the departmental and institutional management staff, which they viewed as outdated and unfit for purpose. Participants adapted their teaching materials provided that the defined core topics in these documents were retained. This showed a partial commitment to institutional guidelines as found in previous studies (Pham, 2014; Tran, 2016).

However, this might paradoxically contribute to the unchanged institutional EFL teaching because the participants appeared to find a haven in their comfort zone, being satisfied with the status quo (Engeström, 2016, Nilsson & Wihlborg, 2011).

Within Confucian hierarchy, "*thứ bậc*" (order and ranking) (Vo, 2020), a manifestation of ritual propriety, refers to how an individual is positioned in relation to others in society regardless of their social status or academic qualification. The order and ranking guide the proper manners of how a person should conduct themselves in relation to social others. Displaying proper manners is a virtue. Even participants perceiving their department or university as a second family, to some extent, reflects the family structural hierarchy because they go to school to teach their 'children'. However, the positive signal regarding institutional hierarchy was that the senior participants espoused moving away from the traditional authority holders in Vietnamese culture to be friends with junior others. This was in contrast with the findings in previous studies (Pham, 2014; Tran, 2016). This finding indicates that there should be a reconceptualisation of structural hierarchy, at least on the institutional level, which encourages the subjects of an activity system, especially those considered less powerful, to move beyond their established comfort zone to embrace changes. In the observed lessons, the fact that students automatically stood up to greet the teacher was considered a manifestation of ritual propriety in Vietnamese non-verbal interactions. It was up to the teacher whether or not to maintain this. As observed, many teachers waved their students to sit down while others stood in front of students to greet them. This shows that the participants held different views on retaining the cultural hierarchical structure in language classrooms, for which some advocated that a comfortable learning environment was better. However, this non-verbal teacher–student interaction might cause tension in tertiary language classrooms because at school-level classrooms in Vietnam, formal greetings before lessons continue to be the cultural norm.

By observing structural hierarchy, the participants believed that collective harmony, a core aspect of their teaching activity, was sustained. Consonant with previous studies (Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Pham, T. H. N., 2007, 2014, 2018; Phan & Locke, 2016; Tran, 2016), collective harmony was perceived in this study as being maintained by showing respect towards and between colleagues and keeping face for each other by not providing destructive evaluations and comments on or disapproval of colleagues' performance. Trust-building opportunities helped promote collective harmony. In addition, confrontational conflicts at the workplace, if any, should be emotionally resolved or better avoided before they start. Collective harmony was identified in this study through the way participants responded to the institutional guidelines by leadership in terms of teaching

materials and time allocation for subject areas. They preferred to provide *"chỉ trích tế nhị"* (witting/deliberate critique) when showing disagreement or disapproval by using euphemisms such as "minor changes" to actually mean "major changes". Participants' toning down assertiveness in expressing their personal stance was believed to either maintain hierarchical positioning in a Confucian-influenced Vietnam or keeping face for the one under critique. This cultural characteristic was in accordance with what researchers have found about Vietnamese culture – strong uncertainty avoidance by which deviant personal opinions or views could be seen as intolerant (Hofstede, 2011).

Vietnamese, as well as many other Asian peoples, under the influence of Confucian collectivism, may suppress their personal opinions or views to maintain collective harmony (Hofstede, 2011; House et al., 2004; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Tran, 2016; Truong, 2013). In other words, individuality or individual voice may be marginalised at the expense of the group's common benefit. This may lead to the fact that the Vietnamese people choose to use 'witting speech' for the surface benefit of the community. The other bigger half of the iceberg is the inside 'unwitting heart', which may build up implicit disapproval or even a rebellion. In this respect, the surface-level communicative indirectness reflects a tendency to avoid direct confrontation. The findings in this study confirmed Tran's (2016) argument that promoting collective harmony by maintaining superficial structural hierarchy may prevent authentic collegial collaboration. Evidently, participants' teaching practice appeared to be individualised despite their espoused value of colleagues' evaluation and professional advice. In the long term, superficial collective harmony may hinder individual development as they choose not to voice innovative ideas for collective transformation (Nguyen & Phan, 2012).

Collective harmony can be further elaborated based on the Yin-Yang principle in Confucianism (Angle & Tiwald, 2017; Jamieson, 1993; Nguyen & Phan, 2012; Tran, 2009). In the Vietnamese context, participants in this study could be considered as less powerful or subordinates. Their beliefs and practices of EFL teaching showed that they were exercising the Yin within the activity system to maintain collective harmony. Therefore, the compliance-driven practice of EFL teaching and learning at Vietnamese HE institutions found in previous studies (e.g., Pham, 2018; Tran, 2016) should be revisited, at least departmentally and institutionally. This is because Yin does not necessarily mean compliance; it is intended for collective harmony of existence. The observed compliance-driven classrooms reflected the Vietnamese Yin-based culture in which Vietnamese people usually try to avoid being extreme in responding to the natural environment and social interactions (Tran, 2004). This study invites a more nuanced research into the effects of this

relational concept of Yin-Yang on the Vietnamese Confucian-influenced educational context, which has not been well reported in the literature.

7.3.3. The culturality of "mất mặt" (face loss) and associated culture-specific rules

The multifaceted sociocultural concept of "*mất mặt*" (face loss) in the Vietnamese educational context has been well researched (Nguyen, T. Q. T., 2015b, 2015c, 2017; Nguyen, T. N. M., 2016; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Pham, T. H. T., 2014; Pham, T. H. N., 2007, 2011, 2014, 2018; Phan, L. H., 2004a, 2004b). On the one hand, the dominant perspective of the interdependent self in Vietnamese collectivist society values keeping face by showing obedience and respect, especially to the senior others. On the other hand, self face-keeping is important. The concept of face loss is closely linked with the culturality of perfectionism in "*nghề giáo*" (teaching profession) in the Vietnamese context. Platitudes such as "*mô phạm*" (didactic), "*chuẩn mực đạo đức*" (moral/ethic standards), "*đạo lý*" (moral excellence), or "*tấm gương cho các thế hệ học sinh*" (example for generations of students) are sociopolitically and culturally assumed to be outstanding characteristics of 'being a teacher'. This is to acknowledge social recognition of teachers' unsung sacrifice for generations of students in "*sự nghiệp trồng người*" (the cause of planting humans – Ho Chi Minh) that is a popular sociopolitical slogan in Vietnam.

Nonetheless, this implicitly places a further sociocultural burden on teachers regardless of the levels of schooling in which they are involved. Teachers are expected to be moral and ethical exemplars both in and out of school. In addition, the sociocultural image of Vietnamese teachers as the respectful authority of knowledge adds more weight to the perception of teaching as modelling (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Pham, T. H. N., 2014). Therefore, the teacher making mistakes might not only bear academic meanings but also denote sociocultural consequences that would be best prevented as typically expressed by Le, Ngoc, and Minh. In other words, the teaching quality was reliant on the teacher's excellence in making the fewest mistakes even though participants viewed making mistakes as opportunities to learn. Comparable to the findings in T. Q. T. Nguyen's (2017) study, the participants in this study tended to save face by softening their mistakes, attributing them to inadvertent carelessness or spelling and pronunciation errors for instance.

Participants' belief about teaching as role modelling stemmed from their observation of past experiences. This belief was termed descriptive and inference beliefs (Block & Hazelip, 1995; Lortie, 1975). This finding was in contrast to Nguyen and Hall's (2017) argument that Vietnamese teachers' beliefs about teaching activity as role modelling had changed gradually. As perceived by the participants, the role modelling nature of teaching activity consists of two indispensable elements:

"*tài*" (knowledge/talent) and "*đức*" (ethics/morality); the absence of either could lead the activity to flawed outcomes. Congruent with the findings in previous studies (Nguyen, T. M. H., 2014; Tran, 2016; Truong, 2013), participants in this study placed great weight on *đức/tâm* in the teaching activity as role modelling. The "*tâm*" in teaching appeared to stem from participants' beliefs about teaching as a parenting activity in which school and classrooms were viewed as home and students as "*con cháu*" (children or grandchildren) who were expected to learn not only the language knowledge and skills for their future study or employment but also the manner of conduct that promoted respect of junior toward senior members in society. This perception is closely linked to the government and institutional requirements to train students to have moral qualities – "*học làm người*" (learn to be human or showing humanness), which is the chief Confucian virtue (Angle & Tiwald, 2017; Nguyen & Phan, 2012).

Participants tended to assume shared beliefs in relation to role modelling. They used "*mình*" (I, we, or any other group insider). Often heard in the participants' statements were "*mình phải theo*" (I/we must follow), "*mình nên theo chứ*" (I/we should follow), "*mình phải quan tâm đến người học*" (I/we must care for students' learning), or "*mình xem sinh viên như* …" (I/we consider students …). Culturally, *mình* bears an emotional connotation in the Vietnamese cultural context, of which the metaphorical entailment is beyond tangible cultural values. The use of "*mình*" was to show hierarchical respect to the senior others in the academic setting and loving care for the junior others. In a broader sense, the cultural assumption of *mình* is that there should be common submission to the collective activity for the best overall. In the case of this study, there should be common submission to role modelling in teaching activity.

Another rule relating to the concept of face loss was participants' preference individual and/or informal in-group professional learning. This preference is intricately linked to perception of role modelling in teaching because Vietnamese teachers are ingrained with the belief that the teaching profession is noble with a high social rank and that it plays a crucial role in social development (Nguyen, 2015b; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). Thus, individual professional learning (e.g., personal reflection by keeping a teaching diary, reading articles, searching supplementary teaching materials for knowledge update or classroom use, doing action research) was reported as common among participants. However, it is noteworthy that participants did not show a sense of sharing in their individual professional learning such as discussing the articles they read or who was involved in their action research. In other words, participants, on the one hand, appeared not to be not academically ready for collaborative professional learning that required them to share knowledge, and on the

other, intentionally individualised their professional learning. This echoes Nguyen and Nguyen's (2019) argument that in individual professional learning, teachers were not exposed to "the risk of losing face and public image" (p. 236) and that there was a reluctance among Vietnamese teachers towards collaborative professional learning. Despite their espoused search for supplementary materials for classroom use, the observational data did not support this. To this point, it could be argued that participants' espoused beliefs about individual professional learning aimed to keep face in their academic development. Another indication of keeping face was participants' preference and valuing of informal professional learning within the faculty of English or the faculty's specialist divisions, and among familiar groups of colleagues. Although this could be considered informal collaborative professional learning (Tran, 2016), it prompts an association with in-group collectivism which participants felt familiar (Hofstede, 2011; House et al., 2004; Nguyen & Phan, 2012). This in-group professional learning could be argued to help save face because in-group members do not receive outsider's evaluation on their academic performance (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019).

7.3.4. *Perezhivanie* in the community

In this study, participants' experiences with their family members and former teachers within specific social situations of development suggested that *perezhivanie* (emotional experiencing of experiences) was an important influence on their teaching beliefs and practices (Dang, K., 2013; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Mok, 2017; Nguyen, M. H., 2018; Smagorinsky, 2011a; Veresov & Fleer, 2016). Through perezhivanie, one's future experiences are reflected (Johnson, 2015). For example, Dang (2013) found that Vietnamese EFL teachers' emotions resulting from peer learning opportunities helped resolve conflicts and develop teachers' professional identities; this resolution in turn promoted teaching effectiveness.

In this study, the idealisation of their former teachers' or family members' home teaching together with the sociocultural concept of face-keeping, for example, possibly made Trang, Minh, and Le believe that the teacher should not make mistakes in their teaching. Similarly, for Diem, the strictness of her father in teaching her English during her childhood led to her espoused strictness as a rule in teaching. The perezhivanie Huy experienced when an English-speaking mentor criticised his 'self-preening' teacher-centred approach during his early teaching years made him change his belief about effective teaching later in the teaching profession, shifting from self-imaging with excellent performance of language knowledge to promoting close connections with students. His perezhivanie resulted in a full undestanding of the social situation of development at that time in his later teaching years (Blunden, 2016): the teacher and students nurturing emotional bonds

toward each other. In fact, teacher–student affinity as an additional variable of affective filter contributes to or hinders effective language teaching and learning (Krashen, 1982). In this respect, participants' socioculturally situated teaching activity in this study was somewhat rendered by this meta-experience of perezhivanie (Smagorinsky, 2011a). This finding indicates a possible lack of space in the teacher education programmes for preservice teachers to explore their perezhivanie and possible impacts of perezhivanie on their later teaching. For example, such programmes should provide preservice teachers with opportunities to examine their emotional connections and experiences in relation to theories of teaching and learning.

That said, it is rational when the participants in this study referred to non-academic occasions such as International Women's Day (8 March), Vietnamese Teachers' Day (20 November) or the New Year celebration (end of December) (Thanh, Diep), as a good way to build perezhivanie. On these occasions, arts performances are often organised by the Youth Union or the Trade Union with teachers and students taking active part. Although perezhivanie was not the focus of the current study, the initial findings indicated that there should be comprehensive research into this if teachers' beliefs and practices are to be further explored. This is because teachers being faced with daily teaching collisions or emotionally charged situations with their environment could be a resource for their belief reflection and change. At this point, a question comes my mind as to why participants in this study had a common teaching belief of teaching grammar and vocabulary. Was this because they had the same perezhivanie? Even so, it is interesting to note that perezhivanie is different for different individuals. Is perezhivanie only influenced by the social situations of development in a point of time? The answer might embrace the cultural-historic moments of such situations. The initial evidence of family education and participants' similar educational experiences might be a starting point for further research into this. To the best of my knowledge, the educational role of perezhivanie has been underresearched in the Vietnamese context.

7.4. Contradictions and expansive learning in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL education

The analysis of the findings revealed socioculturally and politically hierarchical relationships between activity systems regarding tertiary EFL teaching at Vietnamese public universities with RedStar as an illustrative case because it is one of the key actors in the government's and MoET's EFL education reform. This thesis focused on three salient activity systems by MoET as superordinate, by RedStar as superordinate, and by teacher participants as subordinate (Figure 7.2). These activity systems are in a hierarchical interaction with imposing power of superiors (MoET representing the government) on subordinates (universities and teachers). This hierarchical

interaction was reflected through the production of rules and tools by the superordinates and the implementation of such rules and tools by the subordinates.

As for the purpose of the current research, the teacher participants' EFL teaching is the central activity system under investigation with MoET's and RedStar's superordinate activity systems as neighbouring activity systems. It directly interacts with and is under supervision and control of the institutional activity, the outcomes of which usually become tools and rules for the central activity system. The institutional activity is under direct supervision and control of MoET's activity with its outcomes being rules and tools for the institutional activity. Administratively, teacher participants' EFL teaching activity is under supervision and control of MoET's activity, but this relationship is indirect and blurred because the teachers are institutionally recruited and supervised.

Figure 7.2

Interaction between salient activity systems in tertiary EFL education in Vietnam
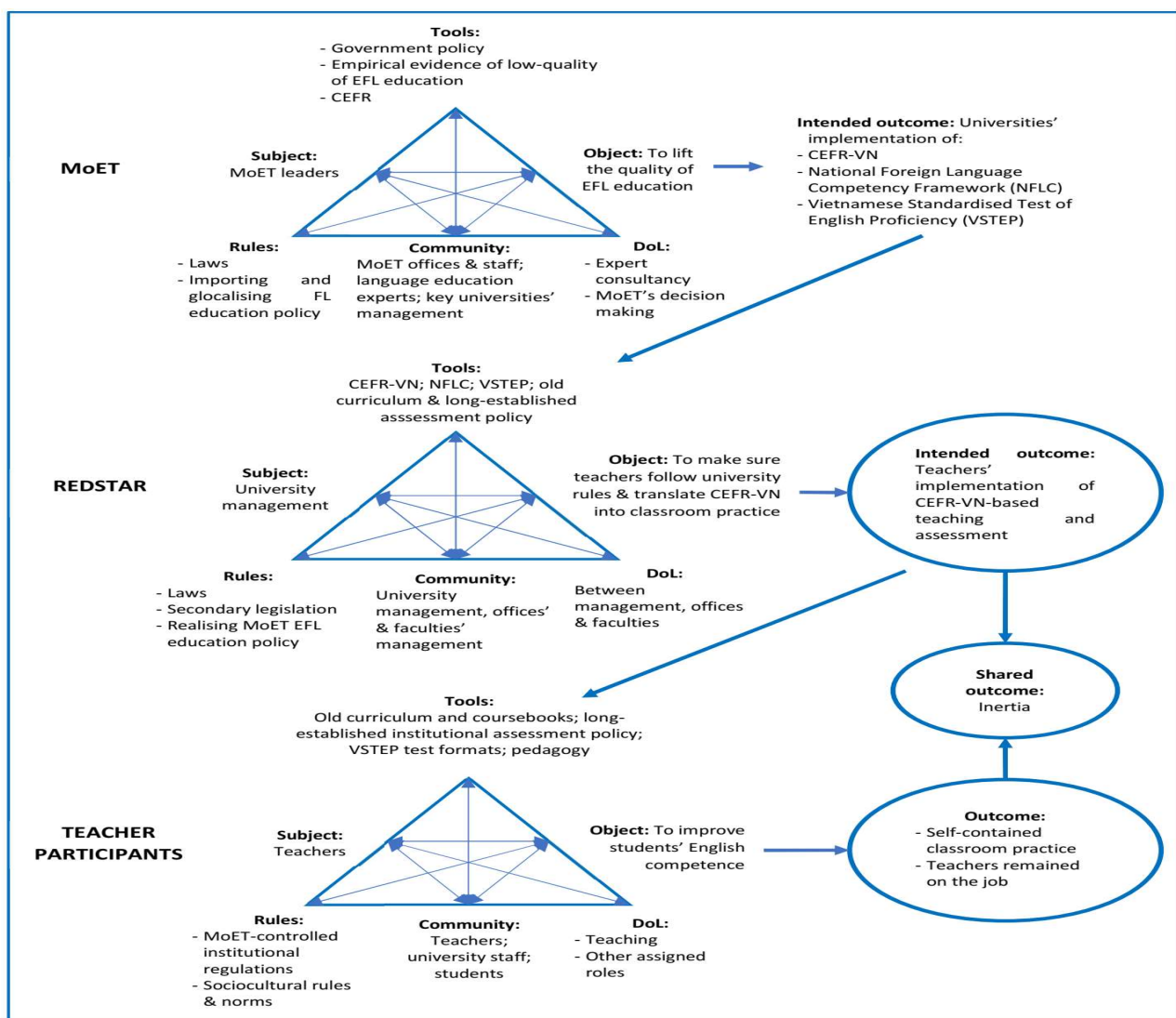
7.4.1. Identifying contradictions and tensions in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL teaching activity system

Emerging from the discussion in the preceding sections was the contradiction between the urgently important object of students' low proficiency in English and the tools mandated in the participants' teaching activity (Figure 7.3). This contradiction emerged mainly because the subject of the activity, the government (represented by MoET), the university and teachers, did not share the same value system and brought tensions to participants' EFL teaching (Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009). These tensions included using outdated prescribed coursebooks to enhance students' English proficiency, PLD versus perezhivanie within the node of tool, and teaching ceaselessly while wanting to help students improve knowledge.

Figure 7.3

Tensions in Vietnamese tertiary EFL teaching activity
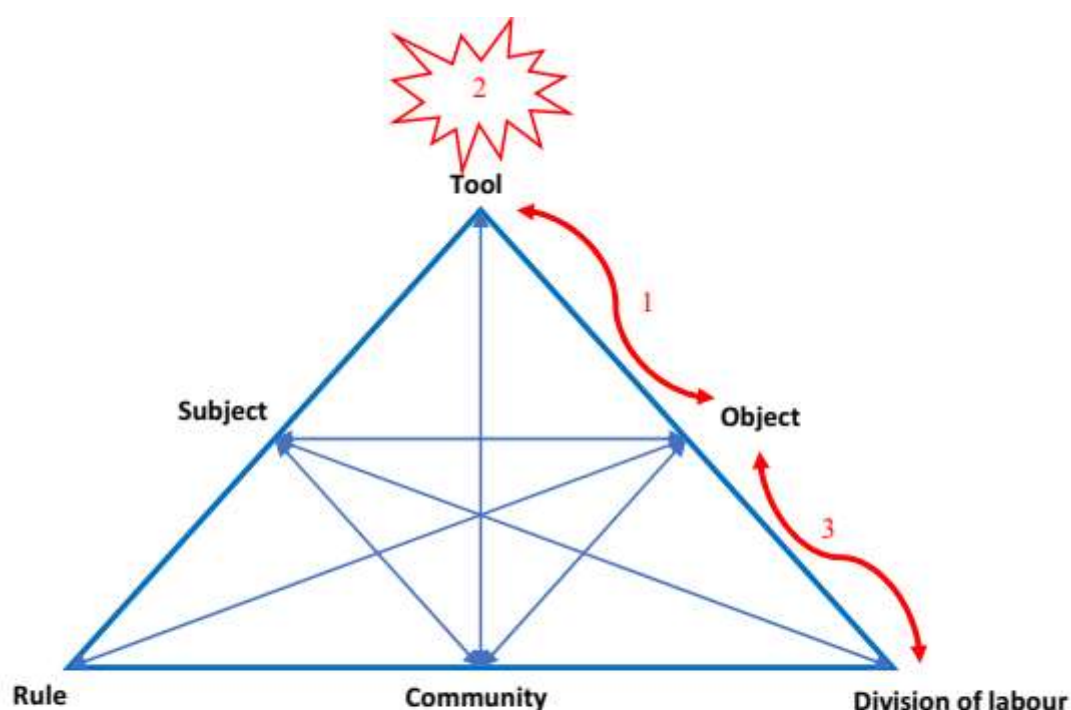
- Tension 1: Using outdated prescribed coursebooks versus enhancing students' English proficiency
- Tension 2: PLD versus *perezhivanie* in the node of tool
- Tension 3: Teaching ceaselessly while wanting to help students improve knowledge

The following sections discuss the tensions in the participants' EFL teaching activity.

7.4.1.1. Using outdated prescribed coursebooks to enhance students' English proficiency

The most obvious tension identified was between use value and exchange value of tools employed in the participants' teaching activity. Despite being required to follow the institutionally prescribed coursebooks, which were believed to be of good use and exchange value, most participants decided to adapt these coursebooks in an attempt to make their lessons effective and beneficial for students' learning in terms of exam preparation. The underlying belief might be that although the prescribed coursebooks could be of some use value, their exchange value should be subject to question regarding their practicality in enhancing students' English proficiency.

The contradiction between the use value and exchange value of the tool in participants' teaching activity could be best culturally understood through their use of the phrase "*chưa đủ*" (not yet sufficient), among others, when it came to the prescribed coursebooks. *Chưa đủ* could be culturally understood as unusable. As highlighted in the analysis of findings, participants used euphemisms of these kinds to avoid direct confrontation with and to show respect to the producers of these coursebooks who were often management or senior staff within their institution. The relationship might be more politically perplexing if the producers were their former teachers or influential figures in their becoming teachers. This is when the issue of social ranking (Vo, 2020) becomes the primary contradiction in teachers' activity. In addition, the cultural perception of the existential Yin-Yang relationship within every single social entity (the university) led participants to avoid being assertive or extreme in their evaluations of the existence or phenomena (e.g., the prescribed coursebooks) that may seriously affect social relationships or collective harmony. This finding resonates the Tran's (2004) argument on the culturally valued collective harmony in Vietnam. In other words, participants tended to choose to be in the safe zone of continuing their profession as teachers, which has an exchange value (e.g., salary, promotion). They seemed to avoid using critical expressions in their speech about what should be changed for the better (Tran, 2004). In the Vietnamese sociocultural context, there is an unwritten rule for state employees: "*chờ gần về hưu hãy nói*" (Just have your say when you are going to retire). This means that while one is in the industry, be cautious to remain professionally and politically safe because their say would probably be taken from a political perspective.

Participants' approach to the prescribed coursebook reflected the 'or' equation which is often evident in an activity (Engeström, 2016). The 'not-enough' of the institutionally prescribed coursebooks led them to weigh between following the prescribed coursebooks (the comfort zone) or adapting them to equip students with further knowledge (zone of proximal development

(Vygotsky, 1978), which may be risky). This 'or' was bound by the institutional rule that teachers had to teach the prescribed content and follow the test-driven practice regardless of personal perception of their suitability. Consistent with Pham and Hamid's (2013) and Hos and Kekec's (2014) findings, participants in this study either consciously or unconsciously followed the traditional way of teaching. The observational data showed that the objective of the participants' teaching was intended for the students to be equipped with sufficient language knowledge needed to pass the exams, whether continuous assessment such as the mid-term tests or end-of-term exams. As such, their beliefs of the teaching objective of providing students with communicative skills and preparing students for further study or employment were constrained and situated by political conditions within which institutional and individual activities were bound (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Marginson, 2011; Pajares, 1992). Consonant with other studies' findings (Dao & Newton, 2021; Nilsson & Wihlborg, 2011), the participants chose to remain in their comfort zone – teaching for exam preparation.

7.4.1.2. PLD versus perezhivanie in the node of tool

PLD was perceived by both the leadership (i.e., the government, MoET, and university management staff) and participants as a significant mediator in enhancing the quality of EFL teaching and learning. The government, for example, believed that by sending teachers for PLD overseas, the country's English education would be successfully reformed. In other words, one of the conceptual tools (together with the adoption of the CEFR) that the government and MoET employed regarding foreign language reform was upgrading qualifications for the teaching staff. However, the participants' beliefs and practices in this study appeared to be more deeply impacted, as found in other studies (Johnson, 2009, 2015), by their internal perezhivanie than their external access to scientific concepts equipped via overseas teacher education programmes.

A credible explanation for this contradiction is the substantive differences between the two culturally organised activities in which participants engaged (Rogoff, 1995). Specifically, the participants had been ingrained with practices of EFL teaching and learning during their familial and school apprenticeships of observation long before they followed the apprenticeship of observation overseas. Therefore, although the participants were exposed to theories of linguistics and/or the scientific concepts of second/foreign language acquisition, these were not necessarily translated into effective or culturally appropriate instruction in their everyday practice upon completing their overseas training (Johnson, 2015; Ngo, 2018). In other words, the values, assumptions, and attitudes embedded in the participants' past learning experiences possibly constrained systemic changes in

their EFL teaching activity even when a new, presumably more advanced mediating artefact (i.e., borrowed language education framework) was enforced in the system (Johnson, 2015). Given that the time participants were involved in culturally organised activities while abroad was much more short-lived than their collective and enduring EFL teaching activity back in their home Vietnamese university, it was understandable that systemic changes were insignificant (Cole & Engeström, 1993).

Further clear evidence in this study was that there was a misalignment between the value systems of the activity subjects regarding PLD, between the government and MoET, the institution, and the participants. Therefore, attending these PLD events did not lead to profound or radical changes in teachers' beliefs and practices as found in other studies (e.g., Borg, 2011; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Tran, 2016). Participants seemed to prefer to attend informal PLD events within their familiar institutional community such as divisional academic discussions or departmental professional meetings or workshops. Formal PLD events were viewed as impractical or inapplicable; they appeared not to meet participants' needs (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). This created complexity in the formation of teachers' identity in their daily teaching activity, the result of which was that the participants tended to follow their perceived activity systems rather than transforming them even when a new objective, for instance, was injected into the activity system.

7.4.1.3. Teaching ceaselessly while wanting to help students improve knowledge

Participants (Thanh, Ngoc, Minh, Chau, Huy, Le, Trang) referred to feeling so burnt out by their teaching load that they did not have time to self-reflect but needed to keep going. They had to adhere to the university's regulations and requirements regarding teaching load. Minh and Trang, the two youngest female participants, admitted that they did not know how they could survive their daily teaching with about 10 groups of students in a four-month semester. Le and Huy questioned their teaching effectiveness because they admitted to going to school to teach and coming home without non-academic interactions with their students. By nature, the participants' ceaseless teaching was caused by a double bind in the division of labour. This double bind appeared to be the result of the demands imposed on the participants: delivering the institutional curriculum with a heavy teaching load and preparing students for VSTEP-based institutional tests because the institutional curriculum did not align with the National Foreign Language Competence Framework.

In the Vietnamese educational context, there is a social concept attributed to such burnt-out situations: "*thợ dạy*" (a teaching mechanic), which was implied by the participants in this study. A teaching mechanic must teach non-stop for so long that they do not have sufficient time to reflect

on the lessons (Ngo, 2019b). Being a teaching mechanic leads to teaching to fill the time and at the same time implies that the exchange value (completing designated teaching load) outweighs the use value (helping students improve their English competence) of the teaching activity. In other words, a teaching mechanic often has their focus more on covering the planned and structured classroom management than on promoting independent student learning. Together with the booming moonlighting as a supplementary behind-the-scene industry, the sociocultural denotation of a teaching mechanic is that the focus of teaching is more on the exchange value (teaching for money) than on the use value (helping students improve skills as espoused by the participants in this study). In the most negative terms, being a teaching mechanic is to turn a blind eye to what students can learn and how to make teaching real teaching.

The irreparable/unbridgeable primary contradiction between being a teaching mechanic and being a true teacher in the contemporary Vietnamese education system warrants more comprehensive research if transformations are to take place. I could sense the participants' disablement, being torn, and even thwarted. On a beautiful day, they could be real teachers, immersing themselves in the lessons for students' learning's sake; in contrast, they were teaching mechanics with emotionless delivery, being overwhelmed with a heavy workload and/or other cumbersome responsibilities or demotivated by social negatives. I would tend to believe that if the concept of a teaching mechanic is used to coin a new sense of social integration of the community of the Vietnamese teachers, it would harm the country's education.

7.4.2. Reconstructing the Vietnamese tertiary EFL education system through Engeström's expansive learning theory

Emerging from this study is the need to reconstruct the Vietnamese tertiary EFL education system through Engeström's (2009, 2015) expansive learning theory, with RedStar as an illustrative case. As discussed in Chapter 3, expansive learning occurs once the systemic contradictions and organisational learning challenge are identified and collective change attempts take place.

Despite reform attempts with the most recent government's and MoET's Project 2020, Vietnamese HE graduates still show low English proficiency (Le, 2011; Trinh & Mai, 2019). Higher education institutions in general and tertiary EFL teachers in particular appear to be under much political and academic pressure to innovate their instructional practice to help improve graduates' English competence while there is little evidence of EFL teaching transformation at lower levels. As found by researchers, EFL education in Vietnam remains problematic due to inappropriate English teaching and learning materials (Trinh & Mai, 2019), a lack of secondary-through-tertiary connection in terms

of curriculum (Le, 2011, 2019; Tran & Marginson, 2014), the traditional grammar- and vocabulary-based pedagogy (Nguyen, G., 2014; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019), and a test-oriented educational system (Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Nguyen & Stracke, 2020; Trinh & Mai, 2019).

The government and MoET responded to this practice by a politicised redesign of the tool by glocalising CEFR as the CEFR-VN and the production of CEFR-based Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (Ngo, 2021; Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020). Evidently, this research shows that this redesign attempt did not include many teachers' and students' voices, who were essentially the change agents (Mai, 2018). This is partly because of the hierarchical interactions of the activity systems in Vietnamese education in which superordinate's decision making is assumption-based (Le, 2020). In other words, there seemed to be a lack of a "preliminary *phenomenological insight* into the nature of its discourse and problems as experienced by those involved in the activity" (Engeström, 2015, p. 253. Italics original).

Moreover, the analysis of findings showed that in the case study institution the institutional response to reform calls did not appear to be robust. This was evidenced through the institutional reliance on and continuity of an old curriculum, the out-of-date prescribed coursebooks, requirements that teachers follow the subject-specific unit descriptions, and a historically inherited assessment policy. One obvious institutional move was the VSTEP-based test formats for language skill subjects. In other words, it seemed that RedStar's management/superordinate activity, mediated by the outcomes of the government's and MoET's activity, conceptualised the object of their activity around the assessment rather than students' low proficiency in English as both acknowledged by the government and MoET and empirically informed by the researchers in the field. An additional objective of the institutional activity appeared to make sure that the teaching staff follow the curriculum strictly, as found in other research (Pham, T. H. T., 2016). Given these mediating artefacts were the outcome of a previous activity, the institutionalisation made them an enduring tool for the current activity system (Cole & Engeström, 1993). The Confucian cultural feature of respecting the predecessor's work (the inheritance), as discussed earlier in this chapter, made these tools more enduring and hard to change.

Paradoxically, the participants in this study responded to the reform imperatives by keeping the status quo, evidenced in their teaching practice of maintaining their core pedagogical belief of providing students with language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary and a coursebook-based and test-oriented teaching. As the subjects of learning (Engeström, 2009), it seemed that the participants in this study made insufficient attempts to reconceptualise their teaching beliefs and

practice, although some of them questioned the glocalisation of a Western-developed foreign language education policy in their teaching activity system (e.g., Minh, Trang). In other words, the participants did not appear to be robust in responding to the recently established tool (CEFR-VN) in their teaching activity (Engeström, 2009). Therefore, the learning challenge of the Vietnamese EFL education, as evident in this study as the least, appeared to be the state of inertia of the participants' practice which is influenced by their motivations for change (Engeström, 2009). As such, the object of the Vietnamese EFL education as found in this study was to change teachers' beliefs and practices before aiming at redesigning the tools to improve students' low English proficiency. Evidently in this study, a "deliberate collective change effort" regarding EFL teaching did not appear to happen, hence expansive learning was far from reach (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). There should be a more comprehensive research into why this deliberate collective change effort does not happen and how it can be materialised.

7.5. Chapter summary

The discussion in this chapter has made the case that culturality and historicity are inherently evident in Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' activity. Cultural values and sociopolitical ideologies have had an impact on the participants' becoming and being a teacher. In the Vietnamese tertiary educational context, Confucian associated values such as "*lễ*" (ritual propriety) and "*hiếu*" (filial piety) (e.g., collective harmony, obedience to familial seniority, face saving, and respect for authority and social seniority) are found to be influential in Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' activity. More importantly, participants' conceptualisation of the tertiary EFL teaching activity shows a balance between the "*cái lý*" (academic issues) and "*cái tình*" (emotional feelings) within the node of rule. The contradiction was identified between the urgently important object of students' low proficiency in English and the tools mandated in the participants' teaching activity. This contradiction brings about tensions in their teaching activity.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

My research into Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices is positioned within the context of foreign language education reform under Project 2020 launched by the Vietnamese government in 2008 and amended in 2017 (The Prime Minister, 2008a, 2017). The ambitious goal of the Project was to produce college and university graduates who were competent users of a FL, capable of working in an integrated environment, and who could contribute to the country's industrialisation and modernisation. An important tool for this reform activity was a partial adaptation of an imported language competency framework, Common European Framework of Reference to produce the Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam, intended to be a tool in the needed transformation of the FL education system. However, importing pedagogical concepts and language education policy has not necessarily been successful in the Vietnamese context (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018).

Theoretically, I drew on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2015) as a theoretical framework and activity systems analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) as the analytical framework for my research because these helped in gaining a deep understanding of the cultural and historical complexity of tertiary EFL teaching activity in a Confucianism-influenced Vietnamese context. Methodologically, CHAT is well-paired with qualitative case study (Bligh & Flood, 2017; Sannino & Engeström, 2018; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Framing the research within social constructivism (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I was interested in investigating tertiary EFL teaching within the Vietnamese cultural and historical context, which fitted with a case study approach. I examined the national and institutional contexts. At institutional level I focused on the cases of nine tertiary EFL teachers. I used in-depth interviews, classroom observations, government policy documents and directives, and institutional curriculum documents as my data collection methods and sources. In total, 18 interviews (about 45 minutes each) and 18 classroom observations (90 minutes each) were conducted, which contributed a range of data for the analysis. The analysis of artefacts such as government and institutional guiding documents, and field notes shed further insights into the data interpretation (Creswell, 2014; Orange, 2016). This research presented an account of the complexity of tertiary EFL teaching activity within the contemporary Vietnamese cultural and historical context.

Although there has been an increase in sociocultural research including CHAT-based studies on tertiary English teachers' beliefs and practices (Barahona, 2016; Feryok, 2012; Song & Kim, 2016), there have been few studies on this area of interest in the Vietnamese context. Specifically, limited research has been conducted regarding historical and cultural influences on Vietnamese tertiary EFL

teachers' beliefs and practices. My research questions were designed to address the gap identified in the literature. My questions focused on how Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs were shaped and influenced by sociocultural and historical factors, what the possible contradictions were in their EFL teaching activity, and what they understood to be effective teaching practice. With an understanding of the Vietnamese culture and to the best of my ability, the current study was conducted in a manner that did not trigger a power hierarchy between the teacher participants and me as a researcher. It is also the first of its kind that employs CHAT and activity systems analysis to explore the culturality and historicity of Vietnamese in-service tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices.

8.1. Summary of the findings and research contributions

Within the social constructivist research paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the worldview of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers as was explored in a rich descriptive and interpretive way (Bryman, 2016) and the significant non-observables of their lived experiences were better understood (Slife & Melling, 2012). Although I was the main research instrument and my human interpretation might be to some extent influenced by my own history, the experiences and beliefs shared by the teachers in this study were individually unique and had their own value that deserves due acknowledgement.

Methodological contribution to CHAT

One of the strengths of this research lies in its original methodological contribution, in through the demonstration, the conceptualisation, and the representation of teachers' beliefs, a cognitive aspect of mind within a CHAT framework and graphic model. Practically, CHAT provided tools that helped identify and capture the culturally-induced and historical complexity of the genesis of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and the contradictions in EFL teaching activity system. It helped make tangible the intangible and messy constructs of beliefs (Pajares, 1992). As such, the current research contributed new insights and theoretical contributions into the mediating role beliefs play in practice. My work has helped in conceptualising Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs specifically via considering the culturality and historicity of the activity context within which teachers were operating. The genetic-analytical approach with its central focus on historicity supports a deepened examination of teachers' beliefs and practices (Cross, 2010). This study provides evidence of the value of and potential for further examination of tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices by incorporating their ontogenesis and sociogenesis within immediate cultural-historic settings.

One of the important findings in this study is the EFL teaching activity system at the case study university appears to be rule-bound. The participants' articulation of their values and beliefs revealed the cultural and historic roots of the rules they worked to in their classrooms. These rules appeared to be influenced by teachers' familial and school apprenticeships of observation. The participants' activity system also appears to be mediated by a sociocultural rule that centres on hierarchy, complex collegial harmony, conformity, and relatedness. This explicated the participants' structurally reproductive activity system in which fulfilling the institutional curriculum was an important objective. The most prominent professional connection between the teachers and their institution and higher management was the assessment as a rule. This is when a tool becomes a rule (Foot, 2014). Consequently, the tertiary EFL teaching activity system was exam-driven with not much thought, planning, or a connection made with future context-specific use of English. The option of change appeared to be off participants' radar.

In addition, the study reveals that morality appears to be the backbone rule of teaching and learning. For the teachers in this study, morality connotes teacher–student immediacy, which promotes a teaching-as-caring process. This rule seems to be closely associated with the concept of role modelling in Vietnamese culture that promotes the internalisation of moral virtues through the teacher's actions in the classroom (Lumpkin, 2008).

A third finding was that there appears to be a disconnection between and among the parties involved in the community. The teachers in this study seemed to promote individual agency within their EFL teaching activity system. This contradicts with their expression of "we have to …" in the interviews, which denotes collective actions. Their teaching activity was individualised without close connection to significant others within the institutional activity system or to the wider community. This may cause a mismatch between the classroom happenings and what was expected of the students by society. In addition, there is a loose curricular engagement by teachers; they are simply rule-followers influenced by the sociocultural valuing of collective harmony. However, there appears to be a strong connection between teachers and their family members and former teachers who were either spiritual or academic supporters in the teachers' teaching activity.

Furthermore, the institutional activity system appeared to be inertia for a long time even after the release in 2008 of the government's Project 2020 which aimed to enhance the quality of English language education. Concurrently, the teachers' activity system, inherent with culturality and historicity, seemed to be traditional in which participants did not push the boundaries to be

innovative in their teaching practice. Despite the teachers' different approaches to the prescribed coursebooks in their lessons, these differences seem to be cosmetic. Therefore, it may be argued that the teachers' motive was to remain within the safe or comfort zone.

Finally, the current foreign language education reform in Vietnam intends a change in primary tools and artefacts by partially borrowing and adapting a Western-developed language competency framework and policy (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020). The Vietnamese government and its acting bodies focus on EFL teacher training to enhance the effective use of secondary artefacts (e.g., pedagogical and methodological knowledge and expertise). However, tertiary artefacts (e.g., Confucian-influenced teachers' and students' beliefs) are under-researched, which may impact the effectiveness of tertiary EFL teaching activity system. A convenient adaptation of primary artefacts that are produced in different cultural-historic contexts may not necessarily lead to transformation because they fail to address critical issues of sociocultural values in language classroom practice in the Vietnamese context (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015, 2020; Pham & Ton, 2010). In other words, the overreliance on Western-developed artefacts may not fit well in the Vietnamese tertiary teaching activity system, which may result in tensions in language policy enactment. The data showed that even one of the institution's primary tools (i.e., the institutionally prescribed coursebooks) was perceived by the teachers as out of date and unfit for purpose in relation to the objective of Project 2020. Therefore, the transformation of the whole activity system of tertiary EFL teaching in the researched Vietnamese context, which was dependent on the change in a single tool, appeared to be ineffective and impractical.

8.2. Limitations

This research investigated Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices with a triangulation of data collection methods: guiding documents and instructional artefacts, observations, and in-depth interviews. However, limitations remain.

Firstly, there was a potential for the research process to have an influence on the teacher participants despite the researcher's effort to remain impersonal and reduce such an impact throughout the research.

Secondly, the research was confined to one university in central Vietnam where historical and cultural contexts are likely to be particular to its contexts, and to be different from other parts of the country. The research employed a case study approach and was conducted with a small group of nine in-service tertiary EFL teachers who taught English-major classes. Therefore, this did not allow for generalisation of the findings to other groups of teachers or similar tertiary settings.

Thirdly, time was a methodologically important dimension of the research which focused on exploring teachers' beliefs from their early access to a FL, then of their schooling and early teaching experiences, and up to their teaching at the time of data collection. Therefore, their recollection of past schooling and teaching experiences might be vague or distorted.

Finally, the research did not employ CHAT as its originally interventionist purpose for transformation (Engeström, 2015). This made it challenging to explore the possibility for changes in the case study EFL teaching activity system.

8.3. Implications

The findings of this study provide an understanding of the culturality and historicity of EFL teaching activity system at a university in central Vietnam. The study suggests that more attention from the government policy makers and institutional management staff should be paid to identifying and solving tensions in the EFL teaching activity system. The following are implications for the government and RedStar from understanding these system changes and makes suggestions for future research.

Implications for the government

If curriculum is to be a pivotal government and/or institutional mediating artefact, there should be stronger curricular engagement by the teachers, who are eventually primary change agents of the teaching activity system through their classroom operations. The current foreign language reform (Project 2020) seemed to be geared toward a change in the primary tool (i.e., foreign language policy, the National Foreign Language Competency Framework). However, this change appeared to run counter to the institutional curriculum that was paradoxically bound to the government's guiding documents such as the Education Law to include politics-inclined subject areas.

Implications for RedStar

Practically, the appointment of the teaching staff to a specific division of specialisation might be based on both their specialised areas and familial and academic apprenticeships of observation. This study found that the teachers' beliefs were heavily influenced by such observations. This was the case for both domestically and internationally trained teachers. The internationally trained teachers, despite their exposure to cultures and educational settings other than those in Vietnam, appeared to run the classroom in a traditional way.

Collaborative informal PLD was the preferred option for teachers' professional learning. There are several ways to support teachers to actively participate in PLD events. One possible way is to reduce

the formality of PLD events so that the teachers feel that they are in a comfort zone. Another way is for respected and influential teachers within the faculty to organise informal PLD events for teachers to learn from each other. However, these influential teachers need to take the lead in transforming teaching practice because, as found in the current study, younger teachers tended to regard these teachers as their role models, and continuity and inheritance appeared to be deep-rooted in the EFL teaching activity at the case study university. This is because collectivism in the Vietnamese context creates a small group of insiders or members (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019; Nguyen & Phan, 2012). A small critical friend group could also be introduced within the institution where teachers of the same faculty or across faculties could learn from each other in an informal sharing environment (Vo & Nguyen, 2009).

The division of labour found in this study implied further involvement in or commitment to PLD rather than "*dạy miết*" (teaching ceaselessly). This *dạy miết* in turn signified a more institutional focus on quantity than quality of the teaching activity. This suggests a need to review and revise institutional regulations and practices to ensure that teachers have a manageable workload that includes time to participate in PLD.

The research revealed that there was no explicit connection between the training programmes in the university and the industries who might be using its products. This ultimately resulted in a mismatch between the learning outcomes of the tertiary EFL education programmes and social needs generally and employment requirements particularly. Management staff have a large role to play in establishing connection channels with the industries through practicum or field trips so that learning outcomes could be appropriately modified. At the institutional level, CHAT-based research can be implemented to examine the learning outcomes that are expected by different industries in the economy. This might enable the institutional curriculum to be continually moderated and modified to develop the knowledge and skills required of graduates by these industries and the changing labour market generally. This would help enhance the quality of EFL education in the case study university. Ideally, a CHAT research group would operate with academic freedom and independence and adequate financial autonomy. However, as discussed in an earlier paragraph regarding PLD, because of the underlying sociocultural norms of relatedness in Vietnam, the establishment of such a CHAT research group may be best started at the departmental level, where those who are interested in the application of CHAT could join. As a starting point, this group might be led informally by an experienced teaching staff member whose voice is influential with both the

teaching and management staff. This group could then be extended to include cross-departmental staff, and hopefully across tertiary institutions and universities.

Finally, for the EFL teaching activity system to transform, the design of teacher education programmes such as that of RedStar needs to aim at providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to reflect on their beliefs about teaching and learning. This will make them more likely to be adaptive to prospective teaching practice. The teachers in this study appeared to base their teaching on their own cultural past, which was much influenced by their apprenticeships of observation (Cole & Engeström, 1993). In other words, the cultural past of apprenticeships of observation appeared to outweigh their guided participation (Rogoff, 1995) in PLD events as culturally organised activities, whether domestically or overseas. Therefore, significant changes were hardly seen their teaching practice.

Implications for future research

Further research should be carried out in other tertiary institutions in northern and southern Vietnam to provide comparative analyses regarding EFL teachers' beliefs. This is because the north of Vietnam had been exposed to Russian and Chinese long before English gained its current dominant sociopolitical status in Vietnam, and the south to the English language since the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, the genesis of and sociocultural influences on teachers' beliefs are likely different.

The constraints of a doctoral research project, including that of time meant a more comprehensive study with more English teachers from other departments at RedStar who teach non-English-major classes is needed.

Human interactions are tool mediated (Engeström, 2015); therefore, it is important to conduct further research into the tools used for tertiary EFL teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context. If tools are appropriately contextualised, it is more likely that they are widely accepted and used by the teachers so that even when a tool becomes a rule (e.g., the adaptation of imported English education policy or resources), it is unlikely to place further burden on the teachers.

Voices from other parties involved in the tertiary EFL activity system in Vietnam have yet to be explored. These include policy makers from the government and MoET and institutional management staff who have the political power to inject new objects into such a system. In addition, research on students' beliefs about EFL teaching and learning should be carried out in relation to EFL reforms so that their voices are heard for better results for the reforms. By doing so, there will

be a deepened understanding of the joint activity system of tertiary EFL teaching in the Vietnamese context.

Finally, future research should focus on exploring how teachers' beliefs and practices may change by ethnographic observations and/or interventions, for example with the inclusion of a new artefact such as an online learning tool. Such research may start multiple interviews over time with teachers to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the information provided.

8.4. Closing note

This study has investigated Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices at a public foreign language university in central Vietnam. It has provided an insight into the historicity and culturality, including the political dimensions those beliefs and practices. This study contributed to the knowledge of tertiary EFL teaching and learning and to the existing literature on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in an international context by using CHAT to visualise teachers' beliefs and practices in the Vietnamese context. Particularly, this study has identified:

- the sources or the genesis of Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs
- the sociocultural and historical influences on their beliefs and practices
- the contradictions within the teachers' activity system
- the teachers' conceptualisation of an effective language teacher and effective teaching.

Most importantly, the findings were reported and interpreted in close consideration of Vietnamese culture, ideology, and political perspectives. This study has provided information for policy makers, curriculum designers, educators, and tertiary institutions who are interested in transforming the tertiary EFL teaching activity system in the Vietnamese context.

As a tertiary EFL teacher, I have been inquisitive about teachers' beliefs and practices, including my own. In my early years of English teaching, I used to believe that effective teaching activity was only about the teacher's language knowledge and an individual image of being competent in the language. I used to be confident that my English proficiency was sufficient for being an effective teacher; it was irrational. This study has provided me with a deeper understanding of the complexity of a EFL teaching activity system from a cultural and historical perspective with RedStar being an illustrative case. More importantly, CHAT as an analytical framework has enlightened me that teachers' beliefs could be conceptualised and graphically represented and that the teachers' ontogenesis and sociogenesis could be deeply explored.

The image of my father as my first foreign language teacher with his emotionally strict teaching was entrenched in my mind as I completed this thesis. My father was a teacher of Russian which was prior to 2000 a respected occupation. I can never forget the moment he silently placed his outstanding university academic transcripts before me on the table. I saw extreme disappointment in his eyes when I could not complete an English grammar and vocabulary exercise. Until now, I do not know whether or not those transcripts were mediating artefacts. However, I was driven by the many A+s in them. I can never forget the moment he was ecstatic about his getting a scholarship to study in the United States in the 1990s when I was studying at senior secondary school. I came to understand that his studying in the United States added to his professional identity, as a Russian and English teacher, and that my studying English helped him keep face. I have a vivid memory of my first English reading lesson at the university when my teacher, who was one of my father's students, reprimanded me in front of my classmates saying that my English was "theirs", not "ours" because I spoke English with a Russian accent. There is a sea of similar unforgettable social situations and these contributed to my kinship apprenticeship of observation and developing an understanding of the link between perezhivanie and learning. I believe that the perezhivanie of my father's English lessons is still reflected in my learning and teaching. I love you, Dad! I can never forget your using the time arrow to show verb tenses in English that I still use to teach my students. Now I understand the meaning of the triangle in your lesson plans for Russian classes. Thank you!

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Recruiting email for teachers

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

RECRUITING EMAIL FOR TEACHERS

Dear colleague,

My name is Nguyen Viet and I am a Doctoral student at School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

I am writing this email to invite you to participate in my research on teachers' beliefs and practices. The aim of the research is to gain insights into the role played by culture and values in the EFL classroom. Specifically, it is hoped to that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of EFL pedagogy and curriculum policy and practices in Vietnam. The data will be collected through two rounds of individual interviews. There may be class observations and the collection of teaching and course materials such as textbooks and handouts to better understand the context and inform the interviews.

If you would like to learn more about this project, please email me back with your name and a phone contact.

Thank you very for your time.

Kind regards,

Nguyen Viet
PhD student

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Victoria University of Wellington
03 Waiteata Road, Kelburn, Wellington 6012
Tel,: +64-4-463 9852

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Note: As the interviews are semi-structured, the following questions provide introductory guidelines. Elaborations on ideas during interviews are anticipated. The questions below will be used in round one of the interviews with teachers. Questions for round two will be initiated after classroom observations. Interviews will be conducted in Vietnamese.

Background

1. Please tell me about your background such as where you were born, grew up and went to school?
2. What about family? And family life growing up? Probes: *Who had the greatest influence on you growing up? Why was that? Was anyone in your family a teacher?*
3. Please tell me about your schooling – what stands out for you about school, relationships with teachers, what teachers did? – *positive and negative memories? A favourite teacher –why?*
4. What job or career did you want to have when you grew up?

English language teaching and learning experiences

5. When did you first learn English? Why this language? Who taught you? Your feeling then about English?
6. How about learning English in the country/your city at that time?
7. Who was your role model when learning English? What was special about him/her?
8. What about English learning materials at the time you started learning English?

Teacher education and professional development programs

9. Please tell me about the teacher education programs you had attended before became a teacher of English. - any differences after those programs? Any practical applications?
10. Please comment on the professional development / in-service education that you have had since becoming a teacher of English.

Teacher knowledge

11. Tell me about how you came to be an English language teacher? Any influences from outside?
12. Your favourite teaching way? Why? Any theories of teaching and learning in particular?
13. How do your students influence your teaching?
14. What role should a language teacher play in the class? Why?
15. Please tell me about your view of an effective English teacher/learner/classroom.

Appendix 3. Observation guide

Teacher in charge: …………………………..   Year of study: ……………..
Date and time: ……………………….   Subject taught: …………………………………..
Duration: …………………………………   Number of students: ……………………………………
Instructional materials: …………………………………   Teaching aids: ………………………………………….

Physical classroom arrangement

CHAT-based observation

Content	Details
1. Use of computer-based technologies	
2. Out-of-class communication in English	
3. Time for teaching target culture	
4. Error correction	
5. Use of L1	
6. Class tasks or activities	
7. Use of learning materials and supporting tools (e.g., pictures, visual aids)	
8. Opportunities for students to pose questions and expression personal opinions	
9. Opportunities for students to speak L2	
10. Use of classroom activities (e.g., pair work, group work, class discussion)	
11. Explanation of L2 (grammar, vocabulary, cultural expressions, etc.)	
12. Kinds of teacher-student contact (e.g., eye contact, direct instructions, teacher's assistance and guidance)	
13. Instruction (e.g., clarity, alterations of instruction)	
14. Classroom management: - awareness of students' individual needs and abilities - appreciating students' contributions to the lesson - equal attention to students - effective and appropriate monitoring of class activities - appropriate provision of support for students - switching teacher's roles based on stages of the lesson - facilitating students' participation - management of learning resources	

Appendix 4. Summary of class observations

Note:
- Classroom happenings were reported chronologically and time for classroom happenings was estimated.
- English was primary medium of instruction and learning unless otherwise clearly noted.
- Names are pseudonyms.

	Listening 2	Speaking 2				Reading 2			
	CHAU	TRANG	CHAU	DIEM	MINH	NGOC	THANH	HUY	LE
Student number, year of study & class time	• 22, second year • 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm • Week 5 of 15-week semester	• 22, second year • 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm • Week 2 of 15-week semester	• 22, second year • 3.00 pm -4.30 pm • Week 4 of 15-week semester	• 21, second year • 9.00 am – 10.30 am • Week 6 of 15-week semester	• 30, second year • 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm • Week 5 of 15-week semester	• 16, second year • 7.00 am – 8.30 am • Week 1 of 15-week semester	• 19, second year • 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm • Week 6 of 15-week semester	• 22, second year • 7.00 am – 8.30 am • Week 5 of 15-week semester	• 24, second year • 7.00 am – 8.30 am • Week 5 of 15-week semester
Teacher's attire	• Dressed casually with a pair of black jeans and light blue T-shirt	• Dressed informally with a pair of blue jeans & a black T-shirt	• Dressed informally with a pair of blue jeans and a white T-shirt	• Dressed formally with Vietnamese traditional "áo dài" (long dress)	• Dressed casually with a yellow polo dress	• Dressed formally with Vietnamese traditional "áo dài" (long dress)	• Dressed informally with a black line pair of trousers and a long-sleeve green shirt	• Dressed formally with a black suit and a blue shirt stuck into trousers	• Dressed casually with blue khaki trousers and a light brown T-shirt tucked into trousers
Physical classroom arrangement	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Students tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Students table and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Students table and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Students tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Students tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen
Resources	• Handouts (sample listening practice test B1 – CEFR from university's test bank) • Teacher's own laptop and portable speakers • Removal of textbook	• Northstar 2 - Speaking - Unit 1 • Blank sheets of paper • Teacher's own laptop & notebook • Retaining, adaptation & addition	• Northstar 2 – Speaking - Unit 6 • Handouts (part of sample speaking test B1 - CEFR) • Teacher's own laptop & students' BYODs • Adaptation & removal	• Northstar 2 – Reading and Writing – Unit 2 • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Retaining and addition • Students' homework on vocabulary related to coursebook content	• Northstar 2 – Unit 6 – Reading and Writing • Handouts (2 extra reading exercises) • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Retaining & removal	• Northstar 2 - Unit 3 – Reading and Writing • Handouts (two extra reading exercises) • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Retaining, adaptation & removal	• Northstar 2 - Unit 6 – Reading and Writing • Handouts (Sample reading test B1 - CEFR) • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Retaining, adaptation, addition & removal	• Handouts (Sample reading test B2-CEFR) • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs and smart phones • Removal of coursebook tasks	• Handouts (Sample reading test B1 – CEFR, from university's text bank) • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs and smart phones • Removal of coursebook tasks
Classroom happenings, teachers' and students' roles	• Teacher waved students to sit down when they stood up to greet • Teacher's smiley face • Students talking cheerfully before the lessons started • Teacher taking attendance (looking at students and ticking in a sheet of paper) and preparing for lesson (5 minutes) • Learning task 1(23 minutes): multiple choice; 7 picture-based questions based on short monologues or conversations played twice; students working individually and being told to predict the content while listening; teacher eliciting vocabulary related to pictures before listening and students answering; teacher & students discussing the ambiguity of one question; whole class feedback on answers • Learning task 2 (15 minutes): six multiple choice questions based on a 5-minute monologue played twice; students working individually & taking notes while listening; whole class feedback on answers; teacher instruction to the task and complimenting after students completed • Break: 10 minutes • Learning task 3 (10 minutes): six gap-fill questions based on one 3-minute monologue played twice; students working individually whole class feedback on answers; teacher's instruction to the task • Learning task 4 (25 minutes): ten true-false questions based on a 10-minute conversation; students taking notes while listening and working individually; students discussing questions before listening; whole class feedback on answers with teacher asking students to justify their answers; teacher complimenting	• Teacher waved students to sit down when they stood up to greet • Teacher's smiley face • Students talking cheerfully before the lessons started • Teacher came in early and talked with students • Teacher taking attendance (looking at students and ticking in a sheet of paper) and preparing for lesson (3 minutes) • Learning task 1 (20 minutes): students interviewing 6 peers about their choice of future jobs; teacher walking around and sometimes asking questions; the atmosphere was like an open market • Learning task 2 (20 minutes): students working in pairs and writing reports on their interviews; students' excited engagement while teacher working at desk; students reporting their interviews orally pair by pair and teacher taking notes; teacher complimenting students upon completion • Break: 5 minutes • Learning task 3 (22 minutes): unit 1 in coursebook; students preparing interview questions and taking turns in pairs to role-play a job interview; students using laptops and smart phones and engaging excitedly; teacher walking and taking notes, keeping a smiley face; only English used • Learning task 4 (20 minutes): students working in groups (4 groups of 4 and 2 groups of 3) to discuss characteristics of some	• Teacher waved students to sit down when they stood up to greet • Teacher's smiley face • Students talking cheerfully before the lessons started • Teacher came in early and talked with students • Teacher taking attendance (looking at students and ticking in a sheet of paper) and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (6 minutes): pair work; vocabulary elicitation (game-related adjectives); students very engaged & only English heard; students reported their adjectives; teacher walking around and complimenting upon students' completion • Learning task 2 (28 minutes): group work (6 groups of 3 & 1 group of 4) discussing positive & negative aspects of games; students used laptops, tablets & smart phones for more information; reference to unit 6 in textbook for more vocabulary; students' excited engagement and heard to use varied sentence structures to show agreement and disagreement, interruption, and continuity of ideas; classroom like an open market or a stock market with students arguing with each other; teacher walking around to monitor and participating in students' discussion, being smiley to students and complimenting upon	• Smiling at students when they stood up to greet • Students were quiet when teacher came in • Teacher taking attendance (looking at students and ticking in a sheet of paper) and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (40 minutes): teacher collecting students' homework and re-distributing for peer assessment of a vocabulary exercise related to the topic of the lesson on the day of observation, Unit 2 - Country life or city life?; students working individually to provide feedback on their peer's homework; Vietnamese and English were heard; teacher providing answer keys on PowerPoint slides and asking students for explanation question by question; students kept arguing with each other about the answers; teacher using Vietnamese and English to explain reading text and answers • Break: 5 minutes • Learning task 2 (42 minutes): Unit 2 in coursebook; first part was small group discussion on pictures contrasting city and country life (5 minutes); students occasionally used Vietnamese; teacher asking students to describe pictures (7 minutes); some students seemed uninterested; students then asked to individually read text (The farming life for me) and do exercise in	• Teacher came in 10 minutes early • Teacher waved students to sit down when they stood up to greet • Students talking softly when teacher came in • Teacher calling attendance and preparing for lesson (5 minutes) • Learning task 1 (37 minutes): unit 6 in coursebook (Serious Fun); students working in pairs, reading and doing 2 exercises in coursebook (one about identifying main ideas and one identifying supporting details); some students in back rows seemed not engaged because they didn't form pairs; students used print dictionaries & BYODs; teacher said turning to dictionaries while reading was ineffective; two pairs near observer whispered Vietnamese and not doing the task and teacher seemed angry and told them to stay home if they didn't want to go to school; teacher walking around and sometimes talking to some pairs; teacher then checked the answers from pairs with their explanation; teacher complimenting students upon task completion • Learning task 2 (20 minutes): teacher explicitly stating the purpose was preparing for exam; students working individually on a 5-question multiple-choice exercise based on a short text; two pairs in back row didn't do the task and kept talking in Vietnamese; teacher told them they could stay home if they didn't want to study;	• Teacher greeted standing students in English with smiley face • Students waited until teacher reached desk to sit down • Students talking softly in Vietnamese after teacher came in • Teacher ticking attendance (3 minutes) • Learning task 1 (15 minutes): unit 3 coursebook (Making money); students asked to work in pairs taking notes of main ideas of a text; students' excited engagement; students used print dictionaries and BYODs while reading; teacher walking around without talking; teacher then asked questions; students answered individually and in chorus; teacher complimenting on students' completion • Learning task 2 (25 minutes): moving on to another page in unit 3; students working in pairs and doing two multiple-choice exercises (one about reading for main ideas and one about details); students doing exercise while teacher sitting at desk; teacher then walking round without talking; teacher checking answers with random students; students then not waiting to be called but taking initiative in providing and negotiating answers; teacher smiling and listening to students' negotiation of meaning and then providing correct answers; teacher complimenting students on completion • Break: 10 minutes • Learning task 3 (25 minutes): teacher distributing handouts of a B1-level reading exercise; students asked to work in 4 groups of three and one group of four and matching 5 people who are looking for college courses with the correct courses (8 descriptions); after about 2 minutes doing exercise in silence students started to discuss excitedly together in Vietnamese and	• Students talking cheerfully in Vietnamese and English after teacher came in • No greetings, yet teacher's smiley face • Teacher was 10 minutes early • Teacher talking with students about a local festival where students participated as volunteer translators and interpreters • Teacher then ticking attendance and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (13 minutes): unit 6 (Serious Fun); students asked to read the text individually in 10 minutes; teacher sitting at desk while students reading; some students seemed uninterested while others used print dictionaries and BYODs while reading; teacher calling three students to check their understanding of the text's main ideas; students standing to answer; teacher thanked for students' answers • Learning task 2 (10 minutes): teacher asked students to do another exercise in the same unit in pairs; the exercise was sentence completion by matching two columns of phrases; teacher sitting at desk while students doing exercise; after 5 minutes teacher walked around, looking at students' work without speaking; teacher then called individual students randomly to check answers; no further explanation provided • Learning task 3 (15 minutes): students asked to remain in same pairs and write a short summary of text (5-6 sentences); teacher standing while students working; teacher then walking around in silence; teacher then asked some pairs to read aloud their summaries • Break: 7 minutes • Learning task 4 (40 minutes): teacher explicitly stated the purpose of this task was preparing for exam; teacher	• Students stood up to greet teacher and waited until he reached teacher's desk to sit down • Teacher stood in front to greet students • Teacher taking attendance and preparing for lesson (5 minutes) • Learning task 1 (20 minutes): teacher instructing and distributing handouts and asking students turning to their peers in same row; students told to do parts 1&2 of the practice test; part 1 was 9-question multiple-choice gap-fill of a short text; teacher then sat at desk while students working in silence; students sometimes whispered to each other and used print dictionaries and BYODs; after several minutes teacher walked around and looked at students' work; teacher sometimes nodded as if he agreed with students; he then came back to desk to grasp a sheet of paper; students asked to stop working to check answers; teacher called individual students randomly to answer; sometimes students choroused answers • Learning task 2 (30 minutes): teacher instructing in English and distributing handouts of another exercise which focused on reading for details; the exercise was matching 7 statements with 3 correct people briefly described; students asked to work in pairs; teacher then sat at desk while students working in silence; after several minutes teacher walked around and sometimes pointed at students' work; sometimes students asked teacher questions; teacher then came back to desk before telling students to	• Students stood up to great teacher and waited until he reached teacher's desk to sit down • Teacher's strict facial expression • Students waited for lesson in silence • Teacher taking attendance and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Teacher then explicitly stated the lesson's purpose was to prepare for exam • Learning task 1 (30 minutes): students asked to form pairs; students turning to their peers in same row; students told to do individually; the exercise was multiple choice focusing on interpreting notices or messages; part 2 was matching people with correct tourist destinations they wanted to visit without excitement; students worked in silence, some whispered to each other; students used print dictionaries, laptops & smart phones; teacher remained at desk; after 15 minutes teacher collected papers and swapped for peer checking; teacher then collected and returned papers to original pairs and distributed sheet of answer keys to pairs; students asked on some questions • Break: 10 minutes • Learning task 2 (40 minutes): students instructed to do three remaining parts of practice test in groups of four: a true-false, a multiple choice, and a gap-fill, all based on short texts; teacher distributed handouts; students worked in silence without speaking; teacher then came back to desk and looked at his papers; teacher then asked students to stop working and checked answers group by group and question by question; students asked to justify their answers; teacher sometimes used Vietnamese to explain English words • Homework: teacher told

• Homework: students asked to do task on pages 92-93 of coursebook • English only class	teacher walking around and taking notes • Homework: Reading unit 2 in coursebook for next lesson • English only lesson • After-lesson conversation with researcher: Trang took notes of students' use of vocabulary and sentence structures to plan learning tasks in the next lesson.	students' completion; most in English with Vietnamese for translation; • Break: 7 minutes • Learning task 3 (43 minutes): pair work & group work (3 groups of 4 & 2 groups of 5); students describing their given photos to peers then working in groups to discuss a topic; students' active and excited engagement; teacher explicitly explaining the purpose of task to prepare for exam, walking around to monitor and asking questions; only English heard with good use of language patterns (structures showing agreement & disagreement) & communication strategies (pitch, tone, intonation, etc.) • Homework: students asked to read unit 7 for next lesson	course book; students then asked to discuss their answers in groups; students' unexcited engagement; teacher walking around without communication with students; after students completed group discussion, teacher asked for answers and explanation group by group and compared with answer keys • Homework: students asked to write a paragraph individually about city or country life for next lesson on writing	after 15 minutes teacher checked answers with randomly called students • Learning task 3 (30 minutes): teacher distributing handouts of a 10-question gap-fill exercise based on a short text; students worked individually in about 10 minutes; 4 students in back row focused on their laptops and didn't do exercise; teacher sat at desk then walked around and looked at students' work; students then asked to discuss answers in groups; Vietnamese and English were heard; teacher then asked individual students to give answers; sometimes teacher explained English words in Vietnamese; teacher thanked students • Homework: students asked to read the text in unit 1 of coursebook • After-lesson conversation with researcher: Ngoc said she prepared students for the exam by adding learning task 3 & 4.	English; teacher smiling, walking around, listening to students, then talking to them and asking questions; teacher then asked students to stop and check answers by randomly calling them; one student was called stood up to answer but teacher signalled to sit down; teacher asked students to justify their answers; teacher complimenting on students' completion • Learning task 4 (22 minutes): teacher distributing handouts of a 10-question true-false exercise; students asked to work individually choosing the correct answers to ten statements about the information of a short text about travel; teacher sitting at desk while students doing exercise; students used print dictionaries & BYODs; after about 10 minutes teacher stepping down and asking students to compare answers in pairs; students discussing answers in Vietnamese and English; teacher then distributing handouts of answer keys and asking students to explain their incorrect answers; teacher complimenting students on completion	distributing handouts of a PET exercise (B1 level); students working individually using print dictionaries and BYODs; teacher sitting at desk while students working; after 20 minutes teacher walking around and sometimes pointing at students' work; after about 40 minutes teacher asking students to stop and collecting their work; teacher said would provide feedback the following week; teacher thanked for students' participation • No homework assigned	stop working; teacher then collected students' work and swapped for peer checking; students engaged excitedly; after about 10 minutes teacher collected papers and returned to original pairs; teacher then distributed the sheet of answer keys to each pair • Learning task 3 (35 minutes): teacher instructed students to work in groups of three; students immediately moved chairs to form groups; teacher distributed handouts; the exercise was a 7-question multiple choice based on a short text focusing on identifying main ideas and supporting details; teacher sitting at desk while students working in silence; students used print dictionaries and smartphones; teacher then distributed a sheet of answer keys and asked students to highlight information in text; teacher waited for students to complete highlighting; • No break time • Homework: students asked to read unit 4 in coursebook • After-lesson conversation: Huy admitted the practice exercises were at B2 level (CEFR) but this was because this group of students had higher level of competency.	students to read coursebook without specifying which page.

	Writing 2				Translation 1			Public speaking (Speaking 5)	
	DIEM	NGOC	DIEP	LE	MINH	TRANG	THANH	DIEP	HUY
Student number, year of study & class time	• 35, second year • 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm • Week 7 of 15-week semester	• 18, second year • 9.00 am – 10.30 am • Week 2 of 15-week semester	• 17, second year • 1.00 pm - 2.30 pm • Week 2 of 15-week semester	• 16, second year • 9.00 am - 10.30 pm • Week 6 of 15-week semester	• 19, second year • 9.00 am – 10.30 am • Week 6 of 15-week semester	• 32, second year • 9.00 am – 10.30 am • Week 5 of 15-week semester	• 18, second year • 7.00 am – 8.30 am • Week 7 of 15-week semester	• 20, fourth year • 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm • Week 3 of 15-week semester	• 26, fourth year • 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm • Week 4 of 15-week semester
Teacher's attire	• Dressed informally with a beige gored skirt and a white long-sleeve shirt	• Dressed formally with Vietnamese traditional "áo dài" (long dress)	• Dressed informally with light brown linen trousers and white long sleeve shirt	• Dressed casually with beige khaki trousers and a white T-shirt tucked in	• Dressed casually with a black pair of jeans and a green short-sleeve T-shirt	• Dressed informally with a black pair of jeans and a white T-shirt	• Dressed informally with a black of jeans and a grey long-sleeve shirt	• Dressed informally with a blue pair of jeans and a white shirt	• Dressed formally with a blue suit and a white shirt
Class physical arrangement	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen	• Student tables and chairs in rows facing teacher's desk, whiteboard, and PowerPoint screen
Resources	• Northstar 2 - Unit 2 – Reading and writing • Students' homework writings • Teacher's laptop to show scanned students' writing with comments • Students' BYODs • Adaptation & addition	• Northstar 2 – Units 2 & 3 – Reading and writing • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Adaptation	- Northstar 2 - Unit 2 – Reading and writing - Handouts (Sample writing test B1 - CEFR) - Print dictionaries - Students' BYODs - Adaptation & removal	• Northstar 2 - Unit 2 – Reading and writing • Handouts (a short descriptive paragraph for classroom activity) • PowerPoint • Students' BYODs • Adaptation & addition of tasks	• Handouts • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • PowerPoint • Removal of institutionally compiled coursebook in translation for internal use	• Students' homework (students' translation exercises) • PowerPoint slides showing teachers' corrected versions of students' homework • Removal of institutionally compiled coursebook in translation for internal use	• Institutionally compiled coursebook in translation for internal use • Print dictionaries • Students' BYODs • Retaining	• Students' prepared presentations • PowerPoint • Adaptation	• Students' prepared presentations • PowerPoint • Retaining
Classroom happenings, teachers' and students' roles	• Teacher was 5 minutes early • Teacher greeted standing students • Students waited for lesson in silence • Teacher taking attendance (2 minutes) • Learning task 1 (40 minutes): teacher collected students' homework writing (a short paragraph about who they want to be in future) and redistributed for peer assessment; students asked to work in groups of three or four and commented on their peers' writing; students moved chaired to form groups and worked excitedly; Vietnamese and English heard; teacher walked around and sometimes helped students; after 15 minutes teacher collected papers and returned to original authors; teacher gave students their writing with her comments; students continued working on their writing with teacher's and peers' comments; teacher showed some students' writing with comments on PowerPoint screen; there were general feedback and correction of grammatical errors; teacher asked students to read page 40 coursebook for second period • No break time (teacher working at desk while students remained seated) • Learning task 2 (40 minutes): teacher instructed students to do task 2 on page 40 in coursebook which focused on descriptive paragraph (occasional use of Vietnamese); students asked to work in groups writing a short paragraph about a place they visited; some students still talking while teacher instructing; students asked to relay-write: one student continued writing a sentence after their peer; some groups wrote on laptops; teacher walked around while student writing; after 20 minutes teacher collected students' writing and swapped for peer checking; for those groups writing on laptops teacher moved the laptops; students asked to focus on the use of descriptive adjectives; after about 20 minutes teacher	• Teacher came in 5 minutes early • Students talking cheerfully to each other in Vietnamese • Teacher preparing for lesson at desk while students opened laptops & tablets • Teacher taking attendance (3 minutes) • Learning task 1 (45 minutes): teacher asked one student if she had ever bought a fake product; student stood up and said she bought fake pairs of shoes at city's shoe shop; teacher then asked students to work in pairs and note down vocabulary related to fake products (characteristics, price, buyers, economic & social consequences); students told to look at page 45 coursebook or go online for more vocabulary; students paired up quickly and discussed excitedly; both Vietnamese and English were heard; teacher wrote 'fake products' in a circle on whiteboard while students working; after 5 minutes teacher asked pairs to write their words on whiteboard; students then asked to explain some of their ideas; students then worked in same pairs and wrote short paragraph (150-200 words) about fake products based on brainstormed ideas (20 minutes); students told to refer to pages 64-68 of coursebook for reference; teacher gave a blank sheet of paper to each pair and asked students to write their name on it; teacher worked at desk while students writing; students used print dictionaries and BYODs; after 10 minutes teacher walked around and sometimes talked to students; teacher then collected students' work and swapped for peer checking; students asked to write their feedback directly on papers; teacher walked around and talked cheerfully to students while they were	• Teacher came in 10 minutes early • Students talking cheerfully to each other in Vietnamese and English • Teacher joined students by sharing experiences in learning English • Teacher then came back to desk, ticking attendance and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (40minutes): teacher instructed students to prepare for a relay writing task; teacher wrote a sentence on whiteboard "I still remember the first day I came to Beauty City to study."; this seemed to be adapted from writing task in unit 2 in coursebook; students had 3 minutes to think about the next sentences without knowing who would be the first to write; students seemed to be excited; teacher walked around while students writing; after 5 minutes, students asked to write their sentences on whiteboard one by one; after 20 minutes students finished writing; teacher then asked students to explain some of the paragraph created on whiteboard in about 15 minutes; students paired up quickly and worked excitedly; students used print dictionaries and BYODs; teacher working at desk while students editing; teacher then walked around and discussed with students cheerfully in Vietnamese and English; teacher then continued to work at desk; teacher then collected students' writing and said would give feedback later; teacher complimented students on completion of task • Break: 10 minutes • Learning task 2 (10 minutes): teacher instructed students to work individually on part of a B1-level (CEFR) writing test which focused on sentence structure; teacher distributed	• Teacher greeted standing students • Students waited until teacher reached desk to sit down and waited for lesson in silence • Some students opened laptops or tablets • Teacher ticking attendance and preparing for lesson (4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (40 minutes): teacher reminded students of homework last week (group writing about a tourist destination in Vietnam and would be used in current lesson); some students didn't seem to remember; teacher looked disappointed and said students didn't have appropriate learning attitude; teacher back to desk and took handouts; teacher distributed handouts (scrambled sentences); after about 7 minutes teacher instructed students to work in groups and re-arranged scrambled sentences of a descriptive paragraph about a tourist destination in 15 minutes; teacher worked at desk while students doing exercise; after a while teacher walked around with strict face; teacher then asked students to stop working and checked answers group by group; students provided different answers and explained their choice; after about 15 minutes teacher showed answer key on PowerPoint screen. • Learning task 2 (45 minutes): exercise on page 40, unit 2 coursebook; students instructed to work in pairs and write a 400-word paragraph about a place they visited in 40 minutes; the beginning sentence on page 40 taken as example; students started to write on a sheet of paper or laptops; teacher then asked students to write of paper; teacher walked around and looked at students' writing; teacher then came back to work at desk; after about 35	• Teacher came in 10 minutes early • Waved standing students to sit down • Teacher opened laptop and took out a pile of papers • Students still talking softly in Vietnamese • Teacher working at desk for a couple of minutes • Teacher taking attendance (1 minutes) • Teacher stepped down and instructed students to do the first task • Learning task 1 (45 minutes): handouts of an English-Vietnamese translation exercise of a 150-word text on global warming; students asked to work in pairs in about 25 minutes and translated the text; students started working, some opening BYODs and some used print dictionaries; other students just read the text; students were engaged; teacher working at desk while students doing exercise; after 10 minutes teacher walked around and pointed at some students' work; teacher then came back to work on laptop at desk; teacher then asked students to stop writing, work in pairs and provide a list of important words in the text; students provided different words/phrases; whole class then agreed on a list of 21 important specialist words; teacher then asked individual students randomly to read their translation, sentence by sentence; teacher complimented and provided feedback after students reading, focusing on the naturality of Vietnamese language in the translation version (Vietnamese grammar and use of Chinese-Vietnamese words); teacher then showed suggested translation version on PowerPoint screen; • Break: 5 minutes • Learning task 2 (40 minutes):; teacher instructed students to work in the same pairs; teacher distributed handouts of a Vietnamese-English translation exercise (9 sentences with music topic); students started engaging in	• Teacher came in 5 minutes early • Teacher waived standing students to greet to sit down • Student sat down and waited for lesson in silence while teacher preparing something at desk • Teacher taking attendance (1 minutes) • Teacher asked a group of students to prepare for their presentation • Teacher sat at first row while the group of students were preparing for their presentation at teacher's desk • Learning task (about 80 minutes): the group of students delivered handouts of their work for teacher and classmates; students introduced source texts in English about friendship and in Vietnamese about life habits how they summarised them; students showed their translation versions of texts and explained sentence by sentence in terms of word choice, grammar, and sentence structures; some students in class took notes while others listened; teacher took notes while the group presenting; after 30 minutes students completed presenting; two other students in class asked questions about word choice; teacher complimented students on completion; teacher came to desk, connected her laptop to PowerPoint projector and showed corrected version of students' translation version; teacher explained sentence by sentence, focusing on grammar, punctuation, word choice, idea expression, and sentence structures; students took notes; teacher emphasised that cultural features were important in choosing appropriate words and phrases for translation; teacher complimented students on completion of task again • No break time • After class conversation: Trang said that the	• Teacher came in 10 minutes early • Waived standing students to sit down • Teacher and students talked cheerfully before lesson • Teacher asked students about their life and students asked teacher about translation • Teacher taking attendance (3 minutes) • Teacher then took attendance and prepared for lesson at desk 4 minutes) • Learning task 1 (50 minutes): teacher carried a pile of handouts of English original text on politics on page 59 in coursebook and instructed students to work in groups of three; students immediately formed groups; teacher divided the English original text into two halves with three groups working on the first half and three other working on the second; students started working; students used print dictionaries and BYODs; teacher walked around for about 5 minutes and then worked at desk for long; after about 30 minutes teacher walked around again before asking students to stop working; teacher called each group to read each of translation sentences; teacher provided feedback after each sentences; teacher reminded that some political terms and titles should be carefully translated; teacher complimented students on completion of task • Learning task 2 (40 minutes): teacher instructed students to work in same groups as in task 1; teacher asked students to focus on the first half of Vietnamese original text on politics on page 88 in coursebook (six sentences); students engaged in task and used print dictionaries and BYODs; teacher worked at desk; after 10 minutes teacher walked around and sometimes pointed at students' work and told them something; teacher then asked students to stop writing; each group was asked to write on	• Teacher came in 5 minutes early • No greeting • Teacher talked cheerfully with students before lesson • Students asked teacher questions about lesson • Teacher then ticked attendance and told a group of students to prepare for their presentation • Teacher took a small notebook, a pen, and sat in first row • Learning task 1 (45 minutes): a group of students prepared for their presentation (there were three of them); they delivered copies of PowerPoint slides to class and teacher; first member introduced the group and the focus of presentation; second member presented the section on "outlining and the structure of an oral presentation" which focused on setting the objectives, structuring the presentation, and utilising the language for presentation; third member presented the section on "structure of oral presentation" in detail; teacher and other students in class took notes even though they didn't pose a question after the presentation; the presentation was about 30 minutes; teacher then complimented on students' completion and gave feedback (grammatical errors, some ideas unclear due to pronunciation and word choice, some slides were wordy, more visuals and examples would help make presentation more appealing, etc.) • Break: 7 minutes • Learning task 2 (40 minutes): second group of students presented the topic "Delivery of your presentation"; first member introduced the group and started presentation by asking a question about what	• Teacher stopped and greeted standing students then told them to sit down • Teacher took a small notebook, a pen, and a pile of papers • Teacher called the attendance and told a group of students to prepare for presentation • Teacher sat down in first row • Learning task 1 (40 minutes): a group of students came to teacher's desk and prepared for their presentation (three of them); one member prepared for the PowerPoint slides while another was delivering the hard copies of slides to class; teacher delivered an evaluation form for class to give feedback; one student in class stood up and introduced the group of presenters; one group member thanked the MC and started the presentation by introducing the presentation content; the topic was "Benefits of smiles"; three group members each talked about the benefits of smiles in work, life and relationships; some students in class and teacher took notes; whispering was heard in class; group finished presenting in about 20 minutes and asked for questions from audience; one student in class asked about definition of a proper smile and another asked about the relationship of a smile and culture; the group didn't provide satisfactory answers; they thanked audience and went back their seats; teacher stood in front of class, thanked the group and provided feedback (clear introduction, well-developed ideas, pronunciation should be clearer, visual aids appropriately used); teacher gave the group his evaluation form and

collected students' writing for correction at home; teacher asked students to email their writings right after lesson if done on laptops
- Homework: students asked to read the text in unit 3 and do exercise on page 51 coursebook

giving feedback; after 8 minutes teacher collected and returned papers to original writers
- Break time: 5 minutes
- Learning task 2 (40 minutes): teacher wrote "summer vacation" on whiteboard and asked each students to write one sentence related to this topic; teacher remained standing in front of students while they were writing; after 3 minutes teacher asked students to write their sentences on whiteboard; students finished writing on board in about 10 minutes; teacher then asked the whole class to identify main ideas from their own sentences and circle them; students answered sometimes in chorus; teacher then asked students to work individually and wrote a short paragraph about summer vacation; after about 15 minutes teacher collected papers and swapped for peer feedback outside class hour as part of homework; teacher thanked and complimented students on their completion of tasks.
- Homework: students asked to read pages 32-40, unit 2 in coursebook
- After class conversation: Ngoc said that at the beginning of the semester she had given students a list of basic symbols and abbreviations for writing correction. She would like her students to use this throughout the semester to boost cooperative learning.

handouts; the exercise was gap fill with 5 questions; students asked to use no more than 3 words for each gap; teacher walked and talked to students while they were working; teacher then asked individual students randomly to provide answers.
- Learning task 3 (30 minutes): teacher instructed students to work in groups (3 group of three and 2 groups of 4); students immediately form groups; teacher distributed handouts (2 copies each group & 1 blank sheet of paper) and students were asked to write an email in replying to your friend's email; students worked excitedly, students used print dictionaries and BYODs and discussed in Vietnamese and English; teacher walked around and talked cheerfully to students while they were working; teacher then came back to work at desk; teacher then walked around again; after a while teacher asked students to stop working; teacher said would give feedback later, perhaps on closed user group on Facebook; teacher complimented students on completion
- No homework assigned

minutes teacher collected students' writing and swapped for peer feedback at home.
- No break time
- No other homework assigned

translating and teacher came back to work at desk; students used print dictionaries and BYODs; after 15 minutes teacher walked around and talked softly to some pairs; teacher then came back to work at desk; teacher then asked students to stop writing; students asked to write their translation sentences on whiteboard; students immediately went to write on whiteboard; after students finishing writing on whiteboard, teacher asked the whole class for further comments; two students commented on translation version of the text; teacher complimented on students' completion of learning task; teacher showed suggested translation version on PowerPoint screen; teacher said would email students this version
- No homework assigned but students told to read about education and tourism for next lesson
- After class conversation: My said to students who would be writing the translation sentences on the whiteboard while she was walking around while students were doing learning task 2. That's why students knew which sentences to focus on in their pairs.

students were informed of what to do regarding the translation subject right from the beginning of the semester. Students were required to work in groups of three or four for the whole semester. The groups were assigned by the teacher according to the list of students provided by the university's Department of Training. Trang said that this way of forming groups would encourage students to work with different people. The list of groups of students was decided right in the first lesson of the subject. Trang then attached a number to each group, group 1, group 2, etc. The students were required to find one text in Vietnamese and one text in English with original sources acknowledged at the end of the texts. They were then asked to write the summaries of these texts in their original language, i.e., Vietnamese summary for the text in Vietnamese and English summary for the text in English. Each summary was about 200 words. Trang said this task aimed to help improve students' reading and writing skills. Students the translated the summaries into the target languages, Vietnamese into English and vice versa. Students were asked to email the teacher their homework one week before their presentation in class as the latest. One group will present in one lesson following the cardinal order assigned by the teacher at the beginning of the subject. i.e., week 1 group 2, week 2 group, and so on. They have maximum 30 minutes for their presentation in class. Students were asked to make copies of their work for the whole class on the day of their presentation. Trang said she needed time to correct students' work before the lesson, so she asked them to email her their work as early as possible. Students' homework, in-class presentation, and attendance would account for 40% of the final mark for the subject.

translation sentence on whiteboard; teacher then provided feedback on students' translation and gave them a sheet of suggested translation version; teacher complimented on students' completion of task
- No break time
- Homework: students asked to work in same groups and translate the second half of the Vietnamese original text.
- After class conversation: I asked Thanh why she had distributed the handouts of the coursebook while students should have bought textbooks for themselves. She said that this was a rather sensitive issue. She told me that she took copies of the tasks for students because she wanted to help students by releasing financial burden on them. She said that many of her students came from the remote or rural areas, so their families were not well off to pay for everything at school. She stressed that she just wanted to help them even though she had to use her own money. She added that this was also what her teachers had done to her and her classmates when she was a university a long time ago.

were the most important things to consider during a presentation besides language; one student in class suggested 'voice'; the group member then introduced three important non-verbal aspects of an oral presentation (dress, voice, body language) and talked about 'dress' and 'voice'; second group member continued with 'body language'; second member showed the word "SOFTEN" on slide and asked audience what each letter might stand for; first group member talked about S (Smile), O (open stance), F (forward lean), and T (tone); second member then introduced third member to talk about E (eye contact) and N (nod); the presentation took about 30 minutes; there were no questions asked after the presentation; the group took their seats when teacher stood up to provide feedback (more effective if more examples about voice were provided, some theoretical strategies for good oral presentation were presented but not applied in current presentation, colour of slides were sometimes distracting, and reading the slides somehow made the presentation less effective); teacher complimented on students' completion
- After class conversation: When asked about students' presentations, Diep said that she had asked her students to read the coursebook and present theoretical points related to public speaking in class, one group one topic per week. For the first few weeks, small groups of students would present the topics chosen by themselves through drawings in the first week of the semester. The presentation slides were emailed to the teacher one week before the presentation day.

asked them to email him if further elaboration needed; students in class gave their evaluation forms to the group.
- Break: 5 minutes, teacher said the second period would be the same as the first one, so the researcher decided not to observe the second period.
- After class conversation: The teacher said that he followed the institutional requirements for the subject. Specifically, students were asked to cooperate in group for the whole semester working on both group and individual presentations. The PowerPoint slides and the text for the presentation had to be sent to the teacher one week before the presentation in class as the latest. The topics of the presentations were chosen by the students with the teacher's approval. The groups of students were chosen by the teacher. Huy said this was to make sure that every member had to contribute. If students were working with someone they were too acquainted, the chance would possibly that only one with the highest level would work. Even though students worked in a group, marks were individual. When Huy received the students' slides, he would appoint one student to be the MC for that group on the day of their presentation. He sent the slides to the MC to prepare a short introduction in class.

Appendix 5. A sample of a full report of a classroom observation

<div align="center">CLASS OBSERVATION 2</div>

Teacher in charge: NGOC (female)
Year of study: Year 2
Date: Morning, 17 January 2019
Time: 9.00 am - 10.30 am
Subject: Writing 2
Duration: 90 minutes
Number of students: 19 registered (1 absent)
Learning material: Prescribed coursebook (Haugnes, N. & Maher, B. (2009). *Northstar 2 - Focus on Reading and Writing* (3rd ed)); handouts
Teaching aids: Print dictionaries; students' BYODs; powerpoint;

1. **Introduction:**

This was my second observation of Ngoc's class. I contacted her to arrange this observation one day after the first observation via phone as she had told me to. She agreed and told me that the second observation might not be with the same group of students. I said there would be no problem at all.

On the day of observation, I was introduced to the group of students. Students looked at me and many smiled at me as a way of greeting. Some other did not. She told her students that I was doing research into teachers' beliefs and practices in English language instruction. She explained to her students that no information about the students would be revealed in any form. Ngoc emphasised that I was in class for the sole purpose of research. I was not permitted to audio- or video-record the lesson. Ngoc agreed to give me the copies of the materials used in the classroom if I needed them. I was not allowed to take photos of the lesson in progress. I was aware that I had not applied for this in the ethics. She told me that I could talk to her after the lesson if I had any questions. I was sitting at the back of the classroom as a non-participant observer without interrupting or intervening in the teacher's lesson.

2. **The class observed**

2.1. Physical Facilities

The class is on the second floor of one of three main V-shaped lecture buildings of the university which is reserved for the second year students. The physical arrangement of this classroom was the same as the one in the second observation of My's translation class (for the purpose of providing an actual description of the lesson observed, there were only 18 students sitting as illustrated) (Figure 1.).
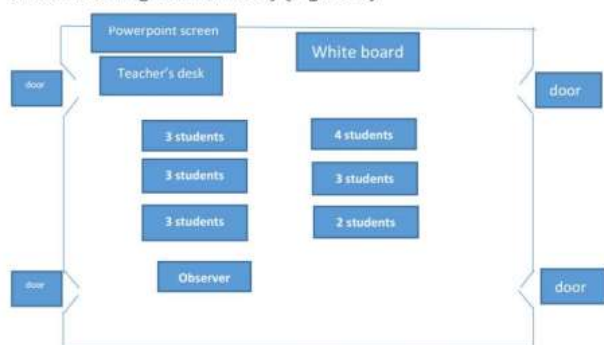
Figure 1. Classroom physical arrangement

2.2. Ngoc's writing lesson

The subject matter

The class I observed was an English writing class for the second year students at a university in the centre of Vietnam. This university is among top five regional universities of the country. Its mission are to train English teachers for the whole central and highland areas of Vietnam and prepare the labour force for the country who show high competence in English in the process of industrialised and modernisation of the country in the global era. English-majored students of this university are trained to achieve level C1 (CEFR) upon their graduation. Student ages in this class range from 19 to 21. Normally, students start their first year at colleges or universities at the age of 18. In case of repeating the class at lower levels or failing the national university entrance exam for the first time, students may start university study later depending on how many times they repeated the class or took the national university entrance exams.

The teaching and learning material

According to the institutional syllabus, writing is normally taught as a separate subject and is among the four basic language skills that are required to be mastered during the first three years of English language learning at tertiary level. The coursebook and instructional materials are decided by a group of management staff in the English department, usually the Head of Language Skills Division. The teachers are required to teach all the units in the coursebook at any cost. This is for the final summative tests that account for 60% of the students' band score of the subject. The other 40% is decided by students' attendance and their collaborative participation in the classroom. At the time of my observation in early 2019, the coursebook used in this writing class was *Northstar 2 - Reading and Writing*, which is claimed by the institutional management staff to be effective in integrated teaching of reading and writing skills in English.

The writing lesson

Ngoc came to class about five minutes before the lesson. Students had already come to class and taken seats. They were talking to each other cheerfully. I was waiting for Ngoc outside the classroom. She invited me into the classroom. I thanked her and entered by the back door. Ngoc took the front door. She walked slow and comfortable steps toward the front of the students who were standing up to greet her in English. Ngoc greeted students in English and signaled them to sit down.

Ngoc dressed formally with the Vietnamese traditional long light blue dress (*áo dài*) as she did in the first observation. She is in her mid 50s and is going to retire soon after more than 25 years of teaching. She carried a small black handbag and a big folder of documents. She put the handbag on the chair. She took out the learning materials and put them on the teacher's desk. The students were waiting for the lesson. Some were still whispering to each other in Vietnamese. I noticed a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom since Ngoc came in. Some students opened their laptops; others had tablets ready for their learning. Ngoc sat still at the desk for about 3 or 4 minutes and then stood up to start the lesson.

She took out a sheet of paper and called the attendance. She called students' names as she did not seem to be familiar with them. One student was absent. She then put the list of students aside and stepped down in front of the students. She instructed them to do the first task. She asked one student in the first row if she had ever bought a fake product. The student stood up and said yes. She said she had bought a lot of fake shoes of famous brand names such as Adidas, Nike, and Puma. Ngoc asked her where she had bought those products from. The student said that those products could be purchased from any shoe shop in the city. Ngoc thanked the student and told her to sit down.

Comment[U6]: We talked to each other after the lesson, Ngoc said this was the first time she had worked with this group of student. Also, it was just the beginning of the semester at the time of observation, Ngoc still tried to remember her students' names.

She then asked the students to sit in pairs and note down any ideas related to fake products such as the characteristics of fake products, the price of fake products, who often buy these products, what are some possible economic and social consequences of trading fake products. Ngoc set 5 minutes for this task. She told them to open the coursebook, page 45 for reference regarding vocabulary. She also told students to go online for more information regarding fake products. Students turned to each other to form pairs; two of them had to move from their initial seats. The topic seemed to attract students' engagement. They paired up quickly and focused on the task immediately after Ngoc's instruction. Students talked to each other in soft voice; however, both Vietnamese and English could be heard. While students were doing the task, Ngoc drew a circle and wrote "*fake products*" in it on the board.

After about 5 minutes, Ngoc asked students to write their answers on the whiteboard, pair by pair. Students wrote their ideas on the board. As I was not allowed to take a photo, I had to note down students' answers. The answers included: *cheap, bad quality, young people who don't have much money, famous brand names, shops, shopping malls, shoes, clothes, hats, handbags, bad colour, companies lose money, cheating, dishonest, affordable, poor people, IT products, criminal acts, health issues with fake products, dangerous conditions of work*. It took students about 5 minutes to write their ideas on the board. Ngoc thanked students for their thoughtful ideas. She then asked students to further explain their ideas. For example, the student who wrote "*health issues with fake products*" said that fake medical or cosmetic products may cause severe health problems for the users.

Ngoc then told them to sit still in the same pairs and write a short paragraph of about 150 - 200 words about fake products using the ideas shared by the whole class. She told students to have a look at paragraphs on pages 67 and 68 for reference on how to write. She set 20 minutes for this task. She gave students blank sheets of paper, one for each pair. She asked them to write their names on the paper. Students started writing. Ngoc stepped back to the

teacher's desk and worked on her papers. Students were really engaged in the task, negotiating with each other while writing. They used both print dictionaries and BYODs to help with their writing. After about 10 minutes Ngoc stepped down toward students and looked at their work. She talked to them in English. She seemed to try to guide students with their writing.
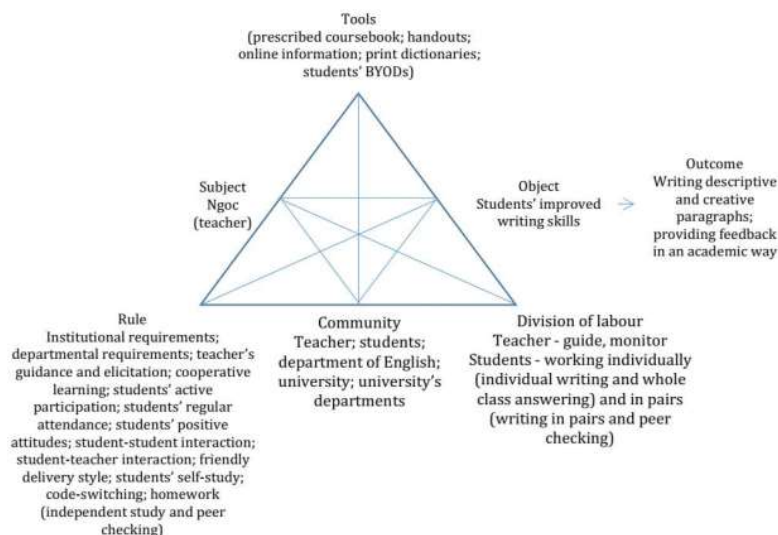
Figure 2. Ngoc's writing class

The task actually took about 25 minutes. Ngoc then told students to stop writing. She collected students' papers and swapped them for peer checking. She asked students to provide constructive feedback. For example, if students found a mistake in verb tense, they would provide feedback such as underlining the verb and writing "*verb tense*" or "*VT*" rather than correcting the mistake directly. Ngoc told students to provided general feedback on their peers' writings if applicable. Students worked on their peers' writing. They seemed to enjoy this task. Ngoc walked around and sometimes she talked to students cheerfully. After about 8 minutes, Ngoc told students to stop. She collected the papers and returned them to the original writers. She allowed about 2 minutes for students to look at their peers' feedback.

This was the end of the first period of the lesson. Ngoc told students to have a short break. I noticed that the first period was slightly longer than it usually took. She approached me and asked if I would like to come with her to the office of English Department. I said I would be alright sitting in the room waiting for the second period. She walked down to the department's office on the first floor. Some students went out for a break while others remained in the classroom. I also remained in the classroom and worked on my field notes. After about 10 minutes, Ngoc came back. Students came in for the second period.

Ngoc walked to the teacher's desk and took a look at her papers. She then stepped down in front of students and instructed them to do the next writing task. She told students to write one sentence each about the general topic of "*summer vacation*". Students started to write their sentences on papers. Ngoc wrote the topic on the whiteboard and then remained standing in front of students. She let students write their sentences in about 3 minutes. She then asked them to stop and go write their sentences on the board, one by one. It took about 15 minutes for students to complete writing their sentences on the board. Some students were unsure about their writing so they stood at the board for long to edit their setences. However, Ngoc and other students were patient to wait for them to finish. Ngoc then asked students to look at the sentences for about 3 minutes and figured out the common ideas from the sentences. Ngoc elicited answers from students by asking the whole class what the ideas were. Students answered in chorus. After circling the ideas chosen by the students, Ngoc told students to work individually and wrote a short paragraph about a summer vacation. She set 15 minutes for this task. Students started writing immediately. Ngoc sat back at the teacher's desk and worked on her papers. The room was quiet with the occasional interruptions of students' opening learning materials and writing on papers. After 15 minutes, Ngoc stood up and asked students to stop writing. She collected their papers and then swapped them. She asked students to provide constructive feedback on their peers' writing outside the class contact hour as homework.

This brought the lesson to the end. Ngoc thanked students for their active engagement in the lesson. She also asked students to have a look at the section on writing in Unit 2 (coursebook, pp. 32 - 40). I stood up and thanked students for allowing me to observe their lesson. Ngoc and I had a short talk about the lesson before we went home for lunch. Ngoc said she had to go to the market to buy something for lunch at home. I said goodbye to Ngoc and told her I would call her to arrange for the second round interview. Ngoc agreed with cheerful smile.

Comment[U7]: After the lesson, we had a talk. I asked Ngoc about how to get students to provide constructive feedback. Ngoc said that at the beginning of the semester she had given students a list of basic symbols and abbreviations for writing correction. She would like her students to use this throughout the semester for peer checking. She said she did not want students to correct their peers' writing because that was considered passive learning. A copy of student's work was attached (the researcher could take only one copy as most of students did not agree to share their writing with a stranger). I also asked Ngoc for a copy of the symbols and abbreviations used for writing correction. The fact that students got themselves familiar with symbols and abbreviations for writing correction is rationale because students might become teachers of English upon their graduation.

Comment[U8]: The researcher collected one sample of student writing with feedback provided upon their consent.

Comment[U9]: The researcher took notes of students' sentences in an odd order as they appeared on the board.

Comment[U10]: The researcher could not collect one sample of student writing because they did not agree to.

Comment[U11]: In Vietnam, people do not usually store foodstuff in the refrigerator for a long time. There are open markets everywhere so foodstuff can be purchased daily. Many people prefer to go the the market in the early morning while other may go at noon or late afternoon.

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Appendix 6. National and institutional directive documents for review

No. / date	Document title	Categories of focus
National Assembly, No. 38/2005/QH11, 2005	Education Law	• Goals of education • Requirements on contents and methods of education • Roles and responsibilities of teacher • Roles and responsibilities of education management staff • Higher education • Duties and rights of teachers • Duties and rights of learners • School, family, and society
National Assembly, No. 42/VBHN-VPQH, 2018	Laws on Higher Education	• Goals of higher education • Chapter IV: Training activities • Chapter VII: Quality assurance and quality auditing of higher education • Chapter VIII: Lecturers • Chapter IX: Learners
National Assembly, No. 22/2008/QH12, 2008	Law on Cadres and Civil Servants	• Chapter 2: Obligations and rights of cadres and civil servants
The Government, No. 1400/QĐ-TTg, 2008	Decision on the approval of the Project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020"	• Whole document
The Government, No. 1505/QĐ-TTg, 2008	Decision on the approval of the Project "Implementing training according to advanced programmes at selected Vietnamese universities from 2008 to 2015.	• Whole document
The Government, No. 1659/QĐ-TTg, 2019	Decision on the approval of the Project entitled "National Program for Foreign Language Learning for Government Staff, Period 2019-2030"	• Whole document
The Government, No. 2080/QĐ-TTg, 2017	Decision on the approval of Amendments of the National Project for Foreign Languages	• Whole document

	Teaching and Learning in the National Education System, Period 2017 – 2025	
The Government, No. 1982/QĐ-TTg, 2016	Decision on the Approval of the Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF)	• Focus on tertiary level
The Government, No. 911/QĐ-TTg, 2010	Decision on the approval on the Project for Doctoral Training for universities and colleges, period 2010 – 2020.	• Whole document
The Government, No. 599/QĐ-TTg, 2013	Decision on the Project for Training Cadres in Foreign Countries on the National Budget, period 2013-2020	• Whole document
The Government, No. 89/QĐ-TTg, 2019	Decision on the approval of the Project for Enhancing Capacity for Lecturers and Management Staff at Higher Education Institutions, meeting the reform requirements for general education and training, period 2019 – 2030	• Whole document
The Government, No. 204/2004/NĐ-CP, 2002	Decree on salary scales and steps for cadres, government employees, and civil servants in armed services	• Whole document
MoET, No. 08/2014/TT-BGDĐT, 2014	Regulations on Organization and Operation of Regional Universities and Member Universities	• Chapter III: Training activities • Chapter VI: Education quality assurance and auditing
MoET, No. 43/2007/QĐ-BGDĐT, 2007	Decision on Regulations on Formal Credit-based Training at Universities and Colleges	• Whole document
MoET, No. 38/2013/TT-BGDĐT, 2013	Circular on issuing Regulations on Procedure and Circle of Quality Auditing of Training Programmes at Universities, Colleges, and Vocational Schools	• Whole document
MoET, No. 12/TT-BGDĐT, 2013	Circular on the Programme for Professional Development for Lecturers at Higher Education Institutions	• Whole document
MoET, No. 01/2014/TT-BGDĐT, 2014	Circular on the issuing of Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam	• Whole document
MoET, No. 6290/QĐ-BGDĐT, 2011	Decision on the Approval of Development Programme for Pedagogical Field and Teacher Education Schools from 2011 to 2020.	• Page 3

MoET, No. 23/2017/TT-BGDĐT, 2017	Circular on the issuing of Regulations on the Assessment of Foreign Language Competence based on the Vietnamese 6-Level Foreign Language Competency Framework	• Whole document
MoET & Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), No. 36/2014/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV, 2014	Joint Circular on Regulations on Codes and Professional Standards of Public University Lecturers	• Requirements for foreign language competency level
MoET & MHA, No. 21/2015/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV, 2015	Joint Circular on Regulations on Codes and Professional Standards of Public Primary Teachers	• Requirements for foreign language competency level
MoET & MHA, No. 22/2015/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV, 2015	Joint Circular on Regulations on Codes and Professional Standards of Public Junior Secondary Teachers	• Requirements for foreign language competency level
MoET & MHA, No. 23/2015/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV, 2015	Joint Circular on Regulations on Codes and Professional Standards of Public Senior Secondary Teachers	• Requirements ofor foreign language competency level
MoET, No. 07/2015/BGDĐT, 2015	Circular on the issuing of the regulations on the requirements on minimum amount of knowledge and level of competence for graduates at different levels of higher education and procedure of building, auditing, and issuing higher education training at bachelor, master, and doctorate levels	• Focus on higher education
MoET, No. 40/2020/TT-BGDĐT, 2020	Circular on the Regulations on Professional Codes and Standards, Appointment, and Salary Scales and Steps for Teachers at Public High Education Institutions	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Decision No. 856/2016 on Credit-based Undergraduate Programmes	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Listening 2	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Speaking 2	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Reading 2	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Writing 2	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Translation 1	• Whole document
Institutional guideline	Unit description for Public Speaking (Speaking 5)	• Whole document

Appendix 7. English Language Teaching Programme

Programme name: Credit-based Undergraduate Programme
Level of training: Undergraduate
Field of study: English Language Teaching
Type of training: Full-time

1. Training Objectives:

- **General Objective:**

Provide students of BA in English, Pedagogy strand with solid knowledge of fundamental sciences & educational sciences, pedagogical skills to meet the requirements of reform in secondary schools.

- **Specific Objectives:**
- **Ethical qualities:**

Students will have basic qualities of a socialist teacher, who has a deep understanding of Marxist-Leninist Worldview and Ho Chi Minh's ideology, who is patriotic with a love for socialism, who loves his/her students and career, and who has a high sense of responsibility, good ethics and exemplary style of a teacher.

- **Knowledge:**

Students will have relative breadth and depth in knowledge of languages, cultures-literatures of foreign countries, developing mastery of communicative skills in target foreign language, producing graduates with solid professional expertise.

Students will have adequate knowledge of theories of English language teaching, of English education programmes & realities of English language teaching at schools.

- **Skills:**

Skills in applying knowledge of language and culture to solve problems encountered in English language teaching

Ability to teach English, carry out the tasks required of an English language teacher, adaptability to innovative changes in education

2. Training duration: 4 years

3. Volume of knowledge: 141 credits including 7 credits for non-specialised language, but not including the content of Physical Education (4 credits) and Defence Education (165 periods).

4. Candidates for Recruitment: Based on the recruitment regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training.

5. Training process and Graduation condition: In accordance with the Regulation 43 of the Ministry of Education and Training.

6. Grading Scale: In accordance with the Regulation 43 of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Programme structure	Knowledge Categories	Subjects	Compulsory	Elective	Credit	Total credits to complete	Note
General knowledge (Stage 1)	Theory of politics	Basic Principles of Marxism and Leninism 1	✔		2		
		Basic Principles of Marxism and Leninism 2	✔		3		
		Ho Chi Minh's Ideology	✔		2	10	
		Revolutionary Strategies of Vietnamese Communist Party	✔		3		
	Natural sciences	Basic informatics	✔		3	5	
		Environment and Human Beings	✔		2		
	Social sciences	Contrastive Linguistics	✔		2		
		Vietnamese in Use	✔		2	8	
		Research Methodology	✔		2		
		Introduction to Linguistics	✔		2		
	Humanities	History of World Civilisation	✔		2		
		Introduction to Vietnamese Culture	✔		2	4	
	Second foreign language (Group 1)	Basics of Second Foreign Language 1		✔	3		
		Basics of Second Foreign Language 2		✔	2		
		Basics of Second Foreign Language 3		✔	2	7 out of 14	
		Basics of Second Foreign Language 4		✔	3		
		Basics of Second Foreign Language 5		✔	2		
		Basics of Second Foreign Language 6		✔	2		
	Second foreign language (Group 2)	General Second Foreign Language 1 (Listening)		✔	2		
		General Second Foreign Language 2 (Speaking)		✔	2	7 out of 11	
		General Second Foreign Language 3 (Reading)		✔	2		
		General Second Foreign Language 4 (Writing)		✔	2		
		General Second Foreign Language (Grammar / Translation Practice)		✔	3		
		Physical Education	✔		5	5	
		National Defence Education	✔		5 weeks	5 weeks	
Professional knowledge (Stage 2)	Linguistics	Phonetics and Phonology	✔		2	6	
		English Grammar	✔		2		
		Semantics	✔		2		
		Discourse Analysis		✔	2	2 out of 6	
		Pragmatics		✔	2		
		Stylistics		✔	2		
	Culture - Literature	British Literature	✔		2		
		British Culture	✔		2		
		American Literature	✔		2	10	
		American Culture	✔		2		
		Cross-cultural Communication	✔		2		

Knowledge categories	Subjects	Compulsory	Elective	Credit	Credits to complete	Note
Practical Language Skills	Listening 1	✔		2	36	
	Speaking 1	✔		2		
	Reading 1	✔		2		
	Writing 1	✔		2		
	Listening 2	✔		2		
	Speaking 2	✔		2		
	Reading 2	✔		2		
	Writing 2	✔		2		
	Listening 3	✔		2		
	Speaking 3	✔		2		
	Reading 3	✔		2		
	Writing 3	✔		2		
	Listening 4	✔		2		
	Speaking 4	✔		2		
	Reading 4	✔		2		
	Writing 4	✔		2		
	Translation Practice 1	✔		2		
	Translation Practice 2	✔		2		
Electives group 1	Listening 5		✔	2	2 out of 8	
	Listening to Lectures		✔	2		
	Listening to News		✔	2		
	English for Tourism		✔	2		
Electives group 2	Speaking 5		✔	2	2 out of 8	
	Interviewing		✔	2		
	Communication and Social Relations		✔	2		
	English for Business		✔	2		
Electives group 3	Reading 5		✔	2	2 out of 8	
	Critical Reading		✔	2		
	English for Academic Purposes		✔	2		
	English for IT		✔	2		
Electives group 4	Writing 5		✔	2	2 out of 8	
	Thesis Writing		✔	2		
	Writing for Specific Purposes		✔	2		
	Translation Practice 3		✔	2		
Specialised Pedagogical Knowledge (A)	Educational Studies 1	✔		2	22	
	Educational Studies 2	✔		2		
	Psychology 1	✔		2		
	Psychology 2	✔		2		
	State Governance and Education Administration	✔		2		
	Teaching Methodology 1 (Teaching & Management Skills)	✔		4		
	Teaching Methodology 2 (Materials Development & Adaptation)	✔		2		
	Teaching Methodology 3 (Language testing & Evaluation)	✔		2		
	Teaching Methodology 4 (Theory of Learning & Teaching)	✔		2		
	Teaching Methodology 5 (Technology in Language Teaching)	✔		2		
Specialised pedagogical Knowledge (B)	Teaching Methodology 6A (Teaching Large Classes)		✔	2	4 out of 10	
	Teaching Methodology 6B (Teaching Practicum)		✔	2		
	Teaching Methodology 7A (Using Textbooks)		✔	2		
	Teaching Methodology 7B (Designing Tests)		✔	2		
	Critical Thinking in Language Teaching		✔	2		
	School-based Teaching Observation and Teaching Practicum	✔		5		
	Undergraduate Thesis		✔	7		
Alternatives to thesis (Group 1) (C)	Functional grammar		✔	3	3 out of 6	Students opting for alternatives to the thesis choose one subject from each group, but not repeating the same subjects completed previously.
	Psycholinguistics		✔	3		
Alternatives to thesis (Group 2) (D)	Teaching Methodology 6A (Teaching Large Classes)		✔	2	2 out of 4	
	Teaching Methodology 6B (Teaching Practicum)		✔	2		
Alternatives to thesis (Group 3) (E)	Teaching Methodology 7A (Using Textbooks)		✔	2	2 out of 6	
	Teaching Methodology 7B (Designing Tests)		✔	2		
	Critical Thinking in Language Teaching		✔	2		
Total					141	

For students majoring in teaching English at primary schools, Specialized Pedagogical Knowledge (A), Specialised Pedagogical Knowledge (Electives) (B), Thesis (C), and Alternatives to Thesis (C, D, and E) are replaced by A1, B1, C1, D1, and E1 as indicated in the following table.

Programme structure	Knowledge categories	Subjects	Compulsory	Elective	Credit	Credits to complete	Note
Professional knowledge (Stage 2)	Specialised Pedagogical Knowledge for Primary English Teaching (A1)	Foundational Education Studies (Primary Level)	✔		2	22	
		Theory of Education Studies & Theory of Primary Education	✔		2		
		Foundational Psychology (Primary level)	✔		2		
		Age and Pedagogical Psychology	✔		2		
		Governance and Educational Administration	✔		2		
		Principles of Language Teaching to Young Learners	✔		2		
		Developing Listening and Speaking Skills for Young Learners	✔		2		
		Developing Reading and Writing Skills for Young Learners	✔		2		
		Language Assessment for Young Learners	✔		2		
		Primary Teaching Practicum	✔		2		
	Specialised Pedagogical Knowledge for Primary English Teaching (B1)	Practical Techniques for Teaching Languages		✔	2	4 out of 8	
		Designing Tests for Young Language Learners		✔	2		
		Teaching Grammar to Young Learners		✔	2		
		Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners		✔	2		
		School-based Observation & Practicum for Primary English Teaching	✔		5		
		Undergraduate Thesis		✔	7		
	Alternatives to thesis	Material Adaptation for Primary English Teaching	✔		3	3 out of 3	
	Alternatives to thesis (Group 1) (D1)	Teaching Grammar to Young Learners		✔	2	2 out of 4	Students opting for alternatives to the thesis choose one subject from each group, but not repeating the same subjects completed previously.
		Practical Techniques for Teaching Languages		✔	2		
	Alternatives to thesis (Group 2) (E1)	Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners		✔	2	2 out of 4	
		Designing Tests for Young Leaners		✔	2		

RedStar University
Faculty of English
Specialised Division: Language Skills 1

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Independence – Freedom - Happiness

I. UNIT OF STUDY

1. General information
- Unit of Study: **SPEAKING 2**
- Code: ....
- Credits: **2**
- Requirement: + Compulsory: ☑
                       + Elective: ☐
- Previous code: ....
- Other requirements (if applicable): ....

1. Learning outcomes
  ▪ **Attitude**: Students:
    ▪ are aware of social, cultural, and economic issues that impact themselves, their families, and society.
    ▪ are aware that they have ability to participate actively in oral communication in English by improving language skills and background knowledge, and practicing speaking frequently.
    ▪ listen and show respect to their peers in pair or group discussion.
  ▪ **Knowledge:** Students can:
    ▪ improve command of vocabulary for familiar everyday conversational purposes.
    ▪ understand different viewpoints on socio-economic, cultural, and environmental issues.
  ▪ **Skills:** Students are able to:
    ▪ select appropriate vocabulary to express personal ideas clearly.
    ▪ use moderately complex structures to express stances, present and defend personal views on simple personal, family, and social issues, improve group discussion skills (listening, participating, agreeing, disagreeing, etc.).
    ▪ independently search information from reference media such as print books, magazines, and the Internet.

2. Summary of unit of study

This unit of study helps students develop techniques / skills in expressing orally their viewpoints on familiar everyday life economic, socio-cultural, and environmental topics. Students must participate in 30 class contact periods and class activities such as conversations. Students take part in individual, pair, and group learning activities. The skills gain in this unit of study are equivalent to Level 3 (Six-level Framework of Foreign Language Competence for Vietnam) which are based on students' ability to:
  ▪ independently participate in conversations on a variety of topics in a logical and coherent manner by demonstrating correct word choices and grammar.
  ▪ present the meaning of an event and/or personal experiences with clear reasoning and logical explanation and defence of personal opinions.

3. Detailed content of unit of study

Periods	Content
1 & 2	Course introduction & students' self-introduction
3 & 4	Topic: Jobs (Offbeat job – NorthStar 2; Extra: *Job advertisements (Total English intermediate, Unit 9, p.128)*
5 & 6	Topic: Community (Building a better community – NorthStar 2; Extra: Are we responsible for the world we live in? (Q: Skills for Success 3, Unit 5, pp.98-101)

7 & 8	Topic: Money saving (A penny saved is a penny earned - NorthStar 2; Extra: What a waste! (Total English intermediate, Unit 4, p.58)
9 & 10	Topic: Crime (Innocent or guilty? – NorthStar 2; Extra: When is honesty important? (Q: Skills for Success 1, Unit 8, pp.155-156)
11 & 12	Topic: Manner (Etiquette - NorthStar 2; Extra: A person you admire (Bridge to IELTS band 3.5-4.5, Unit 3, p.30)
13 & 14	Topic: Entertainment & Pastime (Who's game for these games – NorthStar 2; Extra: What are you good at? (Total English intermediate, Unit 5, p.72)
15 & 16	Practice + revision for Midterm test
17, 18, 19 & 20	Mid-term test
21 & 22	Topic: Food (Good-mood foods – NorthStar 2; Extra: What's more important: taste or nutrition? (Q: Skills for Success 3, Unit 2, pp.38-41)
23 & 24	Topic: Holidays & Relaxation (An ice place to stay – NorthStar 2; Extra: What is the best kind of vacation? (Q: Skills for Success 1, Unit 5, pp.98-100)
25 & 26	Topic: Health (Staying healthy – NorthStar 2; Extra: Is it ever too late to change? (Q: Skills for Success 1, Unit 9, pp.174-175)
27 & 28	Topic: Preserving languages (Endangered languages – NorthStar 2; Extra: Why do we study other cultures? (Q: Skills for Success 1, Unit 3, pp.58-61)
29 & 30	Revision

II. Teaching and learning mode

Content	Teaching and learning mode			Practice exercises	Independent study
	In class				
	Theory	Exercises	Discussion		
Week 1: Course introduction & students' self-introduction		1	1		4
Week 2: Offbeat job	1		1		4
Week 3: Building a better community	1		1		4
Week 4: A penny saved is a penny earned	1		1		4
Week 5: Innocent or guilty?	1		1		4
Week 6: Etiquette	1		1		4
Week 7: Who's game for these games?	1		1		4
Week 8: Practice + revision for Midterm test 1	1		1		4
Week 9: Midterm test	1		1		4
Week 10: Mid-term test	1		1		4
Week 11: Good-mood foods		1	1		4
Week 12: An ice place to stay	1		1		4
Week 13: Staying healthy	1		1		4
Week 14: Endangered languages	1		1		4
Week 15: Revision			2		4
Total	12 periods	02 periods	16 periods		60

III. UNIT OF STUDY REQUIREMENTS, TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS, AND ASSESSMENTS

1. Requirements

Students need to participate actively in class activities and master the relevant content and skills in each lesson. Learning portfolio (independent practice of pronunciation and verbal expression, and extra self-practice), mid-term test, and end-of-term test are compulsory. The teacher in charge and students can choose either of the two types of learning portfolio as above mentioned. However, students are encouraged to do both.

- The requirements for the learning portfolio on pronunciation and verbal expression are as follows.

    - The teacher in charge helps students with choosing their group (4 students) and require cooperation.
    - Students in a group practise pronunciation together following the materials provided by the teacher.
    - Students can practise the pronunciation and the conversation/exchange sections in NorthStar 2.
    - Each group is divided into 2 pairs. Every week, each pair practise the pronunciation and intonation in the conversation/exchange sections in the coursebook. The other pair listen and give feedback.
    - After 5 weeks, each group member writes a self-reflection on pronunciation and intonation practice. After 12 weeks, each group member writes a reflection on group practice.
    - In week 14, each member writes a self-reflection on affordances and challenges in practicing pronunciation and intonation and what they earn from other group members.
    - All the reflection sections may be combined into the e-portfolio (see below for instructions and requirements) and send to the teacher. Students may want to submit the print or hand-written copy of their reflection. The submission should be in group. Remember to include full names of all group members.

- Requirements and instructions for e-portfolio:
    - The teacher in charge sends e-portfolio template to students for everyday practice. Students name their e-portfolio as follows: (Speaking2)(Fullname)(Group number), for example: (Speaking2)(Lethilan)(G14).
    - Students record their practice together with their peer's feedback and self-reflection in the e-portfolio. The e-portfolio needs to be submitted within 10 weeks.
    - Students record their practice weekly according to the topics relevant. Students need to check the self-assessment checklist provided by the teacher. Peer feedback is done according to the peer assessment checklist provided by the teacher.
    - For each practice topic, each student needs to have 2 recordings and two assessment checklists.
    - Name the recordings and assessments as follows:
        o (Full name)(space)(group number)(space)(number of topic)(space)(time of recording)
        o (Full name of speaker)(space)(group number)(space)(number of topic)(space)(self-assessment)
        o (Full name of speaker)(space)(group number)(space)(number of topic)(space)(peer assessment)(full name of assessor)
        Example:
        o "Nguyenthihanh g8 t1 r1": This is the recording by Nguyen Thi Hanh, group 8, topic 1, recording 1.
        o "Nguyenthihanh g8 t1 self-assessment": This is the self-assessment by Nguyen Thi Hanh, group 8, topic 1.
        o "Nguyenthihanh g8 t1 peer-assessment Tranlemyha": This is a peer assessment by Tran Le My Ha for Nguyen Thi Hanh, group 8, topic 1.
    - After topic 5, students write their first reflection and send the link for their e-portfolio to the teacher. After topic 10, students write their second reflection and the teacher grade their e-portfolio.

2. Assessments and evaluation for the unit of study

2.1. Continuous assessment (10% of final grade)

Attendance	Mark for attendance	Note
100%	10	Counted by the end of the unit of study
90%	8	
80-89%	6	
70-79%	4	
<70%	0 (not eligible for sitting the mid-term test(s)	Counted by the time of attendance check for mid-term-test(s)

(Note: The teacher can deduct the mark for attendance by 2 depending on the student's learning attitude in class and out-of-class group work.)

2.2. Mid-term tests (30% of final grade)

There is a minimum of two mid-term tests. The final grade for the mid-term test is the mean of these two tests.

2.3. End-of-term test (60% of final grade)

Test format: Oral

Level	Weighing	Level	Weighing
1. Remember	40	4. Analyse	5
2. Understand	40	5. Evaluate	5
3. Apply	5	6. Create	5

III. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

1. Prescribed coursebook:

Frazier, L. & Mills, R. (2009). *NorthStar: Listening and speaking Level 2 (3rd ed.).* Pearson.

2. Additional materials

2) Brooks, M. (2011). *Q:Skills for Success 2 Listening and speaking.* Oxford University Press.

3) Falla, T. & Davies, P. A. (2007). *Pre-Intermediate Solutions: Students' book.* Oxford University Press.

3. Website for PET practice tests:

1. http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/pet/students/tests/
2. http://www.examenglish.com/PET/pet_speaking.html

IV. UNIT OF STUDY DEVELOPER

- Full name:
- Qualification:
- Place of work: Faculty of English, ….
- Contact: Office of Faculty of English
- Tel.: ……………   E-mail: ……………………

Approved by Rector   **Dean of Faculty of English**   **Developer**

Appendix 9. A sample unit from RedStar's prescribed coursebook
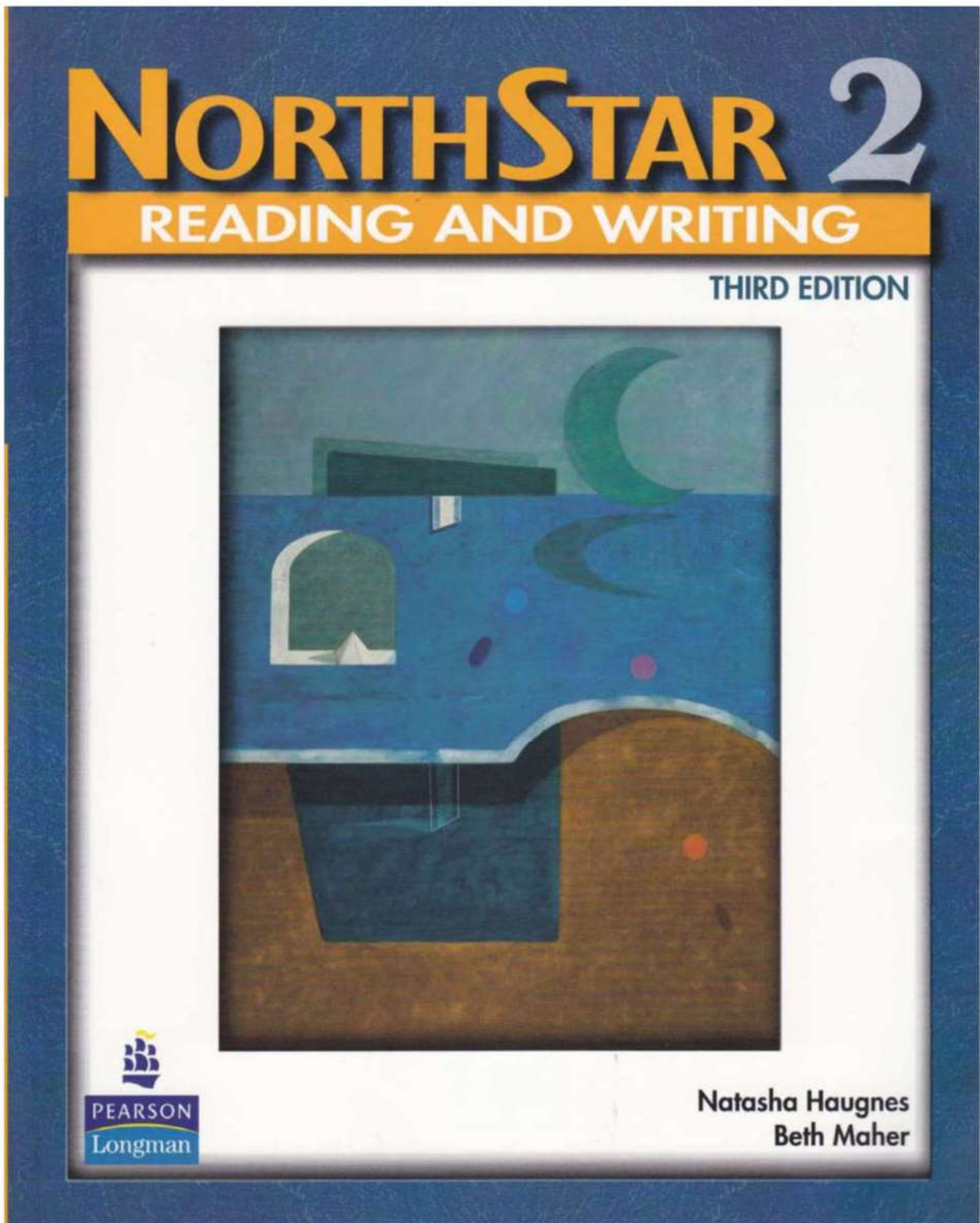
UNIT 1 Finding the Ideal Job

1 FOCUS ON THE TOPIC

A PREDICT

Look at the cartoon and discuss the questions with the class.

1. What is the young man doing?

2. What kinds of work is he thinking of?

3. What do you think is the ideal job (the best job) for this young man?

I

Read each statement. How much do you agree or disagree? Check (✓) the box that shows what you think. Discuss your answers with the class.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. Enjoying your work is more important than making a lot of money.				
2. Working with a lot of people is better than working alone.				
3. Working from home is better than working at an office.				
4. Working indoors is better than working outdoors.				

C BACKGROUND AND VOCABULARY

Read the list of words and their definitions.

ads: advertisements to sell things or to find new workers

careers: the kinds of work people do, usually after learning how and usually for a long time

hire: to give someone a job

ideal: perfect

interviews: meetings where a person looking for a job talks to the person who is looking for a new worker

managers: people who direct and organize groups of workers in a company

out of work: without a job

postings: ads or comments on the Internet

résumés: written descriptions of people's education and previous jobs

rewards: good things you get in return for work (such as money or health insurance)

skills: things that you can do well; abilities that you have learned and practiced

specific: detailed and exact; not general

Now use the words from the list to complete this newspaper article about American workers and companies.

In 2005, only five percent of Americans were ___*out of work*___. That
                                                                    1.
sounds like good news. But is it?

According to a 2005 survey, only 20 percent of American workers really love
their jobs. Another 20 percent want to change jobs. This is a problem for workers,
and it is also a problem for companies. Thirty-three percent of _____
                                                                          2.
say that they don't care what happens to their companies—and those are the people
who are supposed to be in charge[1]!

What do workers want? Usually we think that everyone wants more money,
but today's workers are looking for other _____. They want health
                                                      3.
insurance and more vacation. They also want to know that they will learn new
_____ at a job. Older workers are usually happier with their jobs
          4.
than younger workers. This is probably because they have had time to think about
their _____ and find a job they like.
              5.

Many companies today try to make changes to keep workers happy. They ask
their workers _____ questions about what makes them really happy
                      6.
at work. If a worker loves his job, he will work harder and stay at the company. If
workers leave, companies have to _____ new people. And that takes
                                            7.
a lot of time. They have to write _____ and put _____
                                            8.   9.
on the Internet. They have to read hundreds of _____. They have to
                                                              10.
do _____ to meet people who want to work there. And even after all
        11.
that work, they might not find the _____ new worker.
                                              12.

---

[1] **be in charge:** be responsible for a group of people or an activity

2 FOCUS ON READING

A READING ONE: Finding the Ideal Job

Imagine you are not satisfied with your job. You decide to job hunt—that is, to look for a new job. With a partner, write a list of things you might do to find a job.

1.   I might ask someone in my family for a job.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Now learn what a professional has to say about this topic. Read a book review of a job-hunting manual.

FINDING THE IDEAL JOB

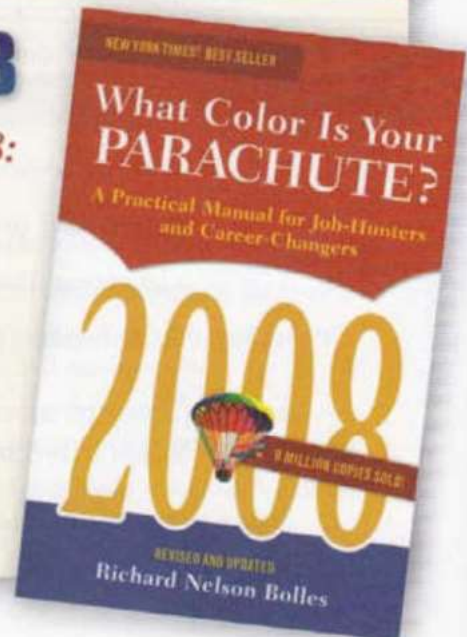## *What Color Is Your Parachute? 2008: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*

by Richard Nelson Bolles, Ten Speed Press, $18.95.

1 You are **out of work**.
You hate your job.
You aren't satisfied with your **career**.
You are looking for your first job. Where do you start?

4   UNIT I

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2 If you are like most Americans, you'll probably send your **résumé** to a lot of companies. You might search for job **postings** on the Internet or look for **ads** in the newspaper. But experts[1] say you won't have much luck. People find jobs only five to ten percent of the time when they use these ways. So what can you do?

3 One thing you can do is read Richard Bolles's *What Color Is Your Parachute?* [2] Bolles is an expert in job hunting. He has helped thousands of people find jobs and careers. This book is different from other job-hunting manuals. Bolles doesn't help you to find just another job. Instead, he helps you find your **ideal** job: a job that fits you, a job that makes you happy. What kind of job is ideal for you? If you don't know the answer, Bolles says, you can't find your ideal job. You need to have a clear picture in your mind of the job you want. The book has many exercises to help you draw this picture.

4 Bolles says that you must think about three things:
(1) YOUR SKILLS. What do you like to do? What do you do well? Are you good at talking to groups? Growing vegetables? Teaching? Drawing on the computer? Bolles asks you to think about all your skills, not only "work skills." For example, a mother of four children is probably good at managing people (children!). This woman may be a good **manager**.
(2) JOB SETTING. Where do you like to work? Do you like to work outside? At home? In an office? Alone or with others? What kinds of people do you like to work with?
(3) JOB REWARDS. How much money do you need? How much money do you want? What else do you want from a job? What makes you feel good about a job?

5 After Bolles helps you decide on your ideal job, he gives you **specific** advice on how to find that job. Bolles's exercises teach you how to find companies and how to introduce yourself. The chapter on job **interviews** is full of useful information and suggestions. For example, most people go to interviews asking themselves the question, "How do I get the company to **hire** me?" Bolles thinks this is the wrong question. Instead, he wants you to ask yourself, "Do I want to work here or not?"

6 Some people think that Bolles writes far too much and repeats himself. True, his book could probably have 100 pages instead of 456. But his writing style makes the book very easy to read, and a reader doesn't have to read the parts that seem less important. Other readers say that there is not enough space to write the answers to the exercises. But these are very small problems. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* is the best job-hunting manual you can buy.

7 *What Color Is Your Parachute?* was first written in 1970. Over nine million copies have been sold since then. The information is updated[3] every year. So, if you are looking for a job or if you have a job but want a new one, remember: Don't just send out copies of your résumé. Don't just answer ads. And don't wait for friends to give you a job. Instead, buy this book and do a job hunt the right way.

Barbara Kleppinger

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[1] **experts:** people who know a lot about something

[2] **parachute:** something you wear when you jump out of a plane. When you jump, it opens up and it stops you from hitting the ground very hard.

[3] **updated:** changed to show new information

◀ READ FOR MAIN IDEAS

*Read each statement. Decide if it is true or false. Write **T** (true) or **F** (false) next to it. Compare your answers with a classmate's.*

_____ 1. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* is similar to other job-hunting manuals.

_____ 2. Bolles wants to help people find jobs on the Internet more quickly.

_____ 3. According to *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, job hunters should think about their skills, the job setting, and the job rewards they want.

_____ 4. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* includes specific advice on finding jobs.

_____ 5. The reviews of Bolles's book are all positive.

◀ READ FOR DETAILS

Look at the list of job-hunting methods. Decide where each one should go in the chart. Write each method in the correct column.

~~answer newspaper ads~~

decide what kind of job is ideal

decide what kind of place you want to work in

do exercises in *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

look on the Internet

send out lots of résumés

think about job rewards

think about your skills

FIND A JOB	
What Many People Do	**What Bolles Says Will Help You**
answer newspaper ads	

Read each situation. Decide whether, according to Bolles, the person is making a mistake or doing the right thing. Circle your answer. Then discuss your decisions with the class.

1. Owen is a manager. He doesn't want to be a manager. But he's not looking for another job because he thinks he doesn't know how to do anything else. According to Bolles, Owen is _____.
   a. making a mistake
   b. doing the right thing

2. Amy studied to be a teacher. But now she's not looking for work as a teacher. Instead, she's thinking about whether teaching is really the right career for her. According to Bolles, Amy is _____.
   a. making a mistake
   b. doing the right thing

3. Bill is in a job interview. He is asking the person who is interviewing him some questions about the company. According to Bolles, Bill is _____.
   a. making a mistake
   b. doing the right thing

4. Kathy has a choice between a job that pays very well and a job that seems very interesting. She decides that for her, money is the most important thing. So she chooses the job that pays well. According to Bolles, Kathy is _____.
   a. making a mistake
   b. doing the right thing

5. Peter sent his résumé to many companies and he answered many Internet postings. Now he is waiting for someone to call him about a job. According to Bolles, Peter is _____.
   a. making a mistake
   b. doing the right thing

◀ EXPRESS OPINIONS

Discuss the questions with a partner. Give your opinions. Then share your answers with the class.

1. The next time you look for a job, which of Bolles's ideas do you think you might use?

2. You are in an interview for a job with a very interesting company. What questions might you ask the interviewer about this company?

3. The title of the book is *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Why do you think the author chose this title?

Read the stories about people who love their jobs.

THE IDEAL JOB BY ALEX FROST

1   Believe it or not, some people get paid—and well—for doing the things that make them really happy. Here are a few people who have the jobs of their dreams.

2   **"I get paid to make videos!"—Ryan**

When I was 14, my uncle gave me his old video camera and I started making videos. I didn't do so well at school, but I loved getting to know people and making videos about them. I taught myself to edit the videos on this simple computer program that my dad had. One day a friend of my mom's asked me to make a video of her family. She wanted to send it to her mother who lived in China. It was totally fun, and she paid me $150. Soon her friends asked me to make videos for them, and suddenly I had a business. That was 10 years ago. After awhile, I realized I had to learn more about video. So now I am studying video part-time and running my business. It's great!

3   **"I have the greatest job in the world."—Amanda**

I am a matchmaker with 41 years of experience. Because of me, 60 couples are now happily married or engaged. I have a very good eye for people. And I don't mean I match people on how they look. I mean, I can meet a person just once for 10 minutes, and I know for sure what kind of person he or she is. I get a feeling. And this feeling tells me, "Oh, he might be a great husband for Stephanie," or "Ah, now here is the woman for Timothy." I can't imagine a job that's more fun. I meet wonderful people. I work for myself. Nobody tells me what to do. I don't spend much time with a computer in an office—the whole city is my office! I make enough money to live a simple life. And I get so much joy from seeing what happens to my matches. A month ago, a couple stopped by on their way home from the hospital with their new baby girl. I'm so happy to think that I helped make that family!

4   **"I have a job with an incredible view."— Donna**

Teaching skydiving[1] is so exciting. I get to be outside, and I love seeing students on their first jump. They are all nervous and excited. When they get to the ground, they can't wait to call everyone they know and tell them they just jumped out of an airplane. Later, when they learn to turn and fly forward, they realize that they're not just flying stones. They realize that they're like birds—they can fly!

5   It wasn't easy to get this job. I had to have about 1,000 jumps and about two years of training. And the salary was only $15,000 for the first year. But I don't do it for the money. In fact, I don't need to get paid at all. I love it that much!

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[1] **skydiving:** the sport of jumping out of airplanes with a parachute

Source: Based on information in Dave Curtin, "From Sky Diving Instructors to Fashion Consultants, Some Folks Just Love Their Jobs," Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, 11 March 1996.

Complete the sentences with the correct name from the reading.

1. _____Donna_____ made $15,000 her first year.

2. _____ helped 60 couples find each other.

3. _____ didn't do well in school as a child.

4. _____ has the same job she had 40 years ago.

5. _____ is studying to get better skills.

6. _____ loves teaching.

7. _____ studied and practiced for her job for two years.

8. _____ is in charge of a video business.

C INTEGRATE READINGS ONE AND TWO

STEP 1: Organize

Look at Reading One again. Reread Paragraph 4 about skills, setting, and rewards. Then look at this list of ideas from Reading Two and decide where each one should go in the chart. Write each idea in the correct column.

editing video

making $15,000/year

getting to know people

working outside

seeing people learn

skydiving

teaching

understanding how people get along

working in an office

running a business

working on a computer

seeing happy couples who I introduced

working with people

SKILLS	SETTINGS	REWARDS
editing video		

Finding the Ideal Job 9

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How could the people in Reading Two answer the interview questions? Write answers for each person. Use information from the chart in Step 1.

1. RYAN

   a. What are your skills?

      <u>I have some video-editing skills. I am also learning more.</u>

   b. What kind of setting do you like working in?

      _____

      _____

   c. What rewards are important to you?

      _____

      _____

2. AMANDA

   a. What are your skills?

      _____

      _____

   b. What kind of setting do you like working in?

      _____

      _____

   c. What rewards are important to you?

      _____

      _____

      _____

3. DONNA

   a. What are your skills?

      _____

      _____

   b. What kind of setting do you like working in?

      _____

      _____

   c. What rewards are important to you?

      _____

      _____

3 FOCUS ON WRITING

A VOCABULARY

◀ REVIEW

Put the three sentences in each group in order. Write 1, 2, or 3 next to each sentence.

a. __1__ I saw a **posting** for an interesting job.

__3__ The company called and asked me to come in for an **interview**.

__2__ I sent my **résumé** to the company.

b. _____ Mr. Fredericks went to school for more **training**.

_____ Mr. Fredericks lost his job after a 20-year **career**.

_____ Mr. Fredericks realized he needed new **skills** to find another job.

c. _____ Myron **realized** that he needed to pay a higher **salary** because no one was interested.

_____ Myron put **ads** in the paper and **postings** on the Internet for a new manager.

_____ Myron's best **manager** quit.

d. _____ John was looking for someone with **specific** skills in photographing food.

_____ John **hired** Karen.

_____ John met Karen, who is **ideal** because she made ads for restaurants.

e. _____ Kelly quit because she wanted a job with different **rewards**.

_____ Kelly is **running her own business**.

_____ Kelly had a big **salary** at her last job, but she did not like the job.

◀ EXPAND

Each word or phrase in parentheses changes the meaning of the sentence. Cross out the word or phrase that does not make sense.

1. Kate's salary is (huge / pretty good / ~~expensive~~).

2. The rewards at my last job were (happy / great / not very good).

3. You will get some (teaching / technical / lazy) skills at this job.

4. Vladimir is a very (organized / long / unfriendly) manager.

(continued on next page)

Finding the Ideal Job   11

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5. When Julie was 30, she realized (she wanted to own a restaurant / she needed a new job / she bought a new car).

6. Jen likes working in a (busy / quiet / short) office.

7. Sam works in a(n) (outdoor / delicious / beautiful) setting.

8. I want to work with (manager / smart / friendly) people.

9. For this job, you need to have very specific (abilities / skills / rewards).

10. Jake knows how to (design / write / build) very tall buildings.

11. Some workers really enjoy working (alone / on teams / in settings).

◀ CREATE

Read the e-mail from Cristina to her friend Jenny.

New   Get Mail   Reply   Reply All   Forward   Delete   Junk

From: Cristina_Bond@Richmond.edu
To: JRIOS@springboard.com
Sent: 1 October 2007 14:23
Subject: New Job :)

Hi Jenny,
Guess what? I finally found a job. Not just any job. A really great one: Web page designer. I think this might be the ideal job for me. (Running my own business was NOT a good choice.) I'm so excited! I thought I was going to be out of work forever.

Remember how I told you that I sent my résumé to about 300 Internet companies? Well, two weeks ago I met this woman on the bus, and we started talking. And the next thing you know, she's setting up an interview for me. I was so nervous during the interview, but I got the job!

Wow, I can't believe it. I'm starting my new job as a Web page designer. I'll e-mail you next week with my new work number and e-mail address.

Yours,
Webmaster[1] Cristina

—

[1] **webmaster:** the job title for people who design Web pages

Now complete the e-mail from Jenny to Cristina. Use the words in parentheses to write the first five questions. Use other words from Review and Expand (pages 11–12) to write the remaining questions.

New   Get Mail   Reply   Reply All   Forward   Delete   Junk

From: JRIOS@springboard.com
To: Cristina_Bond@Richmond.edu
Sent: 3 October 2007 11:16
Subject: Needing help

Hi Cristina,
Glad you finally found a job. Jobs are so difficult to find, or to keep. I just lost my job, and I need to find a new one very soon. How do you like Web design? Do you think a career in Web design might be for me? I have a lot of questions for you if you have time:

(salary) __What kind of salary do new Web designers get?__

(other rewards) _____

(specific skills) _____

(training in design) _____

(setting) _____

(office) _____

(your idea) _____

(your idea) _____

(your idea) _____

(your idea) _____

Thanks for your help. And best of luck in your new career. Can't wait to hear more about the job!

Love,
Jenny

1 Read the e-mail. Notice the boldfaced words. They are two kinds of adjectives: *descriptive adjectives* and *possessive adjectives*.

New   Get Mail   Reply   Reply All   Forward   Delete   Junk

From: Cristina_Bond@NetMakers.com
To: JRIOS@springboard.com
Sent: 13 November 2007 9:12
Subject: Old Job :(

Hey Jenny,
Bad week for me. WebCool bought NetMakers. Lost **my new** job. NetMakers is a **small** company, so I knew this might happen. But I didn't expect it so soon! It was such a **great** job for me because I could use **my** skills. And the job was **fun**. I guess I'll have to start job hunting again. How about **your** job hunt? How is it going? The **last** time we talked, you were going on an interview. Did you get the job? Hope you were **successful**. Don't e-mail me at this address anymore. Just call me on **my** cell phone.

Cristina

List each adjective in the e-mail on one of the lines.

1. Descriptive adjectives: __bad,_____

2. Possessive adjectives: __my,_____

DESCRIPTIVE AND POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

I. **Descriptive adjectives** describe nouns. They can come after the verb **be**.	The teacher **is** *funny*.
They can come before a noun.	She is a *funny* teacher.
When a noun follows an adjective, use *a, an,* or *the* before the adjective. (A and an are used only with count nouns.)	She's a *funny* teacher. She's an *important* writer. The *new* teacher isn't here.
REMEMBER: Do not use *a, an,* or *the* when the adjective is not followed by a noun.	Gary is *smart*.

2. Possessive adjectives show belonging.

A noun always follows a possessive adjective. When using possessive adjectives, do not use *a, an,* or *the.*

Possessive adjectives have the same form before singular or plural nouns.

Possessive Adjectives

my	your	his	her	its
our	your	their		

I have a job. **My job** is very interesting.

His boss is nice.

Your office is beautiful.
Your offices are beautiful.

---

2 *Use the words to write sentences.*

1. for / Jenny / a / is / career / looking / new

   Jenny is looking for a new career.

2. like / She / job / didn't / old / her

   _____

3. Our / funny / manager / and / is / smart

   _____

4. Internet / job / his / Juan / new / found / on / the

   _____

5. sister / out / work / of / is / My

   _____

6. an / Richard Bolles / job / interesting / has

   _____

7. wife / has / office / David's / a / huge

   _____

8. Tom / Andrea / business / and / their / sold

   _____

9. pays / That / well / company / workers / very / its

   _____

10. résumé / has / a / Dee / great

   _____

3 Describe the pictures. For each picture, write at least three sentences. Use at least one possessive adjective, one descriptive adjective before a noun, and one descriptive adjective after **be**. You can use the descriptive adjectives from the box.

big	dirty	hungry	messy	sad	sleepy	young
curly	happy	long	old	short	straight	

1. The man:

   The man is young. He has short hair. He is hungry.

   He drives an old truck.

   The truck:

   His truck is old. The old truck is dirty.

2. The woman:

   _____

   _____

   The desk:

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. The doctor:

   _____

   _____

   The patient:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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C WRITING

In this unit, you read about how to find your ideal job and about people who found their ideal job. Now think about *your* ideal job. Why is that job ideal for you?

You are going to **write a paragraph about your ideal job.** You will explain why this job is ideal for you. You will tell about the skills, setting, and rewards related to this job. Use the vocabulary and grammar from the unit.*

◀ PREPARE TO WRITE: Listing

In order to help you think about the topic for your paragraph, you will do a prewriting activity called **listing.** Listing is **making a list of your ideas** before you begin to write. When you make a list, it is not necessary to write complete sentences *(see the list on page 9).*

1 *Richard Bolles says that you need to know your skills, preferred settings, and rewards in order to find your ideal job. List these things in the chart. Then list some ideal jobs for you.*

SKILLS I HAVE	SETTINGS I PREFER	REWARDS I WANT

Possible Ideal Jobs for Me

_____

_____

_____

2 *Find a classmate who knows you well. Show your list to this classmate. See if he or she has any more ideas about jobs that might be good for you. Add them to the list, then choose an ideal job to write about.*

---

*For Alternative Writing Topics, see page 21. These topics can be used in place of the writing topic for this unit or as homework. The alternative topics relate to the theme of the unit, but may not target the same grammar or rhetorical structures taught in the unit.

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences about one topic. The first sentence is the **topic sentence**. It states the **main idea** of the paragraph. For this assignment, the topic sentence will give the name of the writer's ideal job.

1 Read the paragraph. Then underline the topic sentence and circle the name of the writer's ideal job.

> I would like to be a mountain-climbing guide. I like this job for several reasons. First of all, mountain climbing is very exciting. Mountain-climbing guides get to climb tall, dangerous mountains. Second, I enjoy working outside. I like the fresh air much better than I like a stuffy office. Finally, I like to meet interesting people. Mountain-climbing guides travel to many different parts of the world and meet other adventurous people.

2 Each paragraph is missing a topic sentence. Choose the best one from the list and write it on the line. Remember that the topic sentence must give the name of the writer's ideal job.

Paragraph 1

> _____
>
> There are many reasons why I like this job. First, I like animals. Animals bring a lot of joy to our lives, but they do not ask for a lot in return. I also enjoy helping animals and their owners feel better. Pet owners are happy when their pets are well. Finally, veterinarians get to work with other people who like animals. They can even bring their pets to work!

Topic Sentences

a. I would like a job working with animals.

b. I think I would like to become a veterinarian.

c. A veterinarian helps people and animals feel better.

Paragraph 2

_____.

Many people think accountants have boring jobs, but I think accounting is an interesting job. I like math, and I am good at it. I also like helping people manage their money. So I think I have the skills to be an accountant. Accountants mostly work alone. I like meeting people, but I prefer to work alone. Good accountants can earn a lot of money, and that is important for me.

Topic Sentences

a. Accountants are very important for businesses and people.

b. I would like to be a mathematician.

c. My ideal job is to be an accountant.

3 Write a topic sentence for the paragraph that you are going to write about your ideal job.

Your topic sentence: _____

4 Now write the first draft of your paragraph about your ideal job. Start with your topic sentence. Then write sentences that explain the idea in your topic sentence. Use the list you made on page 17 to help you write your paragraph.

❰ REVISE: Adding Supporting Sentences

Sentences that come after the topic sentence are **supporting sentences.** They explain the main idea with specific **details and examples.**

1 Read the paragraph. Underline the topic sentence. Then discuss with a partner what kind of information the writer could add to the paragraph.

I would like to become an animator and make films like Toy Story, Shrek, and Cars. This job is ideal for me because I love to work on computers. It is important for me to work with fun people, and everyone I know in animation is really fun. Animators can make a lot of money, and that is important too.

2 Read each paragraph and list of supporting sentences. Choose **two** sentences to add to the paragraph. Use an arrow to show where each sentence should go. Put the sentences about skills together, the sentences about setting together, and the sentences about rewards together. The first one has been done for you.

Paragraph 1

> I would like to become an animator and make films like Toy Story, Shrek and Cars. This job is ideal for me because I love to work on computers and I love to draw. It is important for me to work with fun people, and everyone I know in animation is really fun. Animators can make a lot of money, and that is important.

Supporting Sentences

a. I always buy a large popcorn when I go to the movies.

b. But the best reward is that I get to see films I helped to make in theaters.

c. I also know how to draw Manga animations.

d. Mickey Mouse was one of Walt Disney's first animations.

Paragraph 2

> Fashion designing is my dream job. I have good skills for designing clothes. Fashion designers have a lot of fun in their jobs. They can work alone at home or in a studio with others. One reward is that they get to see people wearing their designs. Designing clothes sounds like a lot of fun!

Supporting Sentences

a. I love wearing Dolce and Gabbana clothes.

b. I know how to sew, and I love to draw clothes.

c. Designing shoes could also be a fun job because I like shoes.

d. Fashion designers also get to travel, and I love to travel.

3 Now go back to the first draft of your paragraph. Do all your sentences support the topic sentence? If not, cross them out. Then add some more supporting sentences. Make sure these sentences explain the topic sentence with details and examples.

◀ EDIT: Writing the Final Draft

Write the final draft of your paragraph. Carefully edit it for grammatical and mechanical errors, such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Make sure you used some of the vocabulary and grammar from the unit. Use the checklist to help you write your final draft. Then neatly write or type your paragraph.

✓ FINAL DRAFT CHECKLIST

- ○ Does your paragraph tell about your ideal job?
- ○ Does it tell about the skills, setting, and rewards related to this job?
- ○ Does it contain a topic sentence?
- ○ Are there enough supporting sentences to explain the topic sentence?
- ○ Do the supporting sentences give reasons why the job is ideal for you?
- ○ Do you use descriptive adjectives and possessive adjectives correctly?
- ○ Do you use new vocabulary that you learned in this unit?

ALTERNATIVE WRITING TOPICS

Write about one of the topics. Use the vocabulary and grammar from the unit.

1. Imagine your friend just finished college and doesn't know what to do for work. Write him or her an e-mail with advice. Use information from the review of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Give at least three suggestions.

2. Do you know anyone who has his or her dream job? Write a paragraph about this person. Answer these questions:
   - Who is he or she?
   - What does he or she do?
   - How did he or she get the job?
   - What is most important to him or her about the job?

RESEARCH TOPICS, see page 225.

Appendix 10. A sample Reading practice test (B1 Level)

LE's observation 1 – Reading class – Test preparation (sample B1 test)

Exercise 1.
Look at the text in each question.
What does it say?
Click on the correct letter A, B or C for your answer.

1.

> **Lan**
> No more vegetables left, so I'll get some at the greengrocer's. Please buy some pork at the butcher's near your school so that we can get some soup for lunch.
> **Hoa**

Hoa wants Lan to get some
A. vegetables
B. pork
C. soup

2.

> **MOTORBIKE HIRE**
> PLEASE PAY FOR YOUR FUEL BUT THE INSURANCE IS INCLUDED IN YOUR PAYMENT.

The hire charge covers
A. the insurance and fuel.
B. only the insurance.
C. only the fuel.

3.

> **To:** Second-year students
> **From:** Department secretary
> The Dean of Department would like to inform you all that Tuesday's meeting is to take place in the lecture hall instead of the library as planned. Start time unchanged.

A. Students should check when this Tuesday's meeting begins.
B. The Dean had not remembered to announced the change on Tuesday.
C. The location of Tuesday's meeting will be different.

4.

> **WARNING**
> ALARM WILL SOUND IF DOOR IS OPENED

A. The alarm will sound before the door opens.
B. The door will open until the alarm stops sounding.
C. If you open the door, the alarm will sound.

5.

> **We do not sell beer and any alcoholic drinks after 18.00. Thank you**

A. You can buy beer and alcoholic drinks if you are 18.
B. You can buy beer and alcoholic drinks until 6 pm.
C. You can buy beer and alcoholic drinks after 6 pm.

Exercise 2.
The people below want to visit some interesting places in Vietnam. Enclosed are reviews of eight places. Decide which place would be the most suitable for the following people. Click on the correct letter for your answer.

A   HO CHI MINH CITY
Ho Chi Minh City, formerly-named Saigon, is a modern city with the exciting lifestyle and developing commercial activities. Despite its busy life, Ho Chi Minh City has many historical sites to visit including the Thong Nhat Palace and Cu Chi Tunnels to the west.

1   A boy
Long is a student at the College of Agriculture. He is interested in growing food crops. He wants to visit the place where he can do his research into the food crops.

B   MEKONG DELTA
Known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam', the Mekong Delta is an important economic region as it is the

2   A boy
Nam is a famous singer and likes the excitement of a big city. He also

world's largest rice producing and exporting region. Apart from this, the Mekong Delta is a tourist destination with the vast network of rivers and canals and the gaiety of a riverside culture.

C PHU QUOC
Located in the Gulf of Thailand, Phu Quoc is Vietnam's largest island. The island has some of the most beautiful beaches in Vietnam. It also offers the best seafood in the country. Tourists can relax on the white sand beaches or explore the fishing villages in this tropical paradise.

D DALAT
Dalat is located 1,500 m above sea level on the Langbian Plateau in the southern parts of the Central Highlands region. In Vietnam, Dalat is a popular tourist destination. With its year-round cool weather, Dalat supplies temperate agriculture products for all over Vietnam. Its flower industry produces two typical flowers: hydrangea and golden everlasting.

E NHA TRANG
Nha Trang traditionally relied on its vast fishing industry, however, taking advantage of some of the best coastline and weather in Vietnam, the city has now developed into one of the country's main resort towns. It offers tourists five-star hotels and luxury seafood restaurants.

F HUE
Located in Central Vietnam, Hue was the capital city of Vietnam for approximately 150 years during feudal time (1802–1945), and the royal lifestyle and customs have had a significant impact on the characteristics of the people of Hue, even long afterwards. Hue is well known for its historic monuments, which have earned it a place in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. The seat of the Nguyen emperors was the Citadel, which occupies a large, walled area on the north side of the Perfume River.

G HANOI
Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam and the country's second largest city. A city between the rivers, built from lowland, Hanoi has many scenic lakes and it is sometimes called "city of lakes". A variety of options for entertainment in Hanoi can be found throughout the city. Modern and traditional theaters, cinemas, karaoke bars, dance clubs, bowling alleys, and an abundance of opportunities for shopping provide leisure activity for both locals and tourists.

H SAPA
Sapa is a frontier town and capital of Sapa District in Lao Cai Province in northwest Vietnam. It was first

wants to visit a place which can remind him of some events of history.

3 A girl   Lan is a student at the Department of History. She does not know very much about the Vietnamese kings. She wants to visit a place where she can learn more about the culture and royal lifestyle.

4 A girl   Mai is fond of relaxing atmosphere in a coastal city. She wants to stay in first-class hotels with a nice sea view. She also likes eating fish and squid during her visit.

5 A girl   Hoa loves exploring nature and staying offshore. She enjoys lying on the beach and eating seafood when she visits the place.

inhabited by people we know nothing about. The scenery of the Sapa region in large part reflects the relationship between the minority people and nature. This is seen especially in the paddy fields carpeting the rolling lower slopes of the Hoang Lien Mountains. The impressive physical landscape which underlies this has resulted from the work of the elements over thousands of years, wearing away the underlying rock.

Exercise 3.

Look at the sentences below about a Carnival tour promotion. Read the text to decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, click on the T box. If it is not correct, click on the F box.

1. This tour provides customers with opportunities to visit some provinces in the south of the country.   T   F
2. The tours starting on April 30 are cheaper than the ordinary tours.   T   F
3. Only one tour enables tourists to join Carnaval Ha Long.   T   F
4. The main activities of the carnival take place right at the three-star hotels. T   F
5. Tourists can go around Ha Long Bay by boat.   T   F
6. Tourists can meet some ethnic minority people during their tour.   T   F
7. Tourists can buy some souvenirs when they are in Sapa.   T   F
8. If tourists want to travel by plane, they have to pay an extra amount of money. T   F
9. Tourists can go on a tour by air from HCMC on May 2.   T   F
10. Tourists can sing and play sports during their tour if they want to.   T   F

Carnaval Tour Promotion

Saigontourist Travel Service Company, based in HCMC, has offered tours on which customers can visit places of interest and join Carnaval Ha Long 2014 in the country's northern region. Both tours depart from HCMC on April 30. The tour of Ha Long, Sapa and Hanoi lasts five days and costs nearly VND 8.9 million; and the tour of Hanoi, Yen Tu, Ha Long, Ninh Binh and Sapa takes six days and is at approximately VND 9.6 million. These tours will save each tourist VND 2-3 million compared with ordinary days and are convenient for tourists to attend Carnaval Ha Long

During their vacation, tourists will stay at three-star hotels near Hoang Quoc Viet Street, where the main activities of the carnival happen. They only walk for 5-10 minutes from their hotels to the scene to join parades, watch firework display and enjoy art programs.

Aside from joining Carnaval Ha Long, vacationers can also take a boat trip of Ha Long Bay, visit Hanoi's 36 ancient streets, and see the ancient rock statue of Amitabha Buddha at Phat Tich Pagoda in Bac Ninh Province. Other activities include visiting Cat Cat Hamlet of the Mong ethnic group, Sapa and Coc Leu Markets, Hoa Yen Pagoda and the ancient town of Hoa Lu.

Saigontourist also offers tours by air, which save tourists up to VND 4 million and depart continuously from HCMC from April 30-May 3. The four-day Hanoi-Ninh Binh-Ha Long tour costs nearly VND 7.4 million and departs on April 30 and May 1. The five-day Bac Kan-Ba Be Lake-Cao Bang-Nguom Ngao Cave-Ban Gioc Waterfall tour costs about VND 8.6 million and departs on April 30. The four-day Hue-Danang-Hoi An-Ba Na tour costs VND 6.7 million and departs on April 30 and May 1. The three-day tour of Phu Quoc Island costs VND5.1 million and departs every day from April 30 to May 3.

The luxury four-star Saigon- Ha Long Hotel, a subsidiary of Saigontourist Holding Company, is one of the biggest hotels in Ha Long and it is a key participant of the Carnaval Ha Long. Put into operation since October 2002, the hotel can meet customers' diverse demands with its 222 rooms and other facilities such as a business center, spa, massage parlor, karaoke, swimming pool, tennis courts and fitness center.

(Saigon Times)

Exercise 4.

Read the text and questions below. For each question, click on the correct letter A, B, C or D for your answer.

RMIT in Vietnam

RMIT International University Vietnam is seeking a location in Hanoi to build a new campus as part of its strategy to expand in Vietnam and attract more students. The new facility in the capital city was unveiled by professor Gael McDonald, new president and general director of RMIT Vietnam, at a function in HCMC yesterday. However, she did not unveil the investment capital needed for this new campus as this depended on the site RMIT could find. RMIT had invested significantly in Vietnam in the past 13 years and used its revenue for reinvestment in educational development here in the

country.

RMIT Vietnam currently has 6,000 students, including some 4,500 students at its Saigon South campus in HCMC's District 7. The Australian-owned university looks to bring the total number to 15,000 by 2020. To achieve this goal, RMIT Vietnam will focus on enhancing teaching quality and investing in new facilities in the next five years. In addition, it will intensify cooperation with enterprises in training and recruiting graduates.

With its 14,400 square meters of space across six levels, the new building can house up to 1,100 students at a time. The facility, equipped with modern teaching and learning technology, allows for a range of flexible learning spaces. RMIT offers courses on business, engineering, communications, economics and marketing, among others.

1   What is the writer trying to do in the text?
    A   describe the courses offered by the university
    B   give information about the development of the university
    C   explain the way to build the new campus
    D   advise people to choose the courses at the university

2   Why should somebody read this text?
    A   to find out about the location of the university
    B   to look for information about the university
    C   to learn about detailed information about university courses
    D   to discover how the university was built

3   What does the writer think?
    A   It is difficult to build a new campus in Hanoi.
    B   The investment in the university expansion is high.
    C   The university will have some financial difficulties.
    D   The number of students is likely to increase.

4   What might you think about the employment opportunities after graduation?
    A   The graduates could find their jobs in enterprises.
    B   The enterprises will not employ the graduates from RMIT.
    C   It is difficult for the graduates to find their jobs.
    D   The graduates will work for foreign companies.

5   Which of the following describes RMIT?
    A

> An international university offers technological courses for the students in Southern Vietnam. All the graduates can get well-paid jobs.

B

An international university offers
financial courses for the students in
Northern Vietnam. All the graduates
can get well-paid jobs.

C

An international university offers
business and engineering courses

for the students in Vietnam. All the
graduates can work abroad.

D

An international university offers a
wide range of courses for the
students in Vietnam. The graduates
can get their jobs in enterprises.

Exercise 5.
Read the text below and choose the correct word for each numbered space.
For each question, click on the correct letter A, B, C or D for your answer.

Legend has it that once **upon (0)** a time two male fairies were _____ **(1)** chess on Son Tra Mountain.
_____ **(2)** the game had lasted for several days, no player could defeat the _____**(3)**. A group of angels
then came to _____ **(4)** a bath on the beach to the west of Son Tra Mountain, _____ **(5)** is now called
Tien Sa (Descending Fairies). The _____ **(6)** of the angels frolicking on the beach distracted one of the two
players from the _____ **(7)** and he lost it. Frustrated _____ **(8)** the defeat, the loser kicked the chessboard
out to the sea and flew back to the heaven. Based _____ **(9)** this legendary story, local people built the
_____**(10)** of a male fairy meditating in front of the chessboard on the mountain peak. The peak has been
so named.

1. A. doing   B. playing   C. hitting   D. leading
2. A. Because   B. Since   C. Although   D. When
3. A. other   B. another   C. others   D. one
4. A. do   B. make   C. take   D. get
5. A. which   B. that   C. where   D. when
6. A. view   B. scenery   C. landscape   D. scene
7. A. competition   B. game   C. battle   D. round
8. A. on   B. with   C. in   D. by
9. A. on   B. in   C. with   D. at
10. A. image   B. picture   C. statue   D. photo

Appendix 11. Teachers' core beliefs and evidence/examples from interviews and observation and a data analysis sample

Participants' espoused beliefs	Example(s) from interviews	Examples(s) from observed lessons
1. Affective beliefs about EFL teaching and learning		
1.1. Observing students' reactions is pedagogically important. (Chau, Diep, Trang, Minh)	• "I observe my students very carefully. Some students seem to be indifferent to the classroom happenings. It seems that they are forced to study. Or, it's simply because they don't know what to learn [so they decided to learn English]. For those students, I often approach them in the classroom and encourage them to study." (Diep) • "I often observe my students' reactions, for example through their facial expression. If I feel that they don't understand the content or find it challenging to complete a learning task, I will change it immediately." (Chau) • "I observe my students in class and some students don't have a very positive learning attitude because their levels are a bit lower than their peers." (Trang) • "I often observe students in class. If they seem to have no reactions, I think I may change the teaching approach or learning task." (Minh)	This was only evident in Minh's Reading 2 lesson when the teacher observed that some students at the back rows in the classroom seemed to be unfocused on the learning task and kept talking to each other in Vietnamese, she told them that they could stay home rather than coming to class and doing nothing.
1.2. Underprivileged students from remote or rural areas need further care. (Thanh, Diep)	• "I often stay later after the lessons to talk to those students who seem to be from rural or remote areas or who seem to be slower than their peers. I want to help them. I tell them that I will help them in any way I can, for example providing them with learning materials." (Diep) • "I often pay more attention to students from rural areas or who have a "hoàn cảnh gia đình" (disadvantaged family background). I used to be poor when I was a student, so I understand. Once I came to a student's house to see why he was indifferent in class. And that was because his parents had divorced." (Thanh)	This was hard to observe in class because students' beliefs and practices were not the focus of this research. Therefore, the researcher did not ask or was not allowed to ask students about their beliefs and practices to compare teachers' espoused beliefs with the actual happenings in their teaching activity.
1.3. Building rapport/trust by talking to students about their learning and life situations is important. (Thanh, Diep)	• "I often take my students into confidence. They trust me and tell me about their life. I also talk to students about their learning to see if I can help them." (Diep) • "The reason I want to come to class every day is to talk to my students. You know, they are from different backgrounds and if the teacher talks to them, they will feel more included." (Thanh)	This was evident in Diep's Writing 2 and Speaking 5 lessons, Thanh's Translation 1 and Reading 2 lessons, and Chau's Speaking 2 lesson when teachers talked cheerfully with students before the lessons started. Interestingly, Chau did not espouse this belief in the interviews but she talked cheerfully to students before the lesson started.
1.4. Teacher-student emotional immediacy or closeness is important in teaching and learning. (All participants)	• "If we [teachers] keep a distance with our students, it's hard to motivate them to learn and they will never dare ask us anything. Students' asking questions after class hours proves that we [teachers] have created a closeness with our students." (Diep) • "This will lead to a change in their learning psychology and attitude. This will improve students' sense of sharing and hence their willingness to pose questions, which is very important in creating a comfortable learning environment. Everyone seems to be sociable in such an environment. " (Ngoc) • "Teacher-student closeness is very important and that makes us different from robots. Robots can provide learners with procedural learning and accurate feedback. However, they are not as effective as we are because we nurture the emotional connection and interaction with our students. Robots don't. The teacher's emotion leads to students' emotion. Our devotion and enthusiasm will create a real learning environment. Robots can't. And this is key to being a teacher." (Huy)	Although verbal immediacy could not be or was hard to be observed in lessons (except for teacher-student informal talks before the lesson such as in Chau's Speaking 2 lesson, Thanh's Reading 2 lesson, Diep's Writing 2 lesson, Thanh's Translation 1 lesson, and Diep's Speaking 5 lesson), non-verbal immediacy or closeness was more evident with teachers' behaviours in the classroom. For example, most of the teachers dressed informally or casually (except for Huy dressing formally with a suit and Ngoc with Vietnamese traditional "áo dài" (long dress)), which is in contrast to the Vietnamese classroom's norm of teacher's formal dressing. Even for Ngoc who dressed formally in her Reading 2 and Writing 2 lessons, she was observed to keep an informal distance towards students by talking cheerfully to them while they were doing exercises. Another observed teacher-student non-verbal immediacy was the way teachers greeted their students when entering the classroom. The field notes showed

	• "I have to admit that my personal emotion toward students sometimes results in bias in my teaching. For those students who are hardworking and "ngoan" (well-behaved and obedient) with active participation in the lessons, I often tend to have bias in marking their works. But in general, when I come into the classroom, seeing students' lovely faces in expectation for knowledge, I say to myself that I come to class every day because of this." (Chau) • "Teacher-student immediacy is very important, without which there's no connection or affinity between the teacher and students. If there isn't a connection, the lesson will be uninspiring. It seems easier for me to maintain emotional relationships with my students if I teach theoretical subjects because I feel freer and have more interactions with students by telling stories. It's a failure if the teacher doesn't have affinity or rapport with students, hence teaching is incomplete." (Le)	that many teachers did not uphold the traditional way of greeting by stopping in front of standing students to greet them. For example, Chau (Listening 2 and Speaking 2 lessons), Trang (Speaking 2 and Translation 1 lessons), Minh (Reading 2 and Translation 1 lessons), and Thanh (Translation 1 lesson) waved students to sit down while they were entering the classroom. Students' talking cheerfully when the teacher came into the classroom is regarded as one implicit message about close teacher-student relationship, which is not a traditional norm of the Vietnamese classrooms. This was evident in Chau's Listening 2 and Speaking 2 lessons, Trang's Speaking 2 lesson, Thanh's Reading 2 lesson, and Ngoc's and Diep's Writing 2 lessons,
1.5. Teaching is caring. (Diem, Diep, Ngoc, Thanh, Huy, Le)	• "I consider students my children who need "chỉ bảo" (guidance). I had a student who had a negative learning attitude, but with my guidance he successfully completed the programme and found a good job in a foreign company in Sai Gon. We still keep in touch." (Thanh) • "When I was a university student, my class was like a family where everyone treated each other like siblings. The university is now like my second family where I treat students as my children." (Thanh) • "Sometimes caring is as simple as dealing with students' mistakes in a soft way" (Diep) (This view was also echoed by Huy and Ngoc). • "For me caring means that easing the study pressure for students by not being too strict with their mistakes." (This view was echoed by Thanh, Huy, and Le)	Not observable
1.6. Student-student emotional closeness is important. (Diem, Thanh., Le)	• "When I was a university student in the 1980s, my teachers were very strict but "tình cảm" (showing loving care) towards students and students were living and studying with love. Now, it's hard to see this." (Thanh) • "I still remember when I was at university. We used to go to my classmate's house, having meals together. We often considered their parents our parents. I know young students now may find this strange." (Le) • "There were about 16 students in my university class, from different areas of the country and we actually lived together just as a family. We shared everything. It's hard to see that now." (Diem)	Not observable
1.7. Collegial closeness is important. (Diem, Diep, Ngoc, Chau, Thanh, Huy, Le, Trang)	• "The emotional bond with colleagues helps me balance and feel comfortable although this bond isn't direct. Good emotional relationships lead to more effective teaching." (Ngoc) • "Emotional connection is very important. I want everybody to be closely connected, which helps make our teaching effective. This emotional bond makes the school the second family. We're motivated to go to our second home to have happy teaching." (Thanh) • "Emotional bond among colleagues is important. But for me, this doesn't influence my teaching very much." (Chau) • "A good emotional relationship with colleagues will naturally lead to comfortable teaching. Normally, teachers are grouped into the same specialist division because they have the same personalities and share the same professional views." (Le) • "I like the English word 'collegiality' which implies the supportive environment between colleagues. This is very important. A student cannot study with only one teacher for the whole training programme. Teaching takes place in a community; one teacher cannot accomplish the educational	Not observable

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	mission. Supportiveness is optimal. I think I'm working in a friendly environment and everyone is sociable. I imagine if I worked in an environment where people are indifferent and unconnected to each other, it [teaching] would be harder. But when we follow the credit-based training, this [collegiality] becomes more complicated." (Huy) ● "Close relationships between colleagues are important but I value listening in collegial relationships, especially when it comes to something that is "gay cấn" [stormy]. I'm generally sociable. However, I'm afraid of "những câu chuyện đa chiều" [mixed stories]. For me, "cô là cô" [teacher is teacher] and "chị là chị" [sister is sister]. Mutual respect is essential although many of my colleagues are much younger than me." (Diem) Note: examples provided in the interviews include: ● Gatherings on special occasions such as the Vietnamese Teachers' Day (20 November), the International Women's Day (8 March), and New Year's Day (Thanh and Diep) ● Grouping teaching staff who have similar personalities into a specific "tổ chuyên môn" (division of specialisation) (Le) ● Going out for a cup of tea or coffee (Trang and Huy) ● Sharing academic and social issues with colleagues of same age (Trang and Minh)	
1.8. Family's support is important. (Minh, Trang, Chau, Ngoc, Le)	● "Family is an important support after stressful lessons. I often take my parents into my confidence, telling them that the salary is too low and some students are uncooperative, which makes me feel stressed. My parents give me wise advice to buoy me up. I also have an older sister, also an English teacher who can give me professional advice." (Minh) ● "Family is the greatest motivation for me to become who I am now. When I want to quit teaching because of work pressure, I talk to my mother. She gives me valuable advice. My parents are my "chỗ dựa tinh thần" (emotional support)." (Trang) ● "I always have immense support from my family. My husband drives me to school whenever I feel tired. My children share housework with me so that I have more time for planning lessons." (Ngoc) ● "My parents often encourage me and share with me their experiences. They always say something like "tre già măng mọc" (old generations will resign and young generations will follow). My parents' consolatory advice has pushed me ahead." (Chau) ● "I feel lucky to have my parents living	Not observable
1.9. Friends are important. (Diem, Huy)	● "Sometimes I go out for a cup of coffee with my friends who are also English teachers when I feel burnt-out. I realise that my situation is still better than many." (Diem) ● "I have many friends who are working in different industries. I often go out with them for a drink. I find that the teaching environment is not a "chiến trường" (battle)." (Huy)	Not observable
2. General beliefs about an effective EFL teacher		
2.1. An effective EFL teacher is patient and persevered. (Diem, Diep, Ngoc, Thanh, Huy, Trang)	● "Just as an effective language learner, an effective language teacher should be patient and persevere." (Ngoc) ● "An effective language teacher is patient and tolerates students' mistakes so that they can help students in learning." (Diem) (Thanh echoed this view.) ● "We have to teach students slowly, step by step, so that they can absorb knowledge. We should not be hasty about teaching." (Diep)	It was hard to observe this psychological aspect. Under the pressure of being observed, it was likely that participants tended to control their behavioural reactions in the classroom. However, Minh, in her Reading 2 lesson, told some students who appeared to be indifferent to learning activity to stay home if they did not want

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	• "We need to be patient in teaching. The first stage is equipping students with basic language knowledge and the second stage with communicative skills." (Huy) Note: The researcher did not probe into further examples or elaboration for this espoused belief in the interviews.	
2.2. An effective EFL teacher shows independence and passion in knowledge exploration. (Minh, Trang, Ngoc, Thanh, Diep, Huy, Le)	• "To be an effective teacher, the teaching should be inquiry-based. the teacher should search any available sources for their teaching." (Trang) • "An effective teacher should demonstrate a strong passion for the language and for imparting language knowledge onto their students. They are willing to learn "cái mới" (new knowledge) to diversify their teaching approaches which are beneficial for students." (Ngoc) • "The passion for self-updating knowledge in the field is very important. A teacher can't be effective in their teaching if they stop thinking about or learning new teaching methods and skills. I must say that Vietnamese teachers are very quick with current development in the field. This also reflects a teacher's attitude towards their teaching. The teacher must self-improve continuously to meet students' and social demands." (Le) • "I think an English teacher has a passion [for the language] that has existed since they were a learner of English. I have never stopped learning English and the ways to teach it." (Diep) Note: The researcher did not probe into further examples for this espoused belief.	Because PLD was not the focus of this research, the researcher did not observe the PLD events in which the participants participated. However, in the interviews, the researcher probed into the participants' PLD. Apart from degree-courses they had attended before becoming English teachers or during their teaching, participants mentioned various formal PLD events they had participated in. Ngoc attended a 1-month training course in teaching methods in an English-speaking country, Although she gained a lot from the course such as an increased language competence, classroom management skills, in-class questioning tactics, discussion leadership, and skills in explaining the content, Ngoc did not think of any possible changes regarding her teaching in Vietnam. Similarly, Thanh attended a 1-month curriculum design course in an English-speaking country; however, she admitted that it was hard to apply in the Vietnamese context. Diem attended various workshops and conferences, but she was most impressed by a workshop on the use of ICT in the classroom because it helped her with lesson planning. Chau shared that she attended many academic workshops but they were not in-depth and not context specific for practical application in the Vietnamese context. The only workshop she found useful was on language testing that helped improve her knowledge of test design. She admitted that her test design was previously intuitive. Likewise, Trang stated that she was lucky to participate in many workshops when the project [the Project 2020] was implemented] but found that they lacked a specific process or a roadmap. Diep, while acknowledging the usefulness of academic workshops and/or conferences, raised the concern over their focus.She asserted that there should be a shift from a focus on teaching methodologies to discussions on teacher-student emotional interactions in such workshops. Participants appeared to opt for collaborative PLD within their teaching community. They reported participation in academic meetings (Diem, Ngoc, Le, Huy) or academic discussions (Minh, Le, Diep, Thanh, Trang) with colleagues from the same division of specialisation. In these informal PLD opportunities, they shared teaching techniques (Diem, Ngoc, Minh, Le, Trang, Chau), sought academic advice (Diem, Diep, Thanh, Huy), and discussed the utilisation of prescribed coursebook (Le). In addition, participants tended to experiential learning as commented in 3.5 below.

2.3. An effective EFL teacher has a sound professional knowledge. (All participants)	• Another characteristic of an effective language teacher is having sound professional knowledge which consists of both language knowledge and social knowledge. This knowledge will help the teacher play the role of knowledge sharer. (Trang) • An effective language teacher should have sound professional knowledge of teaching methods. An effective language teacher should also be technology competent, which helps to motivate students and create more learning opportunities outside the classroom. (Chau) • An effective language teacher must have sound professional knowledge and be well trained in FL teaching methods in general and English in particular. This knowledge should be regularly updated for better teaching. (Le) • "An effective teacher has good teaching methods. To do this, they must have a sound knowledge/" (Ngoc) • "The first and foremost requirement for an effective teacher is sound knowledge." (Thanh)	It was hard to observe the "sound professional knowledge" or its manifestations although the teacher participants obtained Master's or PhD degrees (except for Chau and Minh with Bachelor's degrees).
2.4. An effective teacher has wide social knowledge. (Trang)	• "An effective teacher has a wide social knowledge to keep pace with social trends. Several years ago, I taught a group of students. Anytime we started the lesson at 1.00 pm, they began to yawn and appeared unfocused on the lesson. I had to show the photo of an actor starring in the Korean movie, On Air, which was popularly shown on Vietnam Television at that time. They started talking as if they had never felt asleep. I changed the lesson content based on this photo. I realised that social trends helped with in-class learning." (Trang)	
2.5. An effective EFL teacher has a sense of humour. (Thanh, Diem, Le)	• "The teacher can tell funny stories in class to motivate students and to make the lesson less boring and less stressful." (Thanh) • "I'm a serious person. But sometimes I tell funny stories to create a relaxing learning environment in class. A sense of humour is important because it helps turn a boring lesson into an inspiring one. Yet, the funny stories should be relevant to the content taught." (Diem) • "I think a sense of humour is a particular characteristic of an English teacher. I see it easier to tell funny stories in language skills lessons than theoretical classes." (Le)	Not evident in the observed lessons even though many participants seemed to keep an informal distance with their students.
2.6. An effective EFL teacher is extroverted. (Trang, Huy, Ngoc, Minh, Diem)	• "They should be extroverted, a psychologist who understands students' needs and knowledgeable about both the subject matter and social issues. The teacher should be open-minded, who welcomes students' ideas." (Trang) • "An English teacher has something different from other teachers in other subject areas. I think an important characteristic of an effective English teacher is being outgoing and extroverted." (Ngoc) • "An effective English teacher is first of all an extrovert person. (Huy) • "A good FL teacher is dynamic, meaning that they can create a dynamic learning environment. The lessons will be very monotonous if the learning is unidirectional with the teacher lecturing and without students' questions." (Minh) • "An effective teacher should be open to learning from others." (Diem)	It was hard to observe this personal characteristic. However, the observational notes indicated that almost all participants appeared to keep an informal distance with their students in the classroom except for Le who seemed to be delivering the lesson in a strict manner in his Reading 2 and Writing 2 lessons.
2.7. An effective EFL teacher is trustworthy. (Huy, Diep)	• "I have searched for the characteristics of an effective teacher but I think it may take a whole life to know. I think those characteristics are temporal. After years of teaching experience, I have realised that an effective teacher is the one who can create trust and confidence in the learners, ensuring the learners that they can rely on the teacher for learning. During my early years of teaching, I was like a young fighting rooster, thinking that students would see my knowledge performance as their leading star." (Huy) • "The teacher shouldn't show off their professional knowledge. In my teaching, I have no intention to show off my erudition, trying to shine with my excellent command of the language. I focus on students' needs. My students believe in what I'm doing for them." (Diep)	Not observable

	• "I was once severely criticised by an American practitioner after her observation of my class. She told me that my teaching had been just to "trình diễn bản thân" (demonstrate my knowledge and self-image), hence not a real teaching. I didn't pay attention to students; therefore, they didn't listen to me." (Huy). Note: No further examples and/or elaboration provided.	
2.8. An effective EFL teacher is creative. (Minh, Trang)	• "I see that an effective teacher should be creative, from methodological approaches to teaching styles to create more opportunities for students to expose to different learning resources." (Minh) • "The teacher should be open to different approaches to the same content if the lesson is to be effective. The teacher should "chế biến" (process) the lesson contents." (Trang) Note: No further examples and/or elaboration provided.	
3. General beliefs about an effective EFL teaching		
3.1. Effective teaching is methodologically focused with well-structured lessons. (Diem, Huy, Minh, Ngoc, Trang, Diep)	• Effective teaching depends on specific language skills. In reading lessons, for example, there are pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Pre-reading focuses on guessing skill, whereas while-reading helps students improve long-term memory. (Diem) • In effective teaching, a new lesson should start with the consolidation of the old one. For English language learning, a moderate amount of knowledge should be introduced to avoid overload or overwhelming information. Normally, I'll provide students with a couple of foci to practice within a time limit and then consolidation is provided. Three stages in effective language learning include review, introduction of new content, and consolidation. (Huy) • The first step in the lesson is brainstorming which is followed by the controlled activities to build up the content that needs to be obtained with teacher's assistance. The final step is for students to provide their own products. (Trang) • An effective lesson should start with students working in groups on certain tasks, followed by whole class sharing and discussion. The teacher will then provide further feedback. (Ngoc)	Observed in almost all lessons, except for Le's writing when students had not done the homework that was supposed to be used for learning activity in class. Le seemed to change his lesson plan.
3.2. Incentivization helps promote effective teaching and learning. (Minh, Trang, Chau, Diep, Le, Thanh)	• "Those students who do well on exercises will be given a plus mark. Students will be less engaged or motivated if there are just test marks." (Minh) • "I often tend to give good marks to "ngoan" students (well-behaved and obedient)." (Trang) • "I often give "ngoan" students bonus points for their active participation in class activities. You may call this incentive strategy." (Chau) • "Then we will check the answer keys and I ask students to explain why they chose certain answers. I will also give "điểm tốt" (good mark) to those who do well." (Diep) • "I tend to favour "nghe lời" (obedient) students by giving them good marks." (Le)	Not evident in the observed lessons. Participants did not give bonus marks as a motivational strategy as espoused in the interviews.
3.3. Effective teaching reflects "đức/tâm" (morality/ethics) and "tài" (talent/professional knowledge) harmony. (Diem, Diep, Thanh, Minh, Huy, Le)	• "'Đức' and 'tài' are closely linked, the lack of either will lead to unsustainability of teaching." (Diem) • "Many teachers have great professional knowledge, but they don't have a "tâm" of teaching, which impacts effective teaching; hence the learning quality decreases." (Minh) • "My older brother is still my role model who supports me academically and spiritually. The most important personality of his is "tâm". He's always willing to help many students whom he doesn't teach. And I think that is the most important of the teaching job." (Thanh) • "The teacher needs to have "cái duyên" in teaching. Focusing on knowledge is not enough. Teaching lies in the emotional connection with the students." (Huy) • "… "duyên" is something really important in teaching, by which we can attract them." (Le)	This is hard to observe or to judge from the observation. What could be used to verify participants' claims in this case was also their espoused belief of teacher-student emotional closeness which was evidenced and explained earlier in this summary. See 1.4 above.

	• "Teaching requires a "tâm". This is reflected through the teacher's care about students' situations such as family background." (Diep)	
3.4. Effective teaching is reflected through students' active participation and collaborative learning in the student-centered lessons. (Diem, Diep, Ngoc, Minh, Trang, Chau, Huy, Le)	• "Effective teaching is reflected through students' collaborative learning. In my lessons, there is always pair and group work. This is because learning English is sharing, demonstrating, and negotiating." (Diem) • "Group work is mostly used in my classes because students are more engaged. If students work in groups, they will feel more confident to share their ideas. This helps make lessons effective." (Ngoc) • "I often ask students to work in pairs or groups. I find this more effective than teacher's lecturing." (Diep) • "For my classes, students are often asked to work in groups for the whole semester. I think this is the most effective way." (Huy) • "The most effective teaching is to empower students so that they are independent of us; the more the better. Students should discuss together and present their ideas together rather than depending on teachers' lecturing." (Minh) • I demonstrate the lessons for the first one or two weeks. The responsibility will then be passed on to the students who work in groups and are responsible for everything, from the lesson content to language aspects and structures to be learnt." (Trang)	Evident in almost all observed lessons where students worked in pairs, groups, or whole class. For example, in Huy's Reading 2 lesson, Diep's Writing 2 lesson, Minh's Translation 1 lesson, and Thanh's Translation 1 lesson, students immediately formed pairs or groups and engaged actively and excitedly in the learning tasks after the teacher's instructions. Students active and collaborative engagement was evident in many observed lessons such as peer assessment of the vocabulary exercise in Diem's Reading 2 lesson, peer checking of the matching exercise in Huy's Reading 2 lesson, peer checking of the multiple-choice and matching exercises in Le's Reading 2 lesson, peer assessment of the writing homework in Diem's Writing 2 lesson, peer assessment of the paragraph writing exercise in Ngoc's Writing 2 lesson, and peer assessment of the paragraph writing exercise in Le's Writing 2 lesson. The observational notes of Trang's Translation 1 lesson showed that the students took charge of the lesson. Trang said after the observed lesson that the students were asked to work in groups for the whole semester, preparing the lesson content and presenting in class. It seemed that at the start of the semester, students were instructed carefully what they were expected of regarding Translation 1 subject.
3.5. Effective teaching is reflective. (Minh, Diep, Chau, Ngoc, Trang, Huy)	• "If I use the familiar teaching method for the first 15 minutes of the lesson but if no one reacts, i.e., there is no cooperation, I'll change the learning task." (Minh) • I always see a big difference between the first and the last group of students that I teach. The last is often better. That's why I often reflect on both the students and lessons to make lessons more effective. For the same speaking lesson, for example, the tasks may be different for different groups of students. At the start of each semester, I often review the lesson plans for all the groups of students I'm going to teach to see if I can add content to them. At the end of the semester, I will review them again." (Chau) • "Even though students are expected to work independently, we must help them. I must change my teaching method if the one I use is not effective." (Diep) • "My current teaching is the reflection of past schooling. When I teach, a flood of memories of past lessons come to my mind. I don't want to follow my former teachers' footsteps. I don't want my students to have the same experiences as I used to. Positioning myself from a student perspective, I'll understand what is effective for my students. I always want to refresh myself with updated knowledge in the field." (Trang)	Not observable
3.6. Effective teaching depends on the positioning of theory and practice. (Chau, Diem, Minh, Le, Trang, Ngoc)	• "I attach special importance to the applicability of the lessons, meaning that theory should be followed by practical tasks to help students in their learning." (Diem) • "After the theoretical lessons, practical exercises are provided which may be from sources other than the prescribed coursebook." (Minh)	It was evident in all observed lessons that a significant amount of learning time was reserved for practice exercises, which in turn helped prepare students for institutional tests and/or exams.

	• "Theory and practice should be provided simultaneously. For methodology lessons, for example, if only theories are provided without demonstrations, it's hard to be absorbed." (Trang) • "My teaching has both theory and practice. However, theory should be minimized and compressed in class to reserve more time for practice." (Le) • "For younger learners, the lessons may focus on practice. However, for older learners whose cognitive level is higher, practice without theory doesn't work because they will always ask why. So, it's best to provide them with theoretical points first." (Chau) • "I think more practice is better. For the English methodology lessons, we now have only 60 periods compared to previously 100. That's why we don't have enough time for individual micro-teaching practice for 51 students. I wish there would be 20 more periods for students to practise micro-teaching." (Ngoc) **Note: No further examples and/or elaboration of "theory" and "practice" or the theory-practice connection were provided by participants.**	
3.7. Teacher's timely feedback makes teaching effective. (Diem, Minh, Ngoc, Chau, Diep, Trang)	• "If students submit their papers, I'll give feedback very soon. Teachers' timely feedback is very important." (Diem) • "Students learn from teachers' feedback, so it's important to give students feedback. Students need to know where they must improve on. On-site feedback is more effective than delay feedback as it provides students with more opportunities to improve. I often give feedback after each lesson or students' presentation." (Minh) • "In the methodology lessons, I often give clear feedback right after students' micro teaching, especially on the teaching techniques. They will become teachers after graduation, so it's very important to point out which areas they need to improve." (Ngoc) • "Whenever I deliver a lecture or guide students with test-taking skills and techniques, I often check if they can understand." (Diep) • "Based on kinds of mistakes, I will give them immediate or delay feedback. In speaking lessons, I'll never interrupt students' talking because the lesson focus is fluency. For writing classes, I'll provide collective feedback because, honestly, I can't provide individual feedback. Every week, I'll choose 5 pieces of writing and give comments on these. I then take photos and share them on the screen." (Chau)	The observational notes showed that participants mainly provided feedback in the form of answer keys to the practice exercises, general feedback on grammatical errors, and showing suggested translation versions. In Trang's Speaking 2 and Translation 1 lesson, the teacher took notes but did not communicate her notes with students. However, teachers empowered students' self-learning by asking them to provide peer assessment/checking as indicated in 3.4. In Diep's Writing 2 lesson, the teacher preferred delay feedback on students' in-class writing.
3.8. The use of ICT and social networks helps make teaching effective. (Trang, Chau, Minh, Diep, Le, Ngoc, Huy, Thanh, Diem)	• "I prefer to have an Internet-connected computer in the classroom so that both teacher and students can have immediate access to available sources of information on the Internet. The lessons are more effective, and learning is direct. I also create a closed user group on Facebook for each group of students. We can discuss in this group. Generally, social networks are very useful for student learning with shared learning resources." (Minh) • "I set up a Facebook group and post assignments. Those students who do the assignments will be given a bonus point for participation and continuous assessment. If students share learning materials, I also give them bonus points. My students are highly motivated." (Diep) • "Social networks, if properly used, are very useful for learning. Students are more independent and take the initiative in learning. However, it would be better if teachers and the university provide students with academic advice because students may find it misleading when accessing online sources. In addition, there may be some students whose research ability is not high, meaning they can find it hard to search for necessary information for their own learning." (Le)	In the observed lessons, ICT was limited to the use of PowerPoint. For example, in Diep's and Huy's Speaking 5 lessons, PowerPoint was used for students to do their oral presentations. In Diem's Reading 2 lesson and Writing 2 lesson, PowerPoint was used to show the answer keys of a vocabulary exercise and the students' writing with teacher's comments, respectively. In Le's Writing 2 lesson, PowerPoint was used to show the answer key of a writing exercise that required students to re-arrange the scrambled sentences of a descriptive paragraph about a tourist destination in Vietnam. This was the same case for Minh's and Trang's Translation 1 lessons where teachers showed suggested translation versions or student's work with teacher's comments. However, in most of the lessons, the students used their BYODs to support in-class learning activities such as looking for content-

		related information or doing writing exercises (Minh's, Ngoc's, Thanh's, Huy's Reading 2 lessons; Ngoc's and Diep's Writing 2 lessons; Minh's and Thanh's Translation 1 lessons)
3.9. Effective teaching promotes good connection with the wider community. (Trang, Diep, Le)	• "When I was in Australia, I saw many old people coming to read in the library. Later on, I knew that the university libraries are open for everyone. I thought we should have the same model, which connected the university with the wider community so that the university no longer stood alone. If standing alone, the university doesn't know how developed the society is. The fact that we still use the old learning resources for our students means that there isn't such a connection. We don't understand social needs. If there's such a connection, students know what to learn to serve society. We should also build connections with social enterprises." (Trang) • "I think effective teaching should demonstrates a connection with social needs." (Diep, Le)	Not observable
4. Meta-cognitive beliefs about EFL teaching		
4.1. It is important to look for an aspect of teaching that gives me a sense of satisfaction or happiness. (Huy, Diep, Thanh, Chau)	• "Although I retired, I still love teaching. I think about going to school every day. It's just like my meals." (Diep) • "After many years ò teaching, I've realised that teaching is not only about students; it's about us, our satisfaction well. I think a balance between teaching and life is a good thing." (Huy) • "I think the university is like my second family. I feel happy when I think that I go to my second family every Monday." (Thanh) • "I find my students very charming when they present in front of class. I say to myself that this keeps me continuing with the teaching job." (Chau)	Not observable
4.2. Former teachers or significant others are good role models for my teaching. (Trang, Thanh, Minh, Huy, Diep)	• "I used to observe my former teachers while in class because I was determined to become an English teacher. So, I wanted to learn from them" (Minh) • "When I did my teaching practicum at a school and there were many teachers observing my lesson, my former teacher, Mr. A (identification protected – researcher), told me not to see him as a teacher and I would be confident. He told me to see him as a student in the class. His words were ingrained in my head. Until now, I'm sure we need to take predecessors' advice seriously." (Thanh) • "My teacher of English at high school was an open person. She took very good care of her students and she listened to our confidence. She took our opinions seriously and changed the lessons to make them more attractive. And now I'm very open and friendly with my students because I think this is an important way to motivate students." (Diep) • "I will never forget the course in English phonetics and phonology with Ms. Phuong (pseudonym) in which she applied multiple intelligences in learning. In the course, we didn't study phonetics and phonology in the traditional way but incorporating music and haiku haiku (a Japanese poetic style – researcher). I became to believe that if multiple intelligences were applied, the English lessons would be more applicable, practical, and easier to remember." (Trang)	Not observable
5. Cognitive beliefs about EFL teaching		

5.1. PLD events such as workshops/seminars/conferences are beneficial for my teaching. (All participants)	• "I attended many professional development programmes such as workshops and conferences." (Diem) • "I have attended a lot of workshops but almost none of these impressed me because they were not in-depth and usually not context specific for practical application. The only one that helped me much with my teaching was on language testing." (Chau) • I still vividly recall the workshop run by an American professor in my home city. I was young at that time. One criticism (by the professor – researcher) that made me revisit my view of teaching was about my extreme self-performance without caring about the students while teaching in class. That was one big failure in my teaching." (Huy) • "I was lucky to attend many department-level and university-level workshops when the project (the Project 2020 - researcher) was implemented." (Trang) • "I attended a lot of workshops but "ở mình" (in our country in general or in our educational context – researcher) the workshops often teaching methodologies. I have never attended a workshop which discusses the teachers' emotional interactions which may have a significant impact on our students' learning." (Diep)	As commented in 2.2 above, the researcher did not observe these PLD events.
5.2. Informal discussions on academic issues with colleagues is a beneficial channel for professional learning and development. (All participants)	• I often have discussions with my colleagues, including those who used to be my former students, on the cultural content of the lessons. Young teachers often studied in a foreign country, so they have been exposed to the target culture. (Diep) • "The academic discussions mainly occur after class hours in the department's office." (Minh) • "I appreciate sharing experiences with my colleagues across the department. For example, the interview with you (the researcher) right now can be considered a good opportunity for my PLD because it helps me to reconsider my teaching practice." (Le)	Not observable
5.3. Colleagues' evaluation is important academic advice but not pedagogically influential. (Minh, Trang, Huy, Diem, Chau)	• "I see peer evaluation as an important component because they have broad professional knowledge of the field. Therefore, their evaluation is more in-depth with high accuracy. I will receive it seriously to improve myself. However, usually peer evaluations have little or no impact on me." (Minh) • "I think if there is an evaluation from our colleagues, there should be a problem. Of course, when receiving many evaluations from my colleagues, I have to consider carefully. However, these evaluations have a certain influence on my psychology. I think we have to be critical about peer evaluations. In our culture, people often evaluate or want to evaluate others. And this sometimes makes me lose my self-confidence. Working in an environment which has a lot of knowledgeable teachers sometimes makes me hold-back." (Trang) • "I think colleagues' evaluation has a certain influence on my pedagogical knowledge and my teaching practice generally. Feedback from colleagues is a good channel for us to look back at ourselves. however, this evaluation is not the most important" (Huy) • "I welcome evaluations from colleagues. But in fact, there aren't such evaluations. But I don't think I will change my teaching styles." (Chau)	Not observable
5.4. Observing colleagues' lessons is pedagogically valuable. (Minh)	• Last year I observed other teachers' lessons to learn their teaching styles and experience. I noticed the way they utilised the teaching materials and how students engaged in learning tasks." (Minh)	Not observable

5.5. Doing research is an important part of teaching. (Thanh, Le, Trang)	• "I think teachers need to do research. Sometimes, it's not something very big, just an institutional publication or writing a blog to share experience. We can read articles to update knowledge." (Thanh) • "I feel that the university in Vietnam is focusing too much on teaching and not paying much attention to research. Research on classroom reality is practical." (Trang) • "I think action research is not very difficult. This helps improve the teaching quality." (Le)	Not observable
6. Practical beliefs about EFL teaching and learning		
6.1. Taking notes of classroom happenings is important. (Trang, Chau)	• "Often I take notes of students' mistakes in the lesson or what needs to be changed when I teach the next group of students." (Chau) • "Different groups of students have different learning styles and competence levels. That's why I often take notes of what can be changed or improved. I also take notes of students' mistakes so that I can give feedback later." (Trang)	This was evident in Trang's Speaking 2 class. Trang took notes while students, for example, reporting their interviews with peers about their choice of future jobs. Trang also took notes while students were engaging in other learning tasks. However, at the end of her Speaking 2 lesson, Trang did not tell students what the notes were about. The after-lesson short discussion, Trang said that she took notes of students' use of vocabulary and sentence structures to plan learning tasks in the next lesson. In Trang's Translation 1 lesson, she took notes while a group of students were presenting. After students' presentation, Trang commented that cultural features were important in choosing appropriate words and phrases for translation. Teacher's taking notes of classroom happenings was not evident in other observed lessons.
6.2. Thinking about classroom happenings while teaching to adjust approaches is important. (Chau, Diep)	Claim made without further examples and/or elaborations.	Not observable
6.3. Following the institutional guiding documents is a must. (All participants)	• "There's a unit description for each subject area and certainly responsible teachers must adhere to." (Ngoc) • "We must base our teaching on unit descriptions, at least 80% of the content. For the remaining 20%, I'll consult other sources relevant to the subject areas I'm teaching, which can be different from the content in these unit descriptions." (Diem) • "There's a prescribed coursebook for each subject area, for example, the Northstar series are used for language skills [listening, speaking, reading, and writing], which used to be used when I was a student. After years of use, this series is *not very* applicable. It's *not applicable* for summative assessments based on Vietnam's Foreign Language Competency Framework. There should be "thay đổi tí" (minor changes)." (Minh) • "There're teaching syllabi and coursebooks but ... [hesitant voice], I must really adapt. I take the content in these coursebooks and I adopt learning activities from other sources. It's "chán chết" (boring to death) to follow the Northstar series for the whole semester." (Trang) • "*Certainly*, we *must* follow the same coursebook. This is an institutional regulation and it's impossible not to comply. But I will follow about two thirds or three quarters [of the content]. The remaining [of the coursebook] can be adapted from other learning materials to prepare students for the exams. We *must* comply with that [the prescribed coursebook]. If not, "hẳn nói chết" (a central dialect which means that "We will be severely reprimanded by the management staff")." (Thanh)	The fieldnotes showed that all participants adapted the prescribed coursebook. Trang asked each student in her Speaking 2 lesson to interview other 6 students about their choice of future job instead of following the coursebook's instruction for a teacher-student question-answer warm-up session (Unit 2, NorthStar2 – Listening and Speaking). Participants also added learning tasks for students, for example, Diep spent the second period in her Writing 2 lesson to ask students to do a B1-CEFR-formatted exercise on sentence structure instead of finishing Unit 2 in coursebook (Northstar 2 – Reading and Writing). Similarly, Le, in his Writing 2 lesson, had students do an additional exercise about descriptive paragraph which was the prescribed content for the lesson on the observation day. Some participants did not teach the coursebook content that had been prescribed in the unit description for the subject areas. For example, Chau spent the whole time in her Listening 2 lesson on doing listening practice test instead of teaching Unit 5 as mandated in the unit description for Listening 2 subject.

	• "Both teachers and students *must* abide by [prescribed coursebook] because the content for the assessments are taken from mandated instructional materials. There're several teachers in charge of the same subject area. Therefore, if we don't [abide by], it's a bit "tách biệt" (isolated)." (Le)	
6.4. Teaching is role-modelling. (Minh, Ngoc, Chau, Le, Thanh, Diep)	As noted in 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.3., and 6.10.	As noted in 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.3., and 6.10.
6.5. Teacher is a "người lái đò". (Diem, Minh, Huy, Trang, Ngoc)	• "The teacher is a "người lái đò" because the objective of the teaching is to provide students with learning roadmap suitable for their levels." (Huy) • "The teacher must be a "người lái đò" responsible for providing students with academic advice and learning strategies." (Diem) • "Teaching a FL is an interactive activity in which the teacher is a "người lái đò" who guides students with suitable direction for their own learning so that in the end they can learn independently, free from teacher's guidance and having an appropriate approach to their own learning." (Minh) **Note: "người lái đò" literally means "ferryman". This is a metaphoric symbol for teachers in the Vietnamese contexts who lead the way for their students to knowledge.**	Not observable
6.6. Teacher's stories of personal learning and working experiences should be used as a pedagogical tool. (Diem, Diep, Trang, Chau, Le, Thanh, Ngoc, Huy)	• "The teacher's real-life experiential stories can make lessons effective. (Huy) • "I often tell students stories about our own mistakes so that they will not make the same mistakes." (Trang, Ngoc) • "I tell a lot of stories about my personal experiences associated with the learning content in the classroom. For example, when I teach listening skills, I often tell students about my own learning when I was a student. I tell them how I progressed in listening by dictation. Or I will tell them about the stories of volunteering in the international festival season [there is a festival season in her city every two years] to improve speaking skills. Most of the stories I tell in classes are related to the lesson content or my mistakes that I don't want my students to make in their learning or working." (Trang) • "I often share stories of my experiences, which can be learned from other students or colleagues, with my students during lesson hours. These stories can implicitly provide students with other perspectives which might be contrary to theirs." (Ngoc) • "I tell a lot of stories, especially those about my former students' or my own success or failure. I find that my students are really engaged, focused, and motivated every time they listen to such stories." (Le) • "Stories that are related to the learning content can motivate students in their learning." (Chau) • "I often tell students stories about my own English learning in the past." (Diep)	Teacher's stories of personal learning and working experiences were not evident in all the observed lessons.
6.7. The objective of teaching is to provide students with language knowledge, communicative and academic skills for further study and future employment. (All participants)	• "Content and linguistic knowledge such as phonetics and phonology should be taught, which equips students with systematic language learning, unlike fragmented learning at lower levels of study." (Trang) • "Students should be provided with target language knowledge and communicative skills so that they can use that language." (Ngoc) • "Teaching an FL is to create the opportunities in class so that students can gain language knowledge in simulated meaningful communication contexts. The teacher should provide learning tasks that are "gần gũi với" (similar to) daily communication encounters." (Chau) • "Students must be provided with knowledge [of language] for sustainable communication…. This is because learning is lifelong." (Le)	Equipping students with communicative skills or strategies was evident in the observed lessons. However, academic skills such as presentation skills (academic discourse) were only evident in Diep's and Huy's Speaking 5 lessons, and Trang's Translation 1 lesson where students had prepared the lesson content in groups for oral presentations in class. Other academic skills such as academic writing or critical thinking skills were not evident in the observed lessons. This might be due to the fact that most of the observed lessons were for the second year of study which was institutionally designed to

	• "Grammar and sentence structure are indispensable in any language lesson." (Minh) (This view was echoed by Chau, Diem, Diep.) • "Teaching is about leading students towards independent learning in the future." (Diep) (This view is echoed by Thanh.) • "Students should be determined about what to do after graduation. Therefore, teaching is directing students towards what they have chosen, for example becoming an English teacher." (Diem) (This view is echoed by Le.) **Note: No examples and/or elaboration of communicative and academic skills were provided in the interviews.**	equip students with basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The learning tasks in the observed lessons did not indicate a direct link to employment skills except for the task of job interview in Trang's Speaking 2 lesson.
6.8.	The objective of teaching is to prepare students for tests and/or exams. (Diem, Diep, Chau, Huy, Le, Ngoc, Thanh)	• "The remaining [of the coursebook] can be adapted from other learning materials to prepare students for the exams. We *must* comply with that [the prescribed coursebook]." (Thanh) • "Both teachers and students *must* abide by because the content for the assessments is taken from mandated instructional materials." (Le) • "The most important thing is learning attitude because this impacts both the engagement in learning activities and exam results. Therefore, the teacher needs to direct students towards this." (Diem) • "I think the greatest pressure is the end-of-term exams. The teacher should somehow prepare students so that they can obtain necessary knowledge and skills for these exams." (Chau) • "The content of language knowledge in the prescribed coursebook is not enough. I often provide students with extra practice exercises from TOEFL or IELTS to prepare them for exams." (Diep) (This view was echoed by Thanh, Ngoc)	It was evident in most of the observed lessons that a significant amount of time was reserved for test practice exercises. Chau spent the whole time in her Listening 2 lesson to prepare students for the B1-CEFR-formatted listening test. In Chau's Speaking 2 lesson, one period (about 45 minutes) was spent on preparing part of the B1-CEFR speaking test. Similarly, one period each in Minh's and Ngoc's Reading 2 lessons was reserved for preparing part of the B1-CEFR-formatted reading test. This was also the case for Diep's Writing 2 lesson where the teacher provided students with practice tests for the B1-CEFR-formatted writing test.
6.9.	Teacher's making mistakes is normal. (All participants)	• "If I make a spelling mistake, I'll ask my students to help me check it up in the dictionary. I don't feel ashamed. Vocabulary is immense so it's impossible for us to remember everything. However, I ensure myself that a mistake is made only once. Students often see us as *role models*, so our repeated mistakes will have a negative influence on students' learning. The fewer mistakes, the better." (Minh) • "I'm just a knowledge sharer. We can make mistakes anytime. Possibly, we can recognize our mistakes immediately, but often when I reflect on my lessons, I will. In the next lesson, I'll correct my mistake. I also make pronunciation mistakes." (Trang) • "I often make spelling mistakes. I usually ask students to help me check the dictionary. I don't think I have made other "lỗi chuyên môn" (professional mistakes)." (Chau) • "Usually they are spelling mistakes. Another challenge I often face in class is the sudden loss of vocabulary. "Sometimes my lecture is "lệch một chút" (a bit off track or deviated), I'll correct myself in the next lesson." (Diem) • If I recognize the mistakes during the lessons, I'll correct them immediately. Otherwise, I'll correct them in the next lesson. If what I said was "chưa chính xác" (not accurate), I would correct myself. What really matters is recognizing and correcting mistakes. However, basically, we need to "hạn chế" (minimize) our mistakes." (Ngoc)	Not evident in the observed lessons.
6.11.	Qualifications sometimes do not help with practical teaching.	• "I think qualifications don't necessarily result in good teaching. From my experience, PhD degree can upgrade research skills, but it somehow degrades the teaching capacity" (Huy) • "For me, qualifications are one thing; it is 'cách dạy' (teaching tactics) that matters" (Minh)	Not observable

(Huy, Minh, Chau, Thanh)	• "I have observed that many highly qualified teachers don't have appropriate 'cách dạy' (teaching tactics)" (Chau) (Thanh echoed this view.) • "Professional knowledge or qualification is one thing. "Cách truyền đạt" (conveying method) is another." (Thanh)	
6.12. Learning is for sustainable development. (Diem)	Claim made without specific examples/elaboration.	Not observable
6.13. Learning is making mistakes. (Diem, Diep, Huy, Le, Ngoc, Thanh, Minh)	• "We can motivate students by confirming that in learning an FL, making mistakes means learning is happening. This also helps ease the pressure in the classroom. Learning is a process and by saying that we can create a "dễ thở" (comfortable) learning environment." (Diem) • "Mistakes in learning are normal. Mistakes can be individually communicated via email, telephone or face-to-face. Correcting students' mistakes can be given in class like a sharing session when all students can learn from their mistakes together." (Minh) • "Mistakes made by students are inevitable both in writing and speaking. Usually I give collective feedback after the lessons. I write the mistakes on the board so that students can discuss and learn for themselves. I never judge my students just because of their mistakes. Both the teacher and students can learn from students' mistakes." (Trang)	Evident in all observed lessons. The analysis of students' mistakes was not the focus of this research. Therefore, types of students' mistakes were not noted in detail. However, the most common was language mistakes such as pronunciation and grammar.
6.14. Learning is to learn basic language knowledge such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, etc. (All participants)	• "Learning an FL is to form a habit from early days and consolidate what has been learned regularly. To some extent, it's to train a skill. Then grammar and vocabulary are learned, from the easiest to the most difficult." (Huy) • "The objective of learning an FL depends on the learning stages, basic and advanced. The basic stage is to improve grammar knowledge and communication skills." (Diem) • "Learning an FL is to learn both language knowledge and the target culture and all other aspects related to that language." (Trang) • "Learning an FL is to learn language knowledge and the target culture." (Thanh) • "Besides providing students with grammar knowledge, the teacher needs to equip them with cultural knowledge of the target language." (Diep)	Not observable
6.15. Learning is to pass the exams. (Diem, Diep, Chau, Ngoc, Thanh, Le)	• "The remaining [of the coursebook] can be adapted from other learning materials to prepare students for the exams." (Thanh) • "The content for the assessments is taken from mandated instructional materials." (Le) • "Sometimes I tell my students explicitly that they should do the exercises to prepare for the exams." (Chau) • "Learning attitude is very important because it can impact the results of the end-of-term exams. (Diem)	Evident in almost all observed lessons where a significant amount of class time was reserved to prepare for tests/exams.
6.16. Learning is to learn about the target culture. (Diem, Trang, Thanh, Le, Chau)	• "The objective of learning an FL depends on the learning stages, basic and advanced. The basic stage is to improve grammar knowledge and communication skills while the advanced stage focused on the target culture [English-speaking countries] which will help develop sustainable knowledge of English." (Diem) • "Learning an FL is to learn both language knowledge and the target culture and all other aspects related to that language. The target culture will be gradually absorbed. It's not merely about learning vocabulary." (Trang) • "Learning an FL is to learn language knowledge and the target culture." (Thanh)	The fieldnotes showed that most participants did not provide or explain a cultural feature in their lessons except for Trang who (in Translation 1 lesson) emphasised that cultural features were important in choosing appropriate vocabulary and Thanh (in Translation 1 lesson) who explain the appropriate way of using addressing system in Vietnamese culture, especially for political titles.

	• "Learning FL is essential for citizens of a country in the current globalization. Learning an FL is not only about learning the language features; it is about accessing ideologies, cultures, and science and technology to improve oneself in terms of both knowledge and psychology in the globalized context." (Le) • "Learning a FL is to learn both linguistic and cultural features of the target language." (Chau) Note: No specific examples/elaboration provided on what and how target culture is learnt.	
6.17. Learning is to compare it with your mother tongue. (Trang, Thanh)	• "Learning an FL is to learn language knowledge and the target culture. It is also beneficial because we can compare it with our mother tongue." (Thanh) • "Learning an FL is also about comparing with one's native language to find out the most suitable approach to learning that FL." (Trang)	Not evident in observed lessons
6.18. Learning is to prepare for a future job. (Diem, Chau, Diep, Thanh, Huy, Le)	"I think students are determined about their future job before they commence their university study. That's why they should learn for that." (Diem)	Not observable
6.19. Learning is to access science and technology. (Le)	Claim made without specific examples/elaboration.	Not observable
6.20. A positive attitude contributes to successful teaching and learning. (All participants)	• "Institutional discipline is imperative. I also pay close attention to students' positive learning attitude which is reflected through regular class attendance, active participation in class activities, and respect towards the teachers and peers. Those students with a positive learning attitude always receive teacher's recognition. Less able students with a positive learning attitude can still improve competency. I have to say that learning attitude is very important." (Diem) • "Both the teacher and students should hold a positive attitude towards teaching and learning. Students should "khổ luyện" (train rigorously). If the teacher is really engaged in the lesson, students will be more motivated and demonstrate active participation. Social encounters may have very negative impacts on our [teachers'] emotions, but these negative emotions shouldn't be imported into the classroom. The teacher should display a positive attitude towards their teaching in all cases, always smiling and motivating students to create a comfortable learning environment." (Minh) • "A good language learner shows great perseverance. Although learning doesn't mean "gạo bài" (rote learning), a learner must persevere because learning an FL requires a high level of vocabulary memorization. Without perseverance, one can't be successful in FL learning." (Trang) • "A good language learner should be persistent to learn vocabulary and grammar, and to listen to learn pronunciation." (Ngoc) • "A good language learner should be studious. They always practice using the language outside the classroom." (Chau)	The fieldnotes showed that all the participants took attendance, which institutionally counted for 10% of students' final grade of a subject area such as Speaking or Listening. The students in the observed lessons appeared to be hard working; they engaged excitedly in the assigned learning tasks both in and out of class (except for some students in Minh's Reading 2 lesson who appeared to be indifferent to the assigned learning task and students in Le's Writing 2 lesson who had not done the homework that was supposed to be used as an in-class learning task on the day of observation). The students in the observed lessons were seen to participate actively in the assigned learning tasks (pair or group work); they continued working even when the teacher asked them to stop (e.g., Trang's Speaking 2 lesson).

Data analysis sample

Data collection instrument	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes	Data sample
Teacher interviews	Genesis of beliefs about teaching	Motives for learning and teaching a FL	Motivated to be a teacher	• My father depicted a picture of becoming an English teacher when I was a little girl. (Diem) • I wanted to become an English teacher because my parents couldn't afford extra classes for my siblings. I had to teach them English. (Trang)
		Early access to a FL & familial apprenticeship of observation	Family members speak a FL	• My older brother is an English teacher. He encouraged me to become an English teacher. (Thanh) • My uncle played English songs by Westlife and I transcribed into Vietnamese to sing along. (Trang) • My sister spoke English to her American friends at home. I wished I could speak like them one day. (Diep) • My uncles and aunts spoke and taught me French when I was a little boy. My mother taught me English. (Le)
		Apprenticeship of observation	Schooling images and experiences	• When I was a university student, I looked at my young English teachers and saw something very attractive. I wished I would be like them one day. (Trang) • Compared to teachers of other subjects, English teachers have something very appealing inside. I wanted to become an English teacher because I love the language too. (Ngoc) • I used to observe my former teachers while in class because I was determined to become an English teacher. So, I wanted to learn from them. (Minh) • When I entered high school the traditional language teaching and learning was still there. Teachers followed the prescribed textbook in the classroom. The only inspiration for students to learn English was the teacher's good English pronunciation. There was not an environment for speaking English in the wider society. (Ngoc) • My learning English at high school was still very simple: rote learning with teacher's check-up. When it came to English lessons, students were called to the board and translate single words into English. Lessons focused on improving English grammar and vocabulary without evidence of spoken communication. Books and other learning resources were scarce. I still remembered the coursebook *English for Today*. Teachers were the primary source of knowledge. Learning English was exam-driven with multiple tests during the school year. (Thanh) • Even though self-study and group were promoted, the teaching at university was still *một chiều* [mono-direction – translation]. The teachers lectured and students passively received the knowledge. Books were secondary source of knowledge but were very scarce. (Diem) • My university study in the 1980s was a real struggle due to serious lack of learning materials and the environment for speaking English. Textbooks were very blurred on roneoed paper or hand-written. There were no cassette tapes for listening practice. Even though there were group work and whole class discussion, the teachers were still the primary source of knowledge. (Ngoc)
		Professional learning and development	Collaborative learning practice	• My teaching style is not influenced by anyone but for specialized knowledge (*chuyên môn*) I have to learn. I often have discussions with my colleagues, including those who used to be my former students, on cultural content of the lessons. Young teachers often studied in a foreign country, so they have been exposed to the target culture. (Diep) • The academic discussions mainly occur after class hours in the department's office. More formal are academic meetings within the specialized division. In the last semester, I also observed my colleagues' lessons from other specialized divisions. I learned how to teach and how students participated in class activities. Some teachers also observed my classes and gave me constructive feedback. And this helped me improve my teaching. (Minh) • Apart from seminars or workshops organized by the specialized divisions or the department, I appreciate sharing experiences with the colleagues across the department. For example, the interview with you (the researcher) right now can be considered a good opportunity for my PLD because it helps me to reconsider my teaching practice. (Le)

Beliefs about teaching and learning English	Objective of learning English	Learning language knowledge and target culture	• Learning a FL is learning language knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and fours language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). (Ngoc) • The objective of learning a FL is to enhance vocabulary of the target language. (Minh) • the advanced stage focused on the target culture [English-speaking countries] which will help develop sustainable knowledge of English. (Diem) • Learning a FL is to learn both language knowledge and the target culture and all other aspects related to that language. (Trang) • Learning a FL is not only about learning the language features; it is about accessing ideologies, cultures, and science and technology to improve oneself in terms of both knowledge and psychology in the globalized context. (Le)
		Learning for communication	• … for the purpose of communication with those people who speak that language. (Minh) • The basic stage is to improve grammar knowledge and communication skills. (Diem) • Purposes may be different, for study or travel, but the most common is to communicate with those who speak that language. (Chau)
		Learning for further study or future employment	• I often explicitly tell my students that learning [English] is to get a good result, hence a good job upon graduation. (Chau) • Learning a FL is to self-equip with a skill that is crucial for work and communication. It can be for other purposes such as studying abroad, working with foreign experts and professionals, or working in a foreign country. (Diep)
	Objective of teaching English	Teaching language knowledge and target culture	• Students should be provided with target language. (Ngoc) • Content and linguistic knowledge such as phonetics and phonology should be taught. (Diem) • Teaching a FL is equipping students not only with language knowledge and skills but also with the target culture, customs, and literature. In other words, the teacher must equip students with socio-cultural and political knowledge of the countries where the language is spoken. (Diep)
		Teaching for communication	• The teacher should create learning activities that are similar to real-life contexts of communication. (Chau) • Students must be provided with knowledge [of language], skills, and appropriate learning attitude so that they are able to maintain sustainable communication at workplace. (Le)
		Being a "người lái đò"	• The teacher organizes learning activities appropriately so that students can achieve optimal learning effectiveness. This requires the teacher to understand individual students. The more they understand their students, the more effective their lessons. The objective of the teaching is to provide students with learning roadmap suitable for their levels. (Huy) • The teacher must be responsible for providing students with academic advice and have classroom management strategies so that students have clear goals of their own FL learning. (Diem) • Teaching a FL is an interactive activity in which the teacher can guide students with suitable direction for their own learning so that in the end they can learn independently, free from teacher's guidance and having an appropriate approach to their own learning. (Minh)
Beliefs about effective learner	Personal characteristics / qualities	Diligence	• An effective language learner shows serious awareness of learning. (Diem) • They should be very self-disciplined in their own learning for the goal of long-term use of the target language. (Le) • An effective FL learner should be able to build a strong learning interest. They should be "khổ luyện" (rigorous training) and independent in learning, not dependent on the teacher for knowledge. They should know how to learn from others. (Minh)
		Association	• An effective language learner is often collaborative, and they are not hesitant in communication with others in the target language. (Chau)

		Inquisitiveness	• An effective language learner shows the passion for learning, which can be multi-faceted. I was so passionate for learning English that I started to learn by listening and imitating English songs. They should also be curious about knowledge from various sources. (Trang) • An effective language learner should be independent in learning from various sources, not only from the teacher. They need to maintain this [habit of learning] for a long time. (Le)
		Sociableness	• Another personality trait among effective language learners is confidence, showing little or no hesitance in communicating in the target language. Learning a FL is making mistakes. A language learner shouldn't be timid. (Minh) • Effective language learners are not afraid of making mistakes. They tend to be very confident in communication using what they have learned. This is good because the more one uses the language, the more they improve their skills. In my classes, those students who are timid or afraid of making mistakes are often less proficient. (Chau)
Beliefs about effective teacher	Personal characteristics / qualities	Diligence	• An effective language teacher can tolerate students' mistakes so that they can help students in learning. (Diem) • Just as an effective language learner, an effective language teacher should persevere. (Ngoc)
		Altruism	• An effective language teacher shows high responsibility, who pays more attention to their students' needs. (Diem) • … these characteristics are temporal. In the first years of my teaching, I thought a good language teacher was the one who was knowledgeable and had to show off this knowledgeability. After years of teaching experience, I have realized that an effective language teacher is the one who can create trust and confidence in the learners, ensuring the learners that they can rely on the teacher for learning. Therefore, trustworthiness is very important. (Huy)
		Inquisitiveness	• an effective FL teacher should be creative, from methodological approaches to teaching styles, which helps create more opportunities for students to expose to different learning resources. (Minh) • The teacher will "chế biến" (process) the lesson content. To be a good FL teacher, the teaching should be inquiry-based and search any available sources for their teaching. (Trang) • … demonstrates a strong passion for the language and for imparting language knowledge on to their students. They are willing to learn the new to diversify their teaching approaches which will benefit their students. (Ngoc)
		Sociableness	• An effective FL teacher is dynamic, meaning that they can create a dynamic learning environment. The lessons will be very monotonous if the learning is unidirectional with the teacher lecturing and without students' questions. (Minh) • A sense of humour is also important because it helps turn a boring lesson into an inspiring one. Yet, the funny stories should be relevant to the content taught. (Diem) • The more the teacher understands their students, the more effective the lessons are. An outgoing teacher can also trigger students' learning motivation. (Trang) • A sense of humour from the teacher can make lessons less stressful or tense. A very formal teaching style may not be a characteristic of a language lesson. (Thanh) • They should be extrovert, a psychologist who understands students' needs and knowledgeable about both the subject matter and social issues. (Trang)
	Good command of professional knowledge	Content and pedagogical knowledge	• Another characteristic of an effective language teacher is having sound professional knowledge which consists of both language knowledge and social knowledge. This knowledge will help the teacher play the role of knowledge sharer. (Trang) • An effective language teacher should have sound professional knowledge of teaching methods. An effective language teacher should also be technology competent, which helps to motivate students and create more learning opportunities outside the classroom. (Chau) • An effective language teacher must have sound professional knowledge and be well trained in FL teaching methods in general and English in particular. This knowledge should be regularly updated for a better teaching. (Le)

Beliefs about effective teaching	Tool focused	Well-structured lessons	• Effective teaching depends on specific language skills. In reading lessons, for example, there are pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Pre-reading focuses on guessing skill, whereas while-reading helps students improve long-term memory. (Diem) • In effective teaching, a new lesson should start with the consolidation of the old one. For English language learning, a moderate amount of knowledge should be introduced to avoid overload or overwhelming information. Normally, I'll provide students with a couple of foci to practice within a time limit and then consolidation is provided. Three stages in effective language learning include review, introduction of new content, and consolidation. (Huy) • The first step in the lesson is brainstorming which is followed by the controlled while-activities to build up the content that needs to obtain with teacher's assistance. The final step is for students to provide their own products. (Trang) • An effective lesson should start with students working in groups on certain tasks, followed by whole class sharing and discussion. The teacher will then provide further feedback. (Ngoc)
		Inclusion of ICT and social networks	• I prefer to have an Internet-connected computer in the classroom so that both teacher and students can have immediate access to available sources of information on the Internet. The lessons are more effective, and learning is direct. I also create a closed user group on Facebook for each group of students. We can discuss in this group. Generally, social networks are very useful for student learning with shared learning resources. (Minh) • I set up a Facebook group and post assignments. Those students who do the assignments will be given a bonus point for participation and continuous assessment. (Diep) • Social networks, if properly used, are very useful for learning. Students are more independent and take the initiative in learning. However, it would be better if teachers and the university provide students with academic advice because students may find it misleading when access online sources. In addition, there may be some students whose research ability is not high, meaning they can find it hard to search necessary information for their own learning. (Le)
	Rule focused	Incentive in teaching	• Those students who do well on exercises will be given a plus mark. Students will be less engaged or motivated if there are just test marks. (Minh) • I often give *ngoan* students bonus points for their active participation in class activities. You may call this incentive strategy. (Chau) • I tend to favour *nghe lời* (obedient) students by giving them good marks. (Le)
		Đức and *tài*	• *Đức* and *tài* are closely linked, the lack of either will lead to unsustainability of teaching. (Diem) • My older brother is still my role model who supports me professionally. The most important personality of his is *tâm*. He's always willing to help many students whom he doesn't teach. (Thanh)
		Reflection	• I always see a big difference between the first and the last group of students that I teach. The last is often better. That's why I often reflect on both the students and lessons to make lessons more effective. For the same speaking lesson, for example, the tasks may be different for different groups of students. (Chau) • Even though students are expected to work independently, we must help them. I must change my teaching method if the one I use is not effective. If students don't understand the lesson, I'm very sad and I have to change something for the next lesson. (FT7)
		Teaching is co-learning	• I'll describe an effective reading lesson. I often photo a reading text with questions that I've never done before. My students and I do the reading tasks at the same time, but I request myself to stop about 5 minutes earlier than my students. Then we both check against the answer keys and work together on our mistakes. Inevitably, we both make mistakes. If I provide incorrect answers where students get the correct answers, I'll ask them to explain their choices. We're both happy with this way of learning, which empowers student learning. The problem is not to be right or wrong, but what and how to learn from our own mistakes. (Diep)

		• An effective language teacher should be a co-learner in the classroom, "*hòa mình vào bài giảng*" (immerse oneself in the lesson and no longer taking the teacher's role). (Trang
Community expansion	University / community connection	• I'd like to see a close connection between universities and wider community. When I was in Australia, I saw many old people coming to read in the library. Later on, I knew that the university libraries are open for everyone. I thought should have the same model, which connected the university with wider community so that the university no longer stood alone. If standing alone, the university doesn't know how developed the society is. The fact that we still use the old learning resources for our students means that there isn't such a connection. We don't understand social needs. If there's such a connection, students know what to learn to serve society. We should also build connections with social enterprises. (Trang) • The most important factor in our teaching is understanding social needs. There should be a connection. (Le & Diep)
Student-centredness	Student active participation & cooperative / collaborative learning	• There are always individual work, pair work, and group work in my integrated lessons. These activities promote cooperative learning habits among students. This is because learning English is sharing, demonstrating, and negotiating. If a student doesn't have these characteristics, their learning can't be successful. Clinging to one's own knowledge or ideas doesn't help. (Diem) • Group work is mostly used in my classes because students are more engaged. If students work in group, they will feel more confident to share their ideas. (Ngoc) • I require students' active participation in class activities for continuous assessment. (Diep)

Interviewer: Good morning. My name's Viet and I'm doing my PhD at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. My research explores Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. This interview is for the purpose of my research. Before the interview, I would like to confirm that the content and information provided in the interview will be secured at the highest level. There will be no harm to your professional career, your reputation and dignity. The interview is audio-recorded. Do you agree to participate?	Interviewee: Yes, I do.
Interviewer: First of all, I would like to ask some personal information. Where were you born?	Interviewer: I was born in Beauty City and I have lived here for 51 years.
Interviewer: Please tell me more about your family.	Interviewee: My family has 6 members, my parents, my wife and I, my son and daughter. We live in the same home.
Interviewer: Is there any teacher in your family?	Interviewee: My father used to be a teacher. Before 1975.
Interviewer: What was his major?	Interviewee: So-called high school. He taught French as a second living language. He also taught citizen education (a compulsory subject in Vietnamese educational system - translator).

Interviewer: Are there other family members who are teachers beside him?	Interviewee: There are many if considering my big family. For example, my father's sister used to be a secondary teacher. She retired 3 years ago. She taught mathematics. Another aunt in a big southern Vietnam's city taught French and she retired early. My grandparent (the interviewee means *paternal* - Vietnamese people often talk about their paternal side as a result of male-inclined society - translator) has 12 children. Still another aunt taught French at a high school in another southern city. But she quitted her job.
Interviewer: When you were little, who influenced your study the most?	Interviewee: Actually, the main influence was from my family, my parents, my father. Each family member had a sort of influence on my study. My father had to go to a re-education camp (this is used in a political sense). He actually raised me. There was also influence from my uncles and aunts (the interviewee means *paternal side* again). My home used to be very big with the extended family living together. My aunts taught me French. I used to learn French, from Grade 1 to Grade 3, before the country's liberation.
Interviewer: So you got in touch with a foreign language a bit soon.	Interviewee: It was happy to learn a foreign language when I was little. The memory is still vivid in my mind because in the old days in the South it was like that ... French books. Although the South was then under the rule of the Americans, the Southern people, especially those from Hue city preferred French, more noble/aristocratic. Almost all my family members know French. My paternal grandfather died long ago, in 1997.
Interviewer: Was the contact with French formal?	Interviewee: When I was little, the contact happened within the family only. But I also attended French-governed school, a management school near a big church in Beauty City, studying with the nuns. At that time I was in Grade 1 so all was just babblement. For the French books, I asked my aunts to teach me, once or twice a week. I like it. It seems that I have an aptitude for foreign languages.
Interviewer: Where did you attend secondary and high schools?	Interviewee: In Beauty City.
Interviewer: At that time, did you think about following foreign	Interviewee: Actually, at that time I ...... If there was an inclination toward foreign languages, it was when I was completing Grade 8, at the beginning of Grade 9. I was the best in class regarding English and I was chosen for an English competition at the city level. I won the first prize and naturally ..... It can be said that I

languages or did you like another subject?	had an aptitude for foreign languages in my class but I was not studious.
Interviewer: Why did you change from French to English?	Interviewee: That is an interesting story because at that time the country was liberated but my father was in re-education camp. That was really interesting. I was far away from my father. I visited him once every two or three months. At that time, I liked French (the interviewee used 'ưa' - a local word in Beauty City expressing a strong desire of the speaker in daily conversational interactions). It was taught at two famous primary schools in the city. It is interesting to talk about foreign languages, the history is interesting. At that time (the interviewee used 'hồi đó' - another local word to show a nostalgic emotion), my father studied Russian when he was in the re-education camp. My mother visited him and told him about foreign languages. I still remember clearly (laughing). My father wrote a letter to me, asserting that either I would study English or Russian because he said he saw the future. French is interesting but, ..., (accepted voice), it has less use than English. I was really sad because I had dreamed of only studying at a school where French was taught. I studied at a famous secondary school.
Interviewer: So when you exactly changed to English?	Interviewee: It was not about change but about choice. That was when I began Grade 6.
Interviewer: How did you feel when you received your father's letter telling you to choose between Russian and English?	Interviewee: There was something like being thrown off. That is because there was something like self-orientation; I loved French, just like family tradition. And when I changed to study English I felt a bit worried and lost; I didn't seem to like it.
Interviewer: But you still obeyed your father to choose English as a foreign language to study?	Interviewee: Yes.
Interviewer: But how did you feel when you think back that time?	Interviewee: I felt right (comfortably laughing). I liked studying English. At the beginning, I felt like ... because I had known French, you got that? Just like A1 level now. When changing from French to English, I had a feeling of, ..., almost all people from the past feel like that; it is not gorgeous/noble. Although I was still little, I could feel that. I still didn't like it when changing to

	English, thinking just studying it for only 1 or 2 years, just like that. .
Interviewer: Why did you obey your father to choose to study English?	Interviewee: At that time I had to obey. Parents, right? Guiding their children. Today it is still like that, let alone in the old days, sometime in 1976, 1977.
Interviewer: How was it about studying English at school?	Interviewee: Well, I recounted that teachers taught in a very classic way, tapping on the table saying 'Repeat after me', Grades 6, 7, 8. There were texts. Books in the old days were written in a very funny way. I still keep these books. What is the beginning? The first page was phonetic symbols; you had to practice spelling and pronunciation first. There might be vocabulary. Then there was a text for reading comprehension or a conversation model. There were exercises on sentence patterns in Grades 6 and 7. The text for reading comprehension was also about sentence patterns. Before the reading text was an explanation on vocabulary. I remember that the first page of each unit had an exercise on pronunciation practice. For example, this unit has sounds like i, a, ơ. The students had to practice pronouncing the words that contain these sounds.
Interviewer: Did you feel that it was effective?	Interviewee: Looking back at that time, I feel in the old days … but it was effective at that time. Actually, now I think that it is too classic. It was engraved in my mind until my university study. I studied at the university in 1985. At that time I contacted the seemingly modern teaching and learning methods. The communicative approach was still unpopular. In 1985, two of my university teachers used Streameline (a very famous coursebook widely used in Vietnam then - translator). The trend was situational but this coursebook could be considered communicative to some extent. Even for other subjects. There was a subject of speech training, taught separately.
Interviewer: So teacher was the primary source of knowledge. Was there any other supporting sources?	Interviewee: No. There were none.
Interviewer: So how did you support your own study?	Interviewee: Actually I didn't really want to study until my father came home from the re-education camp. Some time in Grade 8 or Grade 9. In Grades 6 and 7 I just studied what the teacher provided in the class. If there was homework I would do it. If

	there was none, then let it be. Sometimes my mother tutored me English at home because she knows English.
Interviewer: You said you began your university study in 1985. Was learning English popular in Vietnam then?	Interviewee: It began to be popularised. I attended the gifted class from 1982 to 1985, the first gifted class majoring in English at a famous high school in the city. But English study at that time was still literary (*từ chương* in the interviewee's words; this indicates something too academic). There were mainly exercises on grammar and vocabulary and reading comprehension. There was no speaking lessons at all.
Interviewer: The study only occured in the class?	Interviewee: In the class. There was homework because my class was a gifted class. I also self-studied. I bought books to study. At that time it was so hard to find books. I remember there was only one bookshop that sold books on foreign languages. Books for English learning were written by Russian authors.
Interviewer: How about your classmates?	Interviewee: There was none in the classroom, at high school. The literary way of English learning and individual; there were no group work and pair work such as now. So there was not a notion of community learning.
Interviewer: Was there a change when you studied at the university?	Interviewee: There were changes regarding pedagogical methods. There were pair work and group work. There was a notion of self-study after class hours. In my class I was considered the best. There was group learning where classmates support each other. We studied (the interviewee used 'tập đọc' which actually means 'learn to read') together and speak English to each other. We also read books in English. During my university study, there was so-called communicative approach but it was not really popular. For writing we had a book by Alexander, a kind of practice book (the English exercise book by Alexander which was very popular in my university time as well which focuses on lexical aspects of English). However, it was mainly about reading comprehension and vocabulary. For speaking, we didn't have a chance to practise at home. We could speak English when we studied in our group. We spoke English when we had a cup of coffee (smiling). Bình (some friend of the interviewee), son of one of my university's teacher, and I studied in the same class at the university and we often speak English to each other. We just said something (the interviewee used 'nói khan' which means saying something in the ignorance of correctness or incorrectness) in English when we had a cup of coffee and came over to each other's house.

Interviewer: Were the principles or purposes of studying English at the university level clear to you?	Interviewee: Although I majored in education (the interviewee used 'sư phạm' which could be literally translated into English as 'pedagogy' or 'teacher training'. However, in the Vietnamese context, this means beyond that), I didn't really notice this (honest voice). This means I didn't notice the English for teaching. Until the first semester of the third was there a subject on 'sư phạm' (teacher training). There was nothing related to 'sư phạm' in the first or second year of the university study. When I was in the third year I studied teaching methods; however, it was too theoretical.
Interviewer: Was there anything during your university study that affected your teaching later on?	Interviewee: In fact it was all about skills … In the past I attended the gifted class so I could say I had studied all the grammatical points. In my view grammar and vocabulary are very important so I studied all at high school. I felt so relaxed with my university study. In general, English learning at the university at that time was easy for me. Therefore, at home, I read books to build up my vocabulary repertoire. What is still in my mind is the comfortable way of studying English at the university level, more relaxing than at high school. But I'm not really sure whether or not this way of studying is effective. I know all about grammar (confident voice); speaking and writing were more improved with more practice.
Interviewer: When did you start teaching?	Interviewee: In Autumn 1990 after my graduation. (the interviewee used the term 'ra trường ở lại' - a term with connotation that the speaker was proud of her/himself. This term also connotes that the speaker has an excellent academic background).
Interviewer: Was it difficult when you started teaching?	Interviewee: Of course. The thinking that if I know English I can teach English comfortably is completely wrong. Knowing and teaching are totally different. Competence is one thing; teaching is another thing. How to manage the class for example. It was really difficult for me in the first two years of my formal teaching, more difficult than later on. Upon my graduation, I taught non-English major classes such as classes of Mathematics, Physics, or Chemistry. On the one hand, students levels were very low so I needed more attempt, on the other, the class was too crowded to manage. That was really a big problem. How to have an attractive imparting of knowledge was a real difficulty for me.
Interviewer: After you experienced difficulties at early stages of your	Interviewee: yes, of course. I have been trying even though now I am in charge of literary or theoretical subjects such as linguistics or translation. Translation is literary, isn't it? For language skills, I

teaching, have you taken a look back for your own lessons?	think I am more skillful. My class management seems to be more proficient.
Interviewer: When you teach language skills …	Interviewee: I have fewer classes on language skills. For the last two years, I have tried to accept one group of speaking for me to feel refreshed. It is fresher than content subjects such as translation, linguistics, interpretation. I have more contact with my students, communicating with them, interacting with them, the level of interaction is higher and more specific. It is more interesting than teaching translation, interpretation or linguistics. Subjects such as linguistics are naturally slow-going (the interviewee used 'trầm trầm' which somehow means 'boring' in English). Moreover, the class is usually too crowded to organise interactive activities while for language skills classes, we have to organise interactive activities so it seems like we mix (used by the interviewee in the original) with our students. I feel something more inspiring.
Interviewer: Are there any institutional pressure in your teaching, for example, institutional regulations or curricula?	Interviewee: Regarding curricula, I think there is. For language skills the pressure is not heavy. For linguistic subjects, the pressure seems to be heavier (the original use is 'bó' which means 'more or less framed') because we have to follow the same curriculum and the same syllabus which are called materials. It is difficult for us to add other materials because there is one that has been chosen (the interviewee used 'quy định' which connotes that something has to be done by rules). Teachers are made sure to use this chosen teaching material, students study this material and the content of this material is used for summative tests. I or we use another material which offer a different lens to understand the same problem, students still feel different from the coursebook. For example, even if I would like my students to have a different understanding of the notions of suffix, prefix and morphology, I still can't add my own supporting materials because there might different explanation on the same thing. I just like to make my lessons more interesting (a bit far from the original but I don't know how to translate this idea. I should think more about this). But this is a big problem (the interviewee means that the supporting materials may have no use for students' summative tests which rely on the 'defined-in-advance' coursebook) as it seems to distract students.
Interviewer: Do you colleagues play any role	Interviewee: Yes, of course. I don't mention the teaching group (teachers who teach the same subjects; can be called sub-

in your teaching? How is your relationship with them?	division) or the division (under the department). For teaching groups such as discourse analysis or functional grammar, there are professional meetings where we discuss academic issues. In fact the meetings are regulational, all about how to achieve sync among teachers regarding the content to be taught, the content for the summative tests. All this is to avoid the gap in teaching among teachers. Teachers are required to teach what are supposed to be in the tests. It is a big problem if there is a content in the tests that was not taught to students. This is also true to exercise formats which are supposed to be in the tests. It is believed that this is to ensure fairness.
Interviewer: Have you ever been abroad?	Interviewee: I studied the Master course in English language teaching in an anglophone country for 2 years in the late 1990s. I did my PhD in another anglophone country for 3.5 years, majoring in language education.
Interviewer: How do these courses of study abroad affect your teaching?	Interviewee: Well (hesitant voice). They are naturally different. When I completed my Master study I felt more refreshed. I felt something new. It is always like that when you have just completed your study. There was more practice with the teaching of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), designing tests and other new concepts; they were new for me. I had never studied the concepts in testing such as validity and reliability, item discrimination. Thinking back about 7 or 8 years before my Master study, I had had no idea of validity, reliability, item discrimination, weighting, etc. So in the Master course, this knowledge was really valuable. Even for language skills, it seemed like I know more about the language acquisition process of the learners. It seemed like I became more knowledgeable. I became more aware of the stages the learners are in. I know more about second language acquisition.
Interviewer: And your PhD study later ….	Interviewee: PhD is (laughing) actually very philosophical in terms of teaching. It provide deeper understanding of teaching in general, for example, learners' points of view. My PhD study focused on language and culture in movies. In fact, to teach language and culture, …., so my philosophy of teaching; I had a broader view of the so-called leaners' knowledge of socio-cultural environment. Looking at the learners and the teaching at a higher level, also at curriculum management, teaching philosophy and teaching principles.

Interviewer: What is your personal view on effective teaching?	Interviewee: My personal view? It is rather difficult. In fact, for me the most important thing is practicality or authenticity. We have to know who the learners are and how to adapt regulations or policies to suit learners. For example, according to regulations, we need to cover a certain amount of content but we also need to consider our learners and the outcome (the interviewee means the summative tests). Also, we need to take into consideration what learners study for. Are they teaching or doing something else? However it can be assumed that education students will become teachers and those majoring in translation and interpretation will become translators and interpreters, right? So, what we do in our classes is to orient our students to these. Exercises or our lectures should relate to their career in the future. To do so, there should be effective learning activities. The organisation of learning activities is of great significance. What kinds of exercises to include in class? What are the outcomes of each lesson?
Interviewer: Thank you very much for participating in this interview. I would like to repeat that the content of the interview will be secured at the highest level. It does no harm to your professional career, reputation and dignity. Thank you.	

Appendix 13. Approved ethics application

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Phone   0-4-463 6028
Email   judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Viet Nguyen
FROM	Dr Judith Loveridge, Convenor, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	17 October 2018
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	**Ethics Approval: number 0000025994** "A Cultural Historical Activity Theory Analysis of Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices: A Case Study of Vietnamese University In-service English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) Teachers"

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval is valid for three years. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards

Judith Loveridge

Convenor, Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Project title: An exploration of language teachers' beliefs and practices: A case study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS
(A Vietnamese language version of this sheet is attached)

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?
My name is Nguyen Viet and I am a doctoral student in School of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. This research project is work towards my PhD dissertation.

What is the aim of the project?
This project will explore Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in order to contribute to future policy and practice in EFL teaching.
This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee reference number: 0000025994.

How can you help?
You have been invited to participate because you are an EFL teacher at a University in Vietnam and the information you provide is of great value for my research. I hope to recruit 12 EFL teachers for my research. I am wanting to gain an in-depth understanding of what Vietnamese teachers believe and do when teaching English as a foreign language.

If you agree to take part I will interview you in Vietnamese at a place of your convenience. I will ask you questions about your background as a language learner, a language teacher and what you believe about teaching and learning English. Each interview will take about an hour and a half. I will audio record the interviews with your permission and the interviews will be transcribed either by me or a transcriber who has to sign the transcribing confidentiality agreement. You can choose to not answer any question or stop an interview at any time, without giving a reason. There will be two rounds of interview. The information from the interviews is solely for use in this research project and is to help me gain an in-depth knowledge of EFL teachers and why they teach in certain ways.

The observations will come between the interviews (round one and round two) which aim to better understand the context of EFL teaching. The observations will inform the interviews and take place in any class you are teaching with teaching and learning materials of your choice. The observations will not be for the purpose of judging your teaching performance. Each observation will be about one to two periods (50 to 100) minutes and there are 2 or 3 observations. I would also like your permission to collect, analyse and include as prompts for the interviews teaching and course materials such as textbooks, in-class handouts, assessments, summary feedback addendum of your students' assignments, and portfolios.

You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any time before 28 February 2019. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

What will happen to the information you give?
This research is confidential. This means that the researchers named below will be aware of your identity but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation. No information from the interviews and class observations will cause a face loss on your part.

Only my supervisors, the transcriber (who will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement) and I will read the notes or transcript of the interviews. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 31 December 2022.

What will the project produce?
The information from my research will be used in my PhD dissertation, academic publications, and conferences.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?
You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:
- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study before 28 February 2019;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview recording;
- receive a copy of your interview transcript;
- read over and comment on the full transcript of your interview;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?
If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either me or my supervisor:

Student:
Name: Nguyen Viet
University email address: viet.nguyen@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Dr. Stephanie Doyle
Role: Primary supervisor
School: Education
Phone: +64-4-4636657
stephanie.doyle@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information
If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Thank you

Appendix 15. Information sheet for students

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Project title: An exploration of language teachers' beliefs and practices: A case study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS
(The information sheet has been translated into Vietnamese and the translated form is attached)

Who am I?
My name is Nguyen Viet and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. This research project is work towards my PhD dissertation.

What is the aim of the project?
This project will explore Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about EFL teaching in order to contribute to future policy and practice.
This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee reference number 0000025994

How can you help?
You can help me by allowing me to observe the teaching and learning activities that take place in your class. Your teacher is one of twelve teachers who have volunteered to participate in this research. I will be observing teaching and learning activities. I am wanting to get an understanding of how English is being taught and learnt in your classroom. I am not assessing either your teacher's teaching or your learning performance. I am interested in what is happening in the classroom, such as the tasks students are asked to do, what resources are being used. I will take some notes on what I observe.

I would possibly copy your teacher's summary feedback addendum on the hard copies of your submitted assignments with any possible identifiers removed.

What will happen to the information obtained during observations?
The information obtained during the observations will be kept confidential. Your teacher, your classmates and yourself will not be identified in any reports of the research.

What will the project produce?
The information from my research will be used in my PhD dissertation, academic publications, and conferences.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?
If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either me or my supervisor:

Student:	**Supervisor:**
Name: Nguyen Viet	Name: Dr. Stephanie Doyle
University email address: viet.nguyen@vuw.ac.nz	Role: Primary supervisor
	School: Education
	Phone: +64-4-4636657
	stephanie.doyle@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information
If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.
Thank you

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Project title: An exploration of language teachers' beliefs and practices: A case study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION (FOR TEACHERS)
(The consent to interview and observation has been translated into Vietnamese is attached)

This consent form will be held for 5 years.

Researcher: Nguyen Viet, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to take part in audio recorded interviews.

- I agree that observations may be conducted in my classes 3 times for the purpose of research.

- I agree to share samples of my summary feedback addendum on students' assignments with students' consent.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from this study at any point before 28 February 2019, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.

- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed by 31 December 2022.

- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, the supervisor and the transcriber.

- I understand that the results will be used for a PhD dissertation and academic publications and/or presented to conferences.

- My name will not be used in reports, nor will any information that would identify me.

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Project title: An exploration of language teachers' beliefs and practices: A case study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers

CONSENT TO OBSERVATION AND COPY OF TEACHER'S SUMMARY FEEDBACK ADDENDUM ON ASSIGNMENTS (FOR STUDENTS)
(The consent has been translated into Vietnamese is attached)

This consent form will be held for 5 years.

Researcher: Nguyen Viet, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to Nguyen Viet's observing and taking notes of classroom activities that I am involved in.

- I agree to Mr. Nguyen Viet's copying of my teacher's summary feedback addendum on my marked assignments for the purpose of research.

I understand that:

- Any information related to me, if any, will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.

- I understand that the results will be used for a PhD dissertation and academic publications and/or presented to conferences.

- My name will not be used in reports, nor will any information that would identify me.

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix 18. CEFR's versus CEFR-VN's global scale

		CEFR Levels and Descriptors	CEFR-VN Levels and Descriptors (Translation)		
Proficient user	C2	• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	6	Advanced
	C1	• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. • Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	• Can understand and reognise implicit meaning of longer and demanding texts. • Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	5	
Independent user	B2	• Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	• Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and naturality with native speakers. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	4	Intermediate
	B1	• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	• Can understand the main points of clear standard text or speech on familiar matters encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations when in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	3	
Basic user	A2	• Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	• Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to basic communication needs (e.g. personal and family information, shopping, asking for directions, job). • Can share information about basic and familiar everyday topics. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	2	Elementary
	A1	• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. • Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. • Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	• Can understand, use familiar everyday structures, vocabulary for specific communication needs. • Can introduce him/herself and others and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, family members, or friends. • Can interact in a simple way provided the interlocutor speaks slowly, clearly and prepared to help.	1	

Source: - https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale
        - http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=1&_page=3&mode=detail&document_id=172297

Appendix 19. Learning outcomes for Level 6 of Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (Graduate programmes)

General category	Specific outcomes
Knowledge	• a sound practical knowledge and intensive theoretical domain knowledge • basic knowledge of social sciences, political science, and laws • knowledge of ICT • planning, organizing, and supervising processes of a specific activity • managing and administering professional activities
Skills	• solving complex problems • leadership and entrepreneurial skills to self-employ and employ others • critical skills and skills to employ alternative solutions in unbounded and changeable circumstances • work evaluation including evaluation of others' work • communicating problems and solutions to colleagues and transferring knowledge and skills • FL skill at level 3/6 according to the Vietnamese Foreign Language Competency Framework
Level of independence and responsibility	• independent working or teamwork in changeable working conditions, being responsible for individual and group work • guiding and supervising other people's work • being self-directed in making professional decisions and defending personal views • being able to plan, coordinate, and administer different resources and evaluate and improve work effectiveness

Appendix 20. Appropriation of prescribed coursebooks in observed lessons

	Subject	Modification (Using the prescribed coursebook content yet with a different type of learning activity) (14 modifications in total)	Addition (Using an extra learning activity to support the prescribed content) (6 additions in total)	Adherence (Keeping intact the content and/or type of learning activity in the prescribed coursebook) (5 adherences in total)	Substitution (Not using both the content and types of learning activity in the prescribed coursebook) (10 substitutions in total)
Listening 2	Prescribed content and/or activity type				1. Chau's lesson in week 5 Unit 5 – NorthStar 2 – Listening and Speaking, pp. 73-88
	In class				2 periods (90 minutes) spent on B1-CEFR-formatted listening practice test (Task 1 + 2: multiple choice; Task 3: gap fill; Task 4: True-False)
Speaking 2	Prescribed content and/or activity type	1. Trang's lesson's task 1, week 2 Teacher-student question-answer warm-up activity about future job (Unit 1, NorthStar 2 – Listening and Speaking, p. 10)	1. Trang's lesson's task 2, week 2 Pairs orally reported their interviews after completing Task 1 (Interviewing six peers about their choices of future jobs)	1. Trang's lesson's task 3, week 2 Students roleplayed a job interview (Unit 1, NorthStar 2 – Listening and Speaking, p. 15)	2. Chau's lesson's task 3, week 4 (whole period 2) Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Listening and Speaking, pp. 104-105
	In class	Students interviewed 6 peers about their choices of future jobs			Exam practice; B1-CEFR; pairs of students described a set of pictures about reading books (reading online or hard copies) then group discussing the topic: "Reading e-books is more convenient than reading print books. Do you agree with this idea?"
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	2. Trang's lesson's task 4, week 2 Interview between a job counsellor and a job seeker (Unit 1, NorthStar 2 – Listening and Speaking, p. 15)			
	In class	Groups discussed the characteristics of some jobs			
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	3. Chau's lesson's task 1, week 4 Groups discussed what is important when choosing to play a game (e.g., "It's exciting.") (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Listening and Speaking, p. 90)			
	In class	Pairs elicited the adjectives related to games			
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	4. Chau's lesson's task 2, week 4 For-against team debate on video games (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Listening and Speaking, p. 104)			

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	In class	Groups discussed the positive and negative aspects of games			
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**5. Ngoc's lesson's task 1, week 1** Individual reading for main ideas and details (Unit 3, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Making money, pp. 50-51)			3. Huy's lesson, week 5 Justice (Unit 4 – NorthStar 2 – Reading and Writing, pp. 74-80)
	In class	Pairs identified main ideas of the coursebook text (Unit 3, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Making money, p. 50)	**2. Diem's lesson's task 1, week 6** Pair feedback on the homework (vocabulary exercise on the topic of living in the city or country) in supporting the in-class reading task about city and country.	**2. Diem's lesson's task 2, week 6** Individual reading task (Unit 2, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, pp. 26-28)	2 periods (90 minutes) spent on B1-CEFR-formatted reading practice test (Task 1: 9-question multiple-choice gap-fill of a short text; Task 2: 7 matching statements with 3 correct people briefly described; Task 3: 7-question multiple-choice based on a short text focusing on identifying main ideas and supporting details)
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**6. Ngoc's lesson's task 2, week 1** Reading for main ideas and details (Unit 3, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Making money, pp. 50-51)	**3. Diem's lesson's task 2, week 6** Individual reading task (Unit 2, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, pp. 26-28)		4. Le's lesson, week 5 Justice (Unit 4 – NorthStar 2 – Reading and Writing, pp. 74-80)
Reading 2	In class	Pairs did 2 exercises on pages 50 & 51 in coursebook (reading for main ideas and reading for details)	Retaining the same prescribed content and activity type for the first part of task 2 and group discussion on the answers in the second part	**3. Thanh's lesson's task 1, week 6** Individual doing exercise on main ideas (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Serious fun, pp. 117-118)	2 periods (90 minutes) spent on B1-CEFR-formatted reading practice test (Task 1: 5-question multiple-choice focusing on interpreting notices or messages; Task 2: matching 5 people with correct tourist destinations they wanted to visit (8 short descriptions of destinations); task 3: 10 true-false questions based on a short text; task 4: 5 multiple choice questions based on a short text; task 5: 10 multiple choice gap-fill questions based on a short text)
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**7. Minh's lesson's task a, week 5** Individual doing exercises on main idea and details (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, pp. 117-118)	**4. Thanh's lesson's task 3, week 6** Individual doing exercise on details (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Serious fun, pp. 117-118)		5. Minh's lesson, week 5 Individual doing exercises on main idea and details (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, pp. 117-118)
	In class	Pair doing exercises on main idea and details (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, pp. 117-118)	Pairs wrote a short summary (5 or 6 sentences) of the coursebook text		Individual doing part of a B1-CEFR practice reading test (Task 2: 5-question multiple choice exercise based on a short text; task 3: 10-question gap-fill exercise based on a short text)
	Prescribed content	**8. Thanh's lesson's task 2, week 6**			6. Ngoc's lesson in week 1 Reading for main ideas and details (Unit 3, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Making money, pp. 50-55)

	and/or activity type	Individual reading and doing exercise on details (Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - *Serious fun*, pp. 117-118)			
	In class	Prescribed content kept intact with pair work			- **Task 3**: groups did B1-CEFR reading practice test and matched 5 people who are looking for college courses with the correct courses briefly described (8 descriptions) - **Task 4**: individual doing 10-question true-false exercise based on a short text about travel
	Prescribed content and/or activity type				**7. Thanh's lesson's task 4, week 6** Unit 6, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - *Serious fun*, pp. 113-122)
	In class				(Whole period of 45 minutes) Individual doing reading practice test B1-CEFR (task 1: 5-question multiple choice focusing on interpreting notices or messages; task 2: matching 5 people with correct descriptions of a guitar factory they want to visit; (8 short descriptions); task 3: 10 true-false questions based on a short text; task 4: 5 multiple choice questions based on a short text; task 5: 10 multiple choice gap-fill questions based on a short text)
Writing 2	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**9. Diem's lesson's task 2, week 7** Individual writing a descriptive paragraph about a place they visited (Unit 2 - NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40)	-		**8. Diep's lesson in week 2** Individuals described a place they visited (Unit 2, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40)
	In class	Group writing a descriptive paragraph about a place they visited then peer checking in groups	**5. Diem's lesson's task 1, week 7** Peer checking of homework (individual short paragraph about who they want to be in future) to support the prescribed content of describing job characteristics (Unit 2 - NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40).		Doing part of a B1-CEFR writing test (**Task 2**: individual writing (gap-fill sentence structure with 5 questions, teacher distributed handouts of the exercise); **Task 3**: group working (writing an email replying a friend's email in 100 words)
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**10. Diep's lesson's task 1, week 2** Individual described a place they visited (Unit 2, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40)			

	In class	Whole class relay writing: first sentence provided by the teacher: "I still remembered the first day I came to Beauty City to study."	**6. Le's lesson's task 1, week 6** Groups rearranged scrambled sentences of a descriptive paragraph about a tourist destination to support the prescribed task about descriptive paragraph writing about a place students visited (Unit 2 - NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40).		
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**11. Le's lesson's task 2, week 6** Individuals wrote a descriptive paragraph about a place they visited (Unit 2 - NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing, p. 40)			
	In class	Pairs wrote a short descriptive paragraph about a place they visited			
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**12. Ngoc's lesson's task 1, week 2** Individual writing about fake products (Unit 3, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - Making money, pp, 64-68)			
	In class	Teacher eliciting vocabulary and ideas related to fake products (characteristics, price, buyers, economic & social consequences), students wrote on board their vocabulary and ideas, then pairs wrote a paragraph about fake products (150-200 words); peer checking followed			
	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**13. Ngoc's lesson's task 2, week 2** Individual paragraph writing about a place they visited (Unit 2, NorthStar 2 - Reading and Writing - p. 40)			
	In class	Teacher writing "summer vacation" on board, students wrote relevant sentences on board and individually wrote a short paragraph about summer vacation, peer feedback followed.			

				4. Thanh's lesson, week 7	9. Trang's lesson, week 5
Translation 1	Prescribed content and/or activity type			Not clearly stated in the unit description for Translation 1 subject	Not clearly stated in the unit description for Translation 1 subject
	In class			Group translation of one English text (political topic) on page 59 and one Vietnamese text (social issues) on page 88 of course material	A group of students (selected by teacher at the start of semester and required to work throughout semester) presented the translation versions of two self-chosen texts (English-Vietnamese about friendship and Vietnamese-English about life habits); other students asked questions after presentation; teacher showed her suggested translation versions on PowerPoint screen and explained
	Prescribed content and/or activity type				**10. Minh's lesson, week 6** Not clearly stated in the unit description for Translation 1 subject
	In class				Pairs transslated teacher-chosen texts (English-Vietnamese translation about global warming and Vietnamese-English about music)
Speaking 5 (Public Speaking)	Prescribed content and/or activity type	**14. Diep's lesson, week 3** Teacher lecturing theoretical points of public speaking		**5. Huy's lesson's, week 4** Teacher-chosen group of students delivering their group presentation on a self-chosen topic approved by teacher at the start of semester.	
	In class	Two groups of students delivered a presentation on techniques for oral presentation (1st group presenting "Outline plan and structure of an oral presentation" and 2nd group presenting "Delivery of your presentation") (Students were asked to work in groups throughout semester and delivered two group presentations, one on a theoretical point of public speaking and the other on a topic of their choice)		(the whole period of 45 minutes) a group of students delivering their oral presentation on a self-chosen topic (Benefits of smiles)	

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Appendix 21. Feedback provision in the observed lessons

Type of feedback provision	Listening 2	Speaking 2	Reading 2	Writing 2	Translation 1	Speaking 5 (Public speaking)
Individual peer checking			• Diem's Reading 2 lesson's task one (individual feedback on peer's vocabulary homework)	• Diem's Writing 2 lesson's task one (homework on paragraph writing about future job) • Diem's Writing 2 lesson's task two (in-class paragraph writing about a place students visited)		
Peer checking in pair			• Le's Reading 2 lesson's task one (a B1-CEFR-formatted 5-question multiple choice exercise focusing on interpreting short notices and messages and an exercise with matching five people with correct tourist destinations they wanted to visit)	• Ngoc's Writing 2 lesson's task one (peer checking on a pair paragraph writing about fake products) • Le's Writing 2 lesson's homework (peer checking on pair paragraph writing about a place students visited)		
Peer checking in group			• Diem's Reading 2 lesson's task two (coursebook reading exercise on main ideas and supporting details)			
Teacher's checking with random individual students			• Minh's Reading 2 lesson's task two (a B1-CEFR-formatted 5-question multiple choice exercise based on a short text) and task three (a B1-CEFR-formatted 10-question gap-fill exercise based on a short text) • Ngoc's Reading 2 lesson's task three (a B1-CEFR-formatted exercise on matching 5 people looking for college with the correct briefly described college courses) • Thanh's Reading 2 lesson's task one (a coursebook reading exercise to identify main ideas) • Huy's Reading 2 lesson's task one (b1-CEFR-formatted 9-question multiple choice gap-fill exercise based on a short text)	• Diep's Writing 2 lesson's task two (B1-CEFR-formatted gap-fill exercise on sentence structure)		
Teacher's checking with pairs			• Minh's Reading 2 lesson's task one (teacher asking pairs of students to explain their answers to a coursebook reading exercise on main ideas and supporting details)		• Minh's Translation 1 lesson's task one (English-Vietnamese pair translation exercise on global warming)	
Teacher's checking with groups			• Le's Reading 2 lesson's task two (teacher asking groups of students to justify their answers on a B1-CEFR-formatted true-false, a multiple choice, and a gap-fill exercise based on short texts)	• Le's Writing 2 lesson's task one (group work on rearranging scrambled sentences of a descriptive paragraph about a visit to a tourist destination)	• Thanh's Translation 1 lesson's tasks one and two (teacher providing feedback after groups of students reading aloud their suggested translation sentences of a short English text on politics and writing their suggested translation sentences of a short Vietnamese text on politics)	
Whole class	• Chau's Listening 2 lesson (teacher checking answers with whole class and discussing the ambiguity of one question in a seven-question picture-prompted multiple choice listening exercise based on short monologues or conversations)					
Feedback form						• Huy's Speaking 5 lesson (feedback was provided through a pre-designed evaluation form)
Handouts of answer keys or comments provided			• Le's Reading 2 lesson's task one (handouts of answer keys delivered after students completed peer checking in pairs) • Ngoc's Reading 2 lesson's task four (a B1-CEFR-formatted 10-question true-false exercise based on a short text – teacher distributing handouts of answer keys and asking students to explain their incorrect answers, if any) • Huy's Reading 2 lesson's task two (a B1-CEFR-formatted exercise with matching seven statements with three correct people firefly described) and task three (a B1-CEFR-formatted 7-question multiple choice exercise based on a short text focusing on identifying main ideas and supporting details)		• Thanh's Translation 1 lesson's task two (teacher delivering handouts of suggested translation version of a short Vietnamese text) • Minh's Translation 1 lesson's task two (teacher showing suggested translation version of a short Vietnamese text on music on the PowerPoint screen) • Trang's Translation 1 lesson (teacher showing suggested translation versions of a Vietnamese text on life habits and a short English text on friendship on the PowerPoint screen after students presented their group translation work in class)	• Diep's Speaking 5 lesson (teacher's oral comments provided after students completed their group presentations in class)
Delayed feedback			• Thanh's Reading 2 lesson's task four (teacher collected students' completed B1-CEFR-formatted practice test and told students that she would provide feedback in the next lesson with them)	• Diep's Writing 2 lesson's task one (pair editing of a whole-class relay descriptive paragraph writing with teacher's elicitation: "I still remember the first day I came to Beauty City to study.") and task three (group email writing in reply to a friend's email)		
No feedback provision		• Chau's and Trang's Speaking 2 lessons				

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BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO   CỘNG HOÀ XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

ĐỊNH DẠNG ĐỀ THI ĐÁNH GIÁ NĂNG LỰC SỬ DỤNG TIẾNG ANH
từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5 theo Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam
(Ban hành kèm theo Quyết định số: 729/QĐ-BGDĐT
ngày 11 tháng 3 năm 2015 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo)

I. CẤU TRÚC ĐỀ THI

Kỹ năng thi	Mục đích	Thời gian	Số câu hỏi/nhiệm vụ bài thi	Dạng câu hỏi/nhiệm vụ bài thi
Nghe	Kiểm tra các tiểu kĩ năng Nghe khác nhau, có độ khó từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5: nghe thông tin chi tiết, nghe hiểu thông tin chính, nghe hiểu ý kiến, mục đích của người nói và suy ra từ thông tin trong bài.	Khoảng 40 phút, bao gồm thời gian chuyển các phương án đã chọn sang phiếu trả lời.	3 phần, 35 câu hỏi nhiều lựa chọn	Thí sinh nghe các đoạn trao đổi ngắn, hướng dẫn, thông báo, các đoạn hội thoại và các bài nói chuyện, bài giảng, sau đó trả lời câu hỏi nhiều lựa chọn đã in sẵn trong đề thi.
Đọc	Kiểm tra các tiểu kĩ năng Đọc khác nhau, có độ khó từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5: đọc hiểu thông tin chi tiết, đọc hiểu ý chính, đọc hiểu ý kiến, thái độ của tác giả, suy ra từ thông tin trong bài và đoán nghĩa của từ trong văn cảnh.	60 phút, bao gồm thời gian chuyển các phương án đã chọn sang phiếu trả lời.	4 bài đọc, 40 câu hỏi nhiều lựa chọn	Thí sinh đọc 4 văn bản về các vấn đề khác nhau, độ khó của văn bản tương đương bậc 3-5 với tổng số từ dao động từ 1900-2050 từ. Thí sinh trả lời các câu hỏi nhiều lựa chọn sau mỗi bài đọc.
Viết	Kiểm tra kĩ năng Viết tương tác và Viết luận (viết sản sinh).	60 phút	2 bài viết	Bài 1: Viết một bức thư/ thư điện tử có độ dài khoảng 120 từ. Bài 1 chiếm 1/3 tổng số điểm của bài thi Viết. Bài 2: Thí sinh viết một bài luận khoảng 250 từ về một chủ đề cho sẵn, sử dụng lí do và ví dụ cụ thể để minh họa cho các lập luận. Bài 2 chiếm 2/3 tổng số điểm của bài thi Viết.

Nói	Kiểm tra các kĩ năng Nói khác nhau: tương tác, thảo luận và trình bày một vấn đề.	12 phút	3 phần	Phần 1: *Tương tác xã hội* Thí sinh trả lời 3-6 câu hỏi về 2 chủ đề khác nhau. Phần 2: *Thảo luận giải pháp* Thí sinh được cung cấp một tình huống và 3 giải pháp đề xuất. Thí sinh phải đưa ra ý kiến về giải pháp tốt nhất trong 3 giải pháp được đưa ra và phản biện các giải pháp còn lại. Phần 3: *Phát triển chủ đề* Thí sinh nói về một chủ đề cho sẵn, có thể sử dụng các ý được cung cấp sẵn hoặc tự phát triển ý của riêng mình. Phần 3 kết thúc với một số câu hỏi thảo luận về chủ đề trên.

II. QUY ĐỊNH VỀ QUY ĐỔI ĐIỂM THI SANG CÁC BẬC NĂNG LỰC
1. Cách tính điểm thi
- Mỗi kỹ năng thi: Nghe, Đọc, Viết và Nói được đánh giá trên thang điểm từ 0 đến 10, làm tròn đến 0,5 điểm.
- Điểm trung bình của 4 kỹ năng, làm tròn đến 0,5 điểm, được sử dụng để xác định bậc năng lực sử dụng tiếng Anh.
2. Bảng quy đổi điểm thi sang các bậc năng lực

Điểm trung bình	Bậc năng lực	Mô tả tổng quát
Dưới 4,0	**Không xét**	Không xét khi sử dụng định dạng đề thi này.
4,0 – 5,5	**3**	Có thể hiểu được các ý chính của một đoạn văn hay bài phát biểu chuẩn mực về câu từ, rõ ràng về các chủ đề quen thuộc hay gặp trong công việc, học tập, giải trí, v.v... Có thể xử lí hầu hết các tình huống xảy ra lúc đi lại tại khu vực có sử dụng tiếng Anh. Có thể viết văn bản đơn giản liên quan đến các chủ đề quen thuộc hoặc cá nhân quan tâm. Có thể mô tả được những trải nghiệm, sự kiện, mơ ước, hi vọng, hoài bão và có thể trình bày ngắn gọn các lí do, giải thích cho ý kiến và kế hoạch của mình.

6,0 – 8,0	4	Có thể hiểu ý chính của một văn bản phức tạp về các chủ đề cụ thể và trừu tượng, kể cả những trao đổi kĩ thuật thuộc lĩnh vực chuyên môn của bản thân. Có thể giao tiếp ở mức độ trôi chảy, tự nhiên đạt đến mức các giao tiếp thường xuyên này với người bản ngữ không gây khó khăn cho cả hai bên. Có thể viết được các văn bản rõ ràng, chi tiết về nhiều chủ đề khác nhau và có thể giải thích quan điểm của mình về một vấn đề có tính thời sự, nêu ra được những ưu điểm, nhược điểm của các phương án lựa chọn khác nhau.
8,5 – 10	5	Có thể hiểu nhiều loại văn bản khó, dài, và nhận biết được hàm ý. Có thể diễn đạt lưu loát, tức thì, và không thể hiện rõ rệt việc phải tìm từ ngữ diễn đạt. Có thể sử dụng ngôn ngữ linh hoạt và hiệu quả phục vụ các mục đích xã hội, học thuật và chuyên môn. Có thể viết được các văn bản rõ ràng, chặt chẽ, chi tiết về các chủ đề phức tạp, thể hiện khả năng sử dụng tốt các kiểu tổ chức văn bản, liên từ và các phương tiện liên kết.

KT. BỘ TRƯỞNG
THỨ TRƯỞNG

Nguyễn Vinh Hiển