Teaching pragmatics in English as a Foreign Language at a Vietnamese university: Teachers' perceptions, curricular content, and classroom practices

Ngoc Minh Vu

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Teachers' perceptions, English as a Foreign Language, English as a lingua franca, teaching English at a university in Vietnam, teaching pragmatics, curricular content.

Abstract

Pragmatic competence is an essential component in communicative competence (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Canale, 1983). Therefore, teaching pragmatic knowledge plays an important role in a foreign language curriculum, particularly in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, there exists a lack of literature about the teaching of pragmatics with little empirical research on teachers' perceptions and classroom practices at the tertiary level in Vietnam.

Informed by key constructs of three theories of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934), cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes, 2004; 2011; 2012; Kecskes & Romero-Trillo, 2013; Wierzbicka, 2003), and critical approach to language teaching (Kachru, 1992a; 1992b; 1997; 2006; Kirkpatrick, 1995; 2006; 2011b; Pennycook, 1994; 1999), this case study of a Vietnamese university attempts to investigate teachers' perceptions of pragmatics, their pragmatic teaching, and pragmatic content presented in textbooks and the curriculum.

Methods of data collection included questionnaire survey, interviews, focus group, classroom observations, and document analysis. Major findings include:

(a)   teachers' understanding of pragmatic knowledge and its teaching varied, although all of them recognised the vital importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge in enhancing EFL students' communicative competence;

(b)   the way teachers taught pragmatic knowledge was influenced by how they learned pragmatics and their perceptions of pragmatics;

(c)   there was a dearth of pragmatic knowledge presented in the analysed textbook; and

(d)   teachers relied mostly on textbooks to teach pragmatics and encountered difficulties in teaching pragmatics because of their lack of pragmatic competence as well as methods to teach it.

The implications of the above are considered and recommendations are made regarding teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching, approaches to teaching pragmatics in particular and teaching EFL in general in a Vietnamese university or a similar context, teacher training and development, and designing materials and tasks from the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CCP	Cross-cultural pragmatics
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CP	Cooperative Principle
DCT	Discourse completion test
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for specific purposes
IC	Intercultural communication
IFID	illocutionary force indicating device
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MCQ	Multiple-choice questionnaire
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam
PP	Politeness Principle
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
US	United States of America

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

I. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree;

II. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

III. the thesis does not exceed the word length for this degree;

IV. no part of this work has been used for the award of another degree;

V. this thesis meets the *University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research*.

Signature: _____

Ngoc Minh Vu

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x

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Chapter 1 Introduction

As a lecturer at a university in Vietnam, I remembered one of my students once said to me "Bye, Ngoc!" with a native-like accent after a conversation with me. That student had learned from one of her American teachers that she could use first names when addressing her teachers because American teachers preferred it that way. However, she was not fully aware of how I felt about being addressed by my first name. It was a feeling of disrespect and even annoyance, although I tried to restrain my feelings and appreciate the fact that she spoke with a native-like English accent. This story expresses the complexity of language and carries a message of the importance of using language appropriately, which means using the right language at the right time, in the right context and, most of the time, it involves some cultural knowledge. That Vietnamese student seemed to forget that in Vietnamese culture, teachers are respected and, thus, she was not expected to address them by their first names.

Using language appropriately does not mean mere correct phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, but involves pragmatic knowledge or, to be more specific, cultural knowledge to avoid misunderstandings or communication breakdowns, as shown in the abovementioned example. Misunderstandings caused by grammatical mistakes are more tolerated than those rooted in different assumptions (Hyde, 1998). This raises an issue at the language pedagogy level, which is more than grammatical or structural accuracy. The complexity is more pronounced in the Vietnamese context, where English is taught as a foreign language.

Therefore, teaching pragmatics (that is, teaching students how to use language appropriately) has become an important and urgent issue. It is obvious that classroom instruction needs to involve the teaching and learning of pragmatics, which includes knowledge and skills, as well as the process of how pragmatic knowledge is being taught to learners of English in a foreign language environment.

This study systematically investigates teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their pragmatic teaching at a university in Vietnam. The detailed examination of pragmatic

teaching at a tertiary institution is situated in the broad context of English language education at all three levels in the Vietnamese education system.

1.1 Context of teaching and learning English in Vietnam

English is the dominant language in the world (Bamgbose, 2001; Llurda, 2004; McKay, 2002; Phillipson, 1992) and is considered to be a global lingua franca (Kirkpatrick, 2006; 2011b; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995). In Vietnam, English has gained the status of being the most important foreign language. English language education has had a considerable influence on language planning and policy and has grown rapidly in terms of domains of use (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013). For example, Decision No. 1400/QD-TTg issued by the Prime Minister of Vietnam stipulates that "the foreign languages taught in institutions of the national education system are English and some other languages" (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2). According to a report by the government presented at the sixth session of the National Assembly XI in December 2004, English is the foreign language that Vietnam needs to focus on in implementing strategies for teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system (Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET), 2008).

At present, English instruction is provided at all levels of education in Vietnam. The importance of teaching English is also shown in a scheme issued by MOET about teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system for the period 2008 to 2020 (MOET, 2008). This ambitious project aims to ensure that all secondary school graduates are able to communicate effectively in English by 2020. This initiative includes implementation of a series of strategies, such as teaching English at a younger age, increasing instruction time, training and retraining teachers of English, teaching mathematics and other subjects in English, and developing a new set of textbooks. This scheme states the time devoted to teaching English and the required proficiency for each level, which are summarised in the following table.

Table 1.1 **Number of periods for instruction and required proficiency for graduates**

Level		No. of periods for instruction One period=45 minutes	Required proficiency for graduates
Primary (Years 3, 4, 5)		410	Level 1
Secondary	Lower secondary (Years 6, 7, 8, 9)	410	Level 2
	Upper secondary (Years 10, 11, 12)	315	Level 3
Tertiary		150 + 75 for ESP	At least Level 3

Source: MOET (2008; 2014)

As shown in Table 1.1, primary students are to be taught for four periods per week for 35 weeks per year in Years 3, 4, and 5, totalling 410 periods. Primary school leavers are to achieve Level 1 specified in the Framework for the Assessment of Foreign Language Competence (MOET, 2014). Lower secondary students are to study a total of 410 periods in four years and are expected to reach Level 2. Higher secondary students receive 315 periods of instruction and need to meet language requirements for Level 3 by the time that they finish high school. Non-language majors study English for at least 150 periods, together with about 75 periods for English for specific purposes (ESP) in their four years of tertiary education and are required to achieve at least Level 3 before they graduate.

On 24 January 2014, MOET issued Circular No. 01/2014/TT-BGDDT regarding the six-level framework for the assessment of foreign language competence used in Vietnam (MOET, 2014). This framework, developed from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division, 2001) and from the framework of reference for the assessment of English used in several countries, is divided into Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, which are further broken up into Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. This framework is compatible with CEFR. Specifically, Level 1 is equal to A1, Level 2 is equal to A2, Level 3 is equal to B1, Level 4 is equal to B2, Level 5 is equal to C1 and Level 6 is equal to C2. The general description of the six levels is actually the Vietnamese equivalent of the six levels of language proficiency described in the CEFR (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division, 2001, p. 24). The description of the six levels is presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2   Six Levels in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything that is 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.
	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 about complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text of 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 about a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint regarding a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input about familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text about topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (for example, very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate simply and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information about familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	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 or does. Can interact in a simple way, provided that the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: Council of Europe Modern Languages Division (2001, p. 24)

This framework also describes in detail the requirements for the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, as well as vocabulary, grammatical and pragmatic knowledge. The issue of the framework shows that MOET is aware of the need to assess students' ability to use language, rather than their knowledge about the language. If this framework is successfully implemented and measures students' proficiencies, it can be considered to be a breakthrough in evaluating language competence and can eventually improve the quality of instruction and students' performances. Sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 below provide up-to-date information about teaching and learning English at the three levels in the national education system.

1.1.1   Primary level

In 2003, MOET announced a policy decision to make English an elective subject from Year 3 at the primary level (MOET, 2003). According to this decision, the objectives of teaching English as an elective subject include:

(a)   shaping skills to help pupils to communicate in simple and basic English using the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with a focus on listening and speaking;

(b)   providing pupils with a basic knowledge of English, and the people and culture of English-speaking countries; and

(c)   helping pupils to have positive attitudes to English and developing the knowledge of and love for the Vietnamese language through teaching English.

MOET seemed to be interested in developing both skills and knowledge of English for primary pupils, as well as helping them to relate to the Vietnamese language when learning English. This English curriculum for primary schools was previously taught for a total of 210 periods in Years 3, 4, and 5 (MOET, 2003).

Allocation of periods for teaching and learning English at the primary level almost doubled according to a recent document issued by MOET (2008). From the academic year 2010/2011, foreign language education became obligatory from Year 3 to about 20% of the number of Year 3 pupils; in the year 2015/2016, this will be expected to increase to about 70% and it will be 100% in the academic year 2018/2019 (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2008).

A document showed that until 2008, 32.2% of elementary schools in Vietnam had English teaching programmes (MOET, 2008). According to a report released in 2005, there were 927,697 primary students studying English as an elective subject in 25 big cities and provinces in Vietnam (Thai, 2005, as cited in Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). By now this number must be much higher because in the academic year 2015/2016 English will be a compulsory subject for approximately 70% of primary students, given the fact that there were 7.02 million

pupils in 15,172 primary schools in Vietnam in the academic year 2009/2010 (UNESCO, 2011).

1.1.2   Secondary level

English also plays an important role in teaching and learning foreign languages in Vietnam at the secondary level. According to Do (2000), more than 73% of secondary students studied English as their first foreign language. A survey in 2005 showed that 99.1% of all lower secondary schools teach English (Loc, 2005, as cited in Nguyen, 2011a). Statistics from MOET (2006, cited in Ton & Pham, 2010) showed that 67% of students in lower secondary schools and 86% in upper secondary schools spent at least three hours per week learning English. The findings and statistics from the three abovementioned sources confirm the dominance of English, in comparison to other foreign languages. From the academic year 2000/2001, MOET introduced a new curriculum and set of textbooks to teach English from Year 6 to Year 12 (MOET, 2008). Students in Years 6, 7, 8, and 9 now study English for a total of 420 periods and are required to reach Level 2 in the Framework for the Assessment of Foreign Language Competence, while those in Years 10, 11, and 12 are taught for 315 periods and need to achieve Level 3 (MOET, 2008; 2014).

1.1.3   Tertiary level

At the tertiary level, it is mandatory for all students to choose a foreign language to study. Students majoring in language are required to study another foreign language besides the language they major in. Official statistics showed that 93% of students who do not major in a foreign language study English, while 85% of language majors choose English (MOET, 2008). These figures are reflected in different studies of teaching and learning English: Do's (2000) study showed that more than 97% studied English at the tertiary level, while another source showed that 90% decided to study English as their foreign language (Le, 2007). Similarly, Hoang (2013) found that approximately 94% of undergraduates and 92% of graduates studied English as a subject among the five foreign languages nationally recognised at the tertiary level (Chinese, English, French, German, and Russian). Obviously,

English has become the first choice as a foreign language to study at higher educational institutions in Vietnam.

Unlike in the elementary and secondary levels, so far, there has not been a set of English textbooks for tertiary students. This gives tertiary institutions flexibility, but also creates difficulty for them in choosing the appropriate textbooks. Non-language majors study English for at least 150 periods, together with about 75 periods for ESP in their four years of tertiary education, and are required to achieve at least Level 3 before they graduate (MOET, 2008; 2014). Language majors in colleges need 600 to 1,050 periods of instruction and are expected to reach Level 4.5, whereas those in universities study English for 900 to 1,350 periods and are supposed to meet the requirements of Level 5 (MOET, 2008; 2014).

In Vietnam nowadays, there is an urgent need to learn English to be able to communicate effectively, as a good command of English can give graduates a chance to work in foreign companies, as well as in the hospitality and tourism industries. It is also a pre-requisite to studying abroad. People are motivated to learn English, not only for career advancement and opportunities to study overseas, but also for cultural knowledge. A study of 641 students in 15 universities and colleges in Hanoi, Hue, Da Nang, Da Lat, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho showed that nearly 92% studied English to gain opportunities for better jobs and that more than 57% studied English to gain pursue studies, while more than 67% wanted to understand Western culture and values (Do, 2000). A decision signed by the Prime Minister of Vietnam states that an ability to use foreign languages (mainly English) is one of the requirements in recruiting government officers and staff (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2008).

1.2 Research about teaching English and pragmatics in Vietnam

To gain a better understanding of the contexts of teaching English as a Foreign Language and English pragmatics in Vietnam, it is then necessary to review studies in this area that have been conducted in Vietnam about Vietnamese learners of English.

Utsumi and Doan (2009) examined the teaching methods and practices used in English language teaching in a study covering five public universities across Vietnam. Different data sources from 178 teachers and 110 students included focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations. The key results were: (1) teachers reported that traditional practices were still in use in all the five universities, although teaching practices showed a movement to more communicative methods and approaches; (2) students, on the other hand, reported that teachers used mainly traditional methods and they did not show agreement in the switch to more communicative approaches; and (3) all groups yielded similar findings about challenges to teaching and learning English, which included teaching and learning practices, resources and facilities, workload, and policy. Utsumi and Doan (2009) suggested improvements to resources and facilities, teaching practices, university programmes, policies and institutional assistance, and teacher development.

To gain insights into what teachers and students think about teaching and learning English, curriculum design, and foreign language policies, Nguyen (2011b) conducted a case-study research at Nha Trang University, a public university in the centre of Vietnam. The data were obtained from documents, observations, and interviews of 22 participants including eight teachers of English, 10 students, and four university administrators. It was found that (1) the traditional model of education still prevailed; (2) teachers still adopted traditional methods in the English classroom; and (3) there was discontinuity or inconsistency of English training programmes in the education systems.

It was suggested that teachers switch from traditional approaches to learner-centred ones and rethink the power relations between teachers and students. In terms of curriculum design, curriculum writers should pool their expertise for the development of a set of English curricula with consistency and continuity across all three levels of education: primary, secondary, and tertiary. It was also suggested that good-quality English textbooks at the tertiary level should be developed in line with those for primary and secondary levels.

These two studies both identified constraints in teaching EFL in Vietnam. The principal constraints were found in teaching methods, resources and facilities for teaching, and

8

teacher training. Others included problems in English language teaching policies, curricula, and instructional materials. Among these limitations, teaching methods, teacher training, English teaching curriculum, and development of teaching materials are closely related to the Vietnamese EFL teachers and can be improved by them. All of these problems are related to the present study and will be discussed later in the thesis. As an example, there are currently no English textbooks written for tertiary students in Vietnam. This study will suggest a number of implications drawn from empirical evidence from the study regarding writing English textbooks suitable for university students.

Apart from the constraints, studies of teaching English in general and pragmatics in particular in Vietnam are concerned with the effects of instruction. Le (2006), in a study carried out at Hue College of Education, examined the effects of teaching communication strategies to Vietnamese students. The subjects included a teacher and two groups of four first-year students who majored in English. They were recruited before the intervention class through the use of an oral test and a speaking lesson in which Group A used communication strategies, whereas group B did not show any strategies. The students received instruction for 90 minutes per week over eight weeks about four communication strategies: approximation, all-purpose words, circumlocution, and fillers. Data collection was conducted for 15 weeks including both the instructional time and the regular class time of the speaking course. The researcher assessed the effectiveness of the strategy instruction by observing the students' performance in different settings and by interviewing one student from each group and the teacher.

The findings revealed that both groups made use of the strategies previously introduced to them in all of the settings. In the tour guide episode, however, group A showed that they were more willing to communicate with English-speaking tourists than group B. The data from the interviews also recorded the positive effects of the strategy teaching. It was suggested that teaching communication strategies might boost learners' fluency in language use. Despite the small sample, which could have affected the reliability of the results, the study explored an area not much researched in Vietnamese tertiary education.

In another study, Nguyen, Pham, and Pham (2012) adopted a quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of explicit and implicit form-focused instruction about the development of the speech act of constructive criticism. The participants were 69 pre-service EFL teachers of English at a teacher training college in Vietnam, divided into three groups: control, explicit, and implicit. The two treatment groups received a 45-minute session of instruction every week over 10 weeks. The pre-test was administered at the beginning of session 1 and the post-test, at the end of session 10; the delayed post-test, given only to the two instructional groups, was conducted in week 15. The explicit group was given awareness-raising activities, explicit metapragmatic explanation, and correction of pragmatic and grammatical errors, while the implicit group engaged in input enhancement activities, communicative tasks, and recast activities. Performance of the three groups was compared based on the results of the pre-test and the post-test, including a DCT, a role play, and an oral peer feedback task.

Data showed that both intervention groups achieved significant improvements in the post-test, outdoing the control group. The delayed post-test showed that the two treatment groups also retained their improvement. The explicit group, however, outperformed the implicit group considerably in all measures. It was concluded that constructive criticism, a speech act that is both linguistically and pragmatically complex, can be taught using both types of form-focused instruction.

The multiple sources of data collection employed in this study helped to ensure data reliability and validity. However, the fact that the two treatment groups were taught by two different teachers may have affected the results of the study.

Unlike Nguyen et al.'s (2012) study about the impacts of explicit and implicit teaching, Nguyen, Pham, and Pham (2015) explored the effects of input enhancement and recasts on the pragmatic development of a group of Vietnamese EFL learners, specifically their use of constructive criticism during peer review tasks. The aim of the study was to find out whether implicit instruction facilitates various aspects of pragmatic development, including learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, as well as their frequency of use of internal and external modifiers in their criticism. Another aim was to investigate both the immediate

10

and delayed effects of the instruction. The participants were 41 pre-service EFL teachers in their third year at a teacher training institution in Vietnam, divided into two groups: treatment and control.

Pragmatic instruction was given for approximately seven hours over a period of 10 weeks, during which the participants were provided with visually enhanced input and recasts of both pragmatic and grammatical errors. Their performance was assessed by a pre-test and a post-test with a delayed post-test after five weeks through the use of a DCT, a role-play, and an oral peer-feedback task. The findings showed that a combination of the two implicit techniques, namely input enhancement and recasts, can improve learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. The durable effects of implicit pragmatic instruction on the learners' pragmatic learning, in terms of appropriacy and accuracy, as well as external modifiers, were confirmed. However, the effects of pragmatic input on their performance of internal modifiers did not last long.

The study shows an alternative way to provide pragmatic instruction, that is, it is possible and effective to use input enhancement and recasts, giving the teacher more choices in terms of methodology. It also shows that implicit instruction is effective in developing pragmatic competence for learners.

Nguyen, Do, Nguyen, and Pham (2015) investigated the effects of giving corrective feedback on students' production and recognition of pragmatically appropriate email requests. The participants were 64 female pre-service EFL teachers in their first year of English major, divided into three groups: control, meta-pragmatic feedback, and direct feedback. Both of the treatment groups received metapragmatic pre-instruction for a total of six hours over four weeks. The students' performance was assessed with a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test.

The instruction consisted of three main elements: consciousness-raising, metapragmatic explanation, and communicative practice. The treatment groups were provided with the same instruction and used identical materials, but received different types of corrective feedback (CF). One group received direct feedback (DF), that is, they received the

correct/suggested answer without explanation for the correction. The other was given metapragmatic feedback (MF), that is, they received comments/questions relating to the nature of the mistake without the correct/suggested answer. The control group did not receive the same metapragmatic pre-instruction as the treatment groups and did not receive corrective feedback about their performance either, but they received metapragmatic instruction relating to requests in everyday and work-related contexts.

The students' email requests were collected by means of a DCT consisting of three request scenarios. A multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) with two components was used to collect data on students' pragmatic awareness. First, the students rated sample email requests with respect to the directness of the requests, the appropriateness of the requests, and the appropriateness of the overall emails. Then they needed to write down explanations of their rating of the email samples.

The findings indicated that the treatment groups outperformed the control group in the productive task, but no significant difference between the two groups was found. However, the MF group performed significantly better than the DF group and the control group in the recognition task. On the whole, the main findings of this study showed the benefits of providing CF in improving L2 pragmatic knowledge as well as the different effects that the two types of CF had on different aspects of pragmatic competence.

This study showed the effects of both explicit and implicit pragmatic instruction. While the combination of both quantitative and qualitative elements in the MCQ was expected to produce more comprehensive data, the use of a DCT did not generate natural data. This DCT-produced data together with the gender-biased sample may have affected the overall validity and reliability of the study.

While Le's (2006) study demonstrated the effects of direct teaching on communication strategies, Nguyen, Pham, and Pham (2015) showed that implicit teaching is effective, and both Nguyen et al. (2012) and Nguyen, Do, Nguyen, and Pham (2015) found the benefits of both explicit and implicit instruction in developing learners' competence in the production of constructive criticism and email requests.

12

These studies showed the importance of instruction in language use (Le, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2012, Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2015; Nguyen, Do, Nguyen, & Pham, 2015) and called for the necessity to revise the curriculum as well as textbooks and teaching materials and to reconsider appropriate teaching methods and practices (Nguyen, 2011b; Utsumi & Doan, 2009). These are currently central issues in teaching English in Vietnam. However, it is not known which teaching methods and practices are appropriate in teaching pragmatic knowledge to Vietnamese university EFL students.

As shown in this chapter, the studies reviewed either examined teaching EFL at the tertiary level in Vietnam and its challenges (Nguyen, 2011b; Utsumi & Doan, 2009) or the effect of pragmatic instruction over a period of time to particular groups of learners (Le, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2012; Nguyen, Do, Nguyen, & Pham, 2015; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2015). None of the studies investigated how pragmatics has been taught in the English language curriculum at the tertiary level in Vietnam. This is the niche this study expects to fill. The aim of the present research is to find out how teachers are teaching pragmatic knowledge at the tertiary level and then to propose an alternative framework for teaching pragmatics. Issues of textbook and curriculum design are also central focuses of this study and will be elaborated later in the thesis.

1.3 Challenges to the teaching and learning of English in Vietnam

There are several challenges to teaching and learning English in Vietnam. Besides physical constraints, such as class size and lack of teaching facilities, there are challenges coming from the curriculum structure or language teacher competency. First is the lack of qualified teachers (Hoang, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2011a; Nguyen, 2011a; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). According to Kirkpatrick (2011a), only 28 out of the 250 English teachers tested in a trial project in which the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) was used achieved a score of more than 500, which is the minimum required by universities in which English is as the medium of instruction. Another source revealed that when 500 primary and secondary

teachers in Hue took tests administered by the British Council, only 20% achieved B2 in CEFR (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division, 2001) or higher (Parks, 2011).

The second challenge arises from the fact that traditional grammar-translation methods of teaching are still pervasive in Vietnam (Le & Barnard, 2009; Nguyen, 2011a; Nguyen, 2011b; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004; Utsumi & Doan, 2009). To be specific, studies undertaken at various universities in Vietnam by Nguyen (2011b) and Utsumi and Doan (2009) showed that traditional teaching methods still prevail, despite a slight movement to more communicative approaches. Teachers of EFL in Vietnam still seem to stick to traditional teaching methods because they still think these approaches are suitable with Vietnamese students of English. However, these traditional methods do not provide learners with an authentic learning environment. Without a change in teachers' perceptions and thinking, it would be hard to adopt approaches that focus on developing communicative competence and particularly pragmatic competence for Vietnamese EFL learners.

The third challenge is that the curriculum is examination-oriented with a focus on teaching grammatical knowledge, rather than developing communicative competence (Denham, 1992). This was echoed by Pham (1999), who argues that examination-driven teaching and traditional teaching methods result in students who may have excellent scores in examinations, but are not able to use English to communicate effectively in everyday situations. There have been efforts to advocate teaching English communicatively, which has been shown in the design of textbook tasks and activities. However, examinations are not testing students' communicative competence. Listening and speaking skills are not assessed. Therefore, teachers are under pressure to provide students with knowledge so that they are able to pass examinations. Consequently, the development of communicative competence for students has been neglected. It seems that the present approaches and methods do not afford opportunities for Vietnamese learners of English to develop communicative competence, particularly pragmatic competence for effective communication.

Despite spending from four to seven years learning English, many students are not able to use English to communicate appropriately in speaking and writing. According to Doan (2006, as cited in Nguyen, 2011b) Vietnamese students' competence in English is the lowest of the

14

countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. A majority of students, even university graduates, master grammatical features and acquire a great deal of vocabulary and pass all of their exams, but they can hardly communicate in English.

Set against this broad context, this study has been designed to gather data for a detailed examination with a view to developing insights into how pragmatics has been taught at the tertiary level in Vietnam. The details of this empirical research will be further described in terms of its design, purpose, research questions, and significance.

1.4 This empirical research

This research is a case study conducted at a medium-sized public university in Vietnam. At the time when the data were collected, there were 24 full-time English teachers and seven visiting teachers, including teachers from other educational institutions in the city and from other faculties and offices in the university, excluding two American teachers. These teachers give English instruction to approximately 2,000 students per academic year. This university provides English instruction to both English majors and non-English majors.

This research investigates teachers' perceptions and pragmatic teaching at this university. The findings from this study were not intended to make a generalisation for other universities and colleges in Vietnam; they do, however, point out useful lessons in pragmatic teaching, teacher development, and any improvements to textbooks and materials.

1.5 Research problems

As mentioned earlier, there have been a number of issues related to the teaching and learning of EFL in Vietnam. This study is concerned with issues specifically related to teaching pragmatics, i.e., teaching students how to use English appropriately. The focus is on how university teachers think about pragmatic teaching and how they teach pragmatic knowledge to university students who do not study English as a major subject. This is of particular importance because university students need to have a good command of English so that they can be successful in their future careers as well as their pursuit of overseas

studies. Tertiary students are considered to be those who need English-using skills urgently. However, their English proficiency, particularly their pragmatic knowledge has been far below society's and their own expectations.

1.6 Purpose of the research

As mentioned previously, Vietnamese learners are not effective at communicating in English because they are not taught how to use the language. For successful communication, learners need pragmatic understanding and competence. Bachman (1989; 1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996; 2010) proposed a theoretical framework of communicative language ability. The authors divide communicative language ability into language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological skills. Under the umbrella of language competence are organisational and pragmatic competencies (see 3.2.4.5 for more details).

The framework clearly maps the various aspects of language teaching that are of equal importance in the development of linguistic and pragmatic competence. However, it seems that learners of English, even those who major in English at Vietnamese universities, lack pragmatic knowledge and competence because this essential component seems to be ignored or does not seem to be given adequate attention in language teaching programmes and curricula in Vietnam. In addition, it is not known whether teachers are adequately equipped with a knowledge of pragmatics and the skills needed to transfer their understanding to their students.

This study aims to investigate how teachers perceive pragmatics and how pragmatics has been taught at a university in Vietnam, domains that seem to be much overlooked in the process of curricular design and classroom instruction. Another aim is to see if there is sufficient pragmatic knowledge in textbooks, and if the development of pragmatic ability is given attention in the English curricula and various documents issued by MOET.

1.7   Research questions

The research design was a qualitative case study of teaching pragmatics to Vietnamese university students framed from three theoretical perspectives: symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934), cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes, 2004; 2011; 2012; LoCastro, 2003; Wierzbicka, 2003), and critical approach to language teaching (Kachru, 1992a; 1992b; 1997; 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2011b; Pennycook, 1994; 1999). This study attempted to answer the overarching question: How is English pragmatics perceived and taught in a Vietnamese university? Specifically, the study will examine the following sub-questions.

Research question 1:   *What are teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching?*

One aim of this study is to understand the way in which teachers perceive pragmatics and pragmatic knowledge. It is of particular importance to understand teachers' perceptions because their observations inform and shape their teaching methods and classroom practice. According to Jia, Eslami, and Burlbaw (2006), it is extremely helpful to understand teachers' perceptions because teachers are deeply engaged in teaching and learning processes and they apply educational principles and theories to their teaching practices. Borg's (2003; 2015) review of research about language teacher cognition identified the relationship between cognition and prior language learning experience, cognition and teacher education, and cognition and classroom practice. In Vietnam's context, limited research regarding teachers' perceptions has been documented. For example, in a case study using narrative frames to explore high school Vietnamese teachers' attitudes to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Barnard and Nguyen (2010) studied 23 English teachers from three urban high schools. The findings revealed a mismatch between teachers' knowledge of communicative language teaching and their reported classroom practice.

In another study conducted at a university by Nguyen (2011b), the data were obtained from document analyses, observations, and interviews of 22 participants, including eight teachers of English, 10 students, and four university administrators to gain insights into what teachers

and students think about teaching and learning English, curriculum design, and foreign language policy. Nguyen (2011b) suggested switching from traditional approaches to learner-centred approaches and rethinking the power relations between teachers and students.

The two studies described above were about teachers' perceptions of TBLT and of teaching and learning English in general. This study explored teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their classroom teaching in a university context. This is a gap that this study aimed to fill. Research question 1, through the use of questionnaires and interviews, is set to achieve the first aim of the research, which is to examine teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching.

Research question 2: *How do teachers apply their pragmatic understanding to their teaching practice?*

Once an understanding of teachers' perceptions of pragmatics has been gained, it is necessary to observe how teachers teach pragmatic knowledge in the classroom. To be more specific, teachers' classroom teaching was examined in the light of their understanding of pragmatics. In other words, this thesis aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' understanding of pragmatics and how their actual pragmatic classroom teaching. Barnard and Nguyen (2010) and Karavas-Doukas (1996) reported a gap between teachers' knowledge and their reported classroom practice. Research question 2 is expected to attain the second aim, i.e., to see how teachers actually teach pragmatics in their classroom. Classroom observation, by comparison to data from the questionnaires and interviews, was conducted to find the answer to this question.

Research question 3: *How is pragmatic knowledge presented in the textbooks and the English curriculum?*

Textbooks play an important role in teaching English, especially in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, because they serve as the primary form of linguistic input (Kim & Hall, 2002). To investigate pragmatic teaching, it was essential to research pragmatic content in textbooks and the curriculum. Content analysis was conducted to see if there was

sufficient pragmatic knowledge in the textbooks the teachers used to teach English to students at the targeted university. So far, there has not been any research of the pragmatic content in English textbooks used for tertiary students in Vietnam.

1.8 Significance of the research

As mentioned before, pragmatic knowledge and competence is essential for successful communication. Nevertheless, the teaching of pragmatics in a Vietnamese English language classroom seems to be neglected, even at the university level. This research sheds light on the panorama of pragmatic teaching in Vietnam by investigating teachers' understanding of pragmatics and how they applied their pragmatic knowledge to their teaching. The empirical evidence gathered from this study helps to examine the relationship between teachers' understanding of pragmatic knowledge and their teaching of this knowledge to students.

Furthermore, this study has also systematically examined the different types of pragmatic knowledge, such as general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, metapragmatic information, speech acts, cultural knowledge, and pragmatically oriented tasks (Ji, 2007; Vellenga, 2004). There has been no empirical study, at least not a systematic analysis, conducted to show whether Vietnamese EFL teachers are aware of these specific types of knowledge, although they may possess pragmatic knowledge in general. Another question that this study is attempting to answer is: How much knowledge of pragmatics is included in the textbooks and the curriculum at the tertiary level? So far, there has not been any research about teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching at the tertiary level in Vietnam. This is the gap that this study intends to fill. The study is designed and framed as outlined in section 1.9.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study, highlights the purpose and the significance of the study, and states the research questions to which the study has attempted to find the answers.

Chapter 2 provides a brief introduction to pragmatics, reviews the literature about teaching pragmatics, instruction and L2 pragmatic development, research of teaching English and pragmatics in Vietnam and cross-cultural studies, and pragmatic content in the textbooks and the English curriculum. Empirical results gained from the literature review highlight the theoretical background, as well as the niche that the study is intended to fill.

Chapter 3 depicts the theoretical framework consisting of three theories of symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching. These constructs served as a theoretical foundation for the study and were used in designing the study, analysing and reporting the data, and developing a framework for teaching pragmatics.

Chapter 4 describes in detail the four instruments of data collection employed during this research: the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and the focus group, classroom observations, and document analyses. The data from different sources were intended to complement and confirm each other.

Key findings are analysed and presented in Chapter 5. These include the categories and sub-categories emerging from the process of coding data from the four instruments.

Chapter 6 includes a discussion and interpretation of the results of the study, with reference to the literature review in Chapter 2, as well as the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3. The discussion of results is organised around the three research questions of the study.

Chapter 7 summarises the major findings and arguments of the case study, followed by outlining framework for teaching pragmatics. It also discusses implications and recommendations regarding strategies for teaching pragmatics, designing materials and tasks, and teacher training and development. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the limitations of the study, directions for further research, and the final conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2   Literature review

This chapter focuses on providing understanding of pragmatics and research on pragmatics and its teaching. It gives background knowledge of pragmatics by discussing various definitions of pragmatics as well as developments in pragmatics research and by locating the territory of pragmatics. The chapter then highlights the importance of teaching pragmatics, approaches to teaching pragmatics, and teachers' roles in teaching pragmatics. It concludes by reviewing studies on direct instruction and L2 pragmatic development, studies of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and pragmatic content in textbooks and curricula.

2.1   Understanding pragmatics

2.1.1   Definitions of pragmatics

The term 'pragmatics' is attributable to Charles Morris (1938), a philosopher of language who defined pragmatics as "the science of the relations of signs to their interpreters" and located it within semiotics, a science of signs (p. 30). After this initial definition, there have been a great number of definitions of 'pragmatics' offered by various linguists and researchers (Crystal, 1997; Ferrara, 1985; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 1993; Verschueren, 1999; Yule, 1996) who viewed pragmatics from different perspectives and contexts. The main reasons for the diverse definitions are:

(a)   the field of pragmatics is, itself, a varied discipline of study, which embraces different aspects of the relationship between meaning and context; and

(b)   the different models and theories from which pragmatics derives have divergent concepts of what are the suitable terms of the discussion (Chapman, 2011).

Pragmatics is "the study of language use" (Levinson, 1983, p. 5; Verschueren, 1999, p. 1). This is probably the simplest and least controversial definition. It describes the nature of pragmatics and serves as a starting point in discussion of pragmatics. However, it does not provide ample theoretical bases for more complicated treatment of pragmatics. The criticism has led to a number of more complex definitions of pragmatics.

Leech (1983) redefined pragmatics for the purposes of linguistics as "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations" (p. 6). Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) divided pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics is "the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p. 11). According to him, pragmalinguistics is related to grammar and refers to the particular resources a speaker has to convey particular communicative acts and interpersonal meanings. Sociopragmatics is "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p. 10). Sociopragmatics is related to sociology and is concerned with the social conditions under which speakers interpret and perform their communicative acts (Leech, 1983). According to Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistics refers to linguistic forms and functions, whereas sociopragmatics is related to appropriate social behaviours. This dichotomy of pragmalinguistics versus sociopragmatics is important as it looks at language use at two levels: how to use language grammatically correctly and how to use it socially appropriately.

Pragmatics was further defined as "the systematic study of the relations between the linguistic properties of utterances and their properties as social action" (Ferrara, 1985, p. 138). According to Ferrara (1985), in order for utterances to count as assertions, orders, promises, questions, or requests, they need to satisfy certain conditions in terms of linguistic features and the contexts in which they are used. This definition acknowledges the importance of social dimensions in discussing communication.

Similarly, Mey (1993) proposed that pragmatics "studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society" (p. 6). This means that language users use language on the basis of their society and their access to the linguistic and communicative means is controlled by society. In this definition, Mey (1993) stressed the vital role of the contexts in which people use language to communicate. Mey (1993), however, distinguished between a societal context and a social context. The former is principally determined by society's institutions, while the latter is mainly created in interaction.

This study has chosen the definition offered by David Crystal (1997) as a working definition. Crystal (1997) defines pragmatics as

22

the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially for the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication. (p. 271)

This definition looks at language from the perspective of the users and focuses on the choices that they are able to make when using the language. Crystal (1997) also stresses the role of the context in which users interact with each other in the process of communication. Communication consists of not only making use of different speech acts, but also engaging in different kinds of discourse and taking part in speech events of different length and complexity (Kasper & Rose, 2001).

This definition has been chosen because of its focus on the point of views of the users when using language to interact with other people in the society around them. Learners should be taught to interact successfully with other speakers of English. This aim of English teaching is significant in Vietnam because, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, many learners of English in Vietnam are not able to communicate in everyday English though they achieve high scores in examinations. Another reason for the choice of this definition is that the focus on the user and the learning context is highly appropriate for a study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers teaching English in an English as a foreign language context, as it allows for the analysis of difficulties arising from EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam, in terms of learner/teacher factors, learning processes, instructional designs/procedures, curriculum materials and tasks, as well as the purposes and processes of learning and teaching the target language in the classroom.

LoCastro (2012) expanded this view by arguing that it is important to gain a greater understanding of interactions because what speakers say can affect what hearers say or act. According to her, to understand pragmatic knowledge, it is necessary to interweave linguistic analysis, local contextual information, and sociolinguistic dimensions, such as sociocultural and historical information.

2.1.2   Developments in pragmatics research

The term *pragmatics* derives from the word *pragmatikos* in Greek, meaning "relating to fact" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2005, p. 1382). Pragmatikos originates from the word *pragma,* which means "a thing done" (Partridge, 1958, p. 519). As mentioned earlier, the term pragmatics was first coined by Morris (1938), a philosopher of language who developed semiotics, a theory of sign-using behaviour. In this theory, syntax was defined as "the formal relation of signs to one another" and semantics was referred to as "the relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable", whereas pragmatics was "the study of the relation of signs to interpreters" (Morris, 1938, p. 6). Despite being criticised for being "vague at critical points in its development and internally incoherent" (Black, 1947, p. 272), the theory is fundamental to the development of pragmatics.

While Morris (1938) established a vast territory for pragmatics by claiming that pragmatics could deal with "all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs" (p. 138), Chomsky (1965) looked at pragmatics from a linguistic point of view. In introducing his theory of generative grammar, Chomsky (1965) argued that

> linguistic theory is primarily concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in a
> completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly
> and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory
> limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or
> characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.
> (p. 3)

According to Chomsky (1965), linguistic competence consists of the user's knowledge of the language (*competence*) and the "actual use of language in concrete situations" (*performance*) (p. 4). He also pointed out that the use of language "undoubtedly involves many factors beyond the grammar that represents fundamental properties of the speaker's knowledge of his language" (Chomsky, 1975, p. 7). Chomsky's (1965) concept of *performance* refers to how language is used in certain contexts, which is the very definition of pragmatics later proposed by Levinson (1983) and Leech (1983).

Austin's book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) laid the foundations for the development of pragmatics, in which speech acts were classified into *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary*. Austin (1962) suggested that when we make an utterance, we perform one of the three acts: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. Pragmatics was then further developed by Searle's (1969; 1975; 1976) theory of speech acts. Searle (1976) criticised Austin's classification of illocutionary acts and established five categories of illocutionary acts: *representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations* (p. 1).

Both of these theories of speech acts have been critically discussed by various authors (Allwood, 1977; Emike, 2013; Masaki, 2004). To be specific, Allwood (1977) argued that Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) concentration on single communicative acts may lead to a failure to focus on communication as a whole while Masaki (2004) claimed that in these theories the dialogical nature of communication is undermined. Despite the critiques, Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) were considered to contribute considerably to the development of pragmatics.

Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature, entailing the Cooperative Principle (CP), also contributed greatly to the development of pragmatics. The Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975) consists of four maxims: *quantity, quality, relation, and manner* (pp. 45-46). The maxims stipulate that participants should speak sincerely, relevantly, and clearly, and provide ample information in order to communicate in an effective and cooperative way (Levinson, 1983).

Grice's theory has been extensively criticised mainly for the ambiguity of the term "cooperation" by different authors (Davies, 2007; Sarangi & Slembrouck, 1992; Taillard, 2004). Recently, Hadi (2013) attacked Grice by arguing that his theory is too biased towards cooperation. Hadi (2013) argues that Grice believes that people desire to communicate effectively and successfully; however, in real conversations, there are moments they do not adhere to his maxims because they have an intention to miscommunicate. In spite of the flaws, the importance of Grice's theory of conversational implicature in the field of pragmatics should not be denied.

Leech's (1983) book *Principles of Pragmatics*, with the introduction of the Politeness

Principle (PP), which comprises maxims of *tact, generosity, approbation, modesty,*

agreement, and sympathy (p. 132), has been considered to be an influential textbook about

pragmatics. Leech (1983) did not recommend considering the PP as another principle to be

added to the CP, but as a necessary supplement, which saves the CP from severe

problems.

The notion of politeness was also discussed in great detail by Brown and Levinson (1978;

1987). These authors constructed an overall theory of politeness with the categories of

positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record; under each are a great number of

strategies of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) also claimed that interactional

systematics are mainly based on universal principles, such as the politeness principles, but

different cultures and different subcultures apply these principles in different ways. This idea

is related to cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, one of the theories employed in the

present research, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The scope of pragmatics was further expanded to include the fields of psycholinguistics,

sociolinguistics, and neurolinguistics by Levinson (1983). Levinson's (1983) work presented

a detailed discussion of the five tenets on which pragmatics hinges, that is *deixis,*

conversational implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and conversational structures. The

publication of Levinson's influential textbook *Pragmatics* in 1983 presented pragmatics in a

systematic way and signalled the coming of age of pragmatics as a linguistic field in its own

right (Huang, 2007).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the linguistic field witnessed a change of focus from language form

and meaning to language use (Trosborg, 1994). From this perspective, language was not

viewed in isolation, but in conjunction with consideration of extralinguistic contextual factors

(Lakoff, 1972). This change of focus entailed the key concept of *communicative competence*

within the communicative approach to language teaching (Trosborg, 1994). Originally

proposed by Hymes (1972), this notion of communicative competence encompasses four

sectors: *grammaticality, feasibility, appropriateness, and possibility for occurrence.* Hymes's

sense of communicative competence includes, not only linguistic features of the language,

but also its socio-cultural rules, which governs the appropriate use of language (Paulston, 1992).

Later, components of communicative competence were developed by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Bachman (1990), and Bachman and Palmer (1996; 2010). These models, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, list pragmatic competence as an important element of communicative competence.

2.1.3 Pragmatics and other linguistic fields

Pragmatics is now a distinct field of study within linguistics, together with phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. According to Thomas (1995), pragmatics has its own theories, methodologies, and fundamental assumptions, and deals with issues that cannot be discussed within other linguistic fields, such as "the assignment of meaning in context — utterance meaning and pragmatic force — speech acts, implicature, indirectness and the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer" (p. 184).

Unlike syntax and semantics, pragmatics is a relatively new field. To achieve a better understanding of pragmatics, it is useful to make a distinction between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Chomsky (1975) defined syntax as "the study of linguistic form" and semantics as the study of "the meaning and reference of linguistic expressions" (p. 57). He further noted that syntax aims to show that the complexity of natural languages can be studied and classified into simple components, while semantics is the study of how the linguistic expressions are actually used in a speech community (Chomsky, 1975).

According to Yule (1996, p. 4), syntax is "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms, how they are arranged in sequence, and which sequences are well-formed"; semantics is "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and entities in the world; that is, how words literally connect to things"; and pragmatics is "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms". It can be clearly seen from the three definitions that syntax is concerned with how linguistic forms are related and how they are ordered; that semantics studies how those forms are related to concrete things; and that pragmatics focuses on the usage of the linguistic forms. The inclusion of the users

entails different aspects worthy of consideration, such as relationship between the users and the context in which language is used.

The similarity and difference between semantics and pragmatics were also discussed by Archer, Aijmer and Wichmann (2012). They were of the view that both semantics and pragmatics involve the conveyance of meaning through language. They are different in terms of usage: pragmatics involves meaning expressed between the speaker and the hearer in a given context, while semantics is concerned with meaning that does not depend on any particular context (Saeed, 1997; 2009). This view, once again, acknowledges the role of context in determining the meaning.

The discrepancy in deciding the territory of pragmatics and its neighbouring field of semantics was previously considered by Leech (1983) when he presented three viewpoints; they are *semanticism* (pragmatics is within semantics), *pragmaticism* (semantics within pragmatics), and *complementarism*. He favoured the approach of *complementarism*, in which pragmatics and semantics are two distinct fields of study that are interrelated. Later, this view seemed to be shared by Mey (2001), who proposed placing pragmatics into a separate corner with its own territory in a complementary relationship with the remaining fields of linguistics.

Verschueren's (1987) argument that pragmatics cannot be considered to be another level on top of the phonology-morphology-syntax-semantics hierarchy seems to complicate the discussion, but is noteworthy. This author viewed pragmatics as a "perspective on any aspect of language, at any level of structure" with the concept of "functionality" as the foundation of this perspective (p. 5). He further commented that this pragmatic perspective is based on the "adaptability of language", the fundamental feature of language, which allows engagement in the activity of communication and involves "the constant making of choices, at every level of linguistic structure, in harmony with the requirements of people, their beliefs, desires and intentions, and the real-world circumstances in which they interact" (p. 5).

This thesis takes a stance in favour of the views expressed by Leech (1983) and Mey (2001), who consider placing pragmatics in a separate territory in relation to other fields of

28

linguistics, such as syntax and semantics. Confined by the EFL context in which pragmatics is taught or learnt, and limited English language proficiency of both Vietmese EFL teachers and students, this study looks at pragmatics from a linguistic perspective. Defining pragmatics and locating its territory, by comparison to other fields of linguistics, is essential for this research, as this will serve as a guiding principle in the design and implementation of this research.

2.2 Teaching pragmatics

This section deals with key issues in teaching pragmatics, such as the necessity and importance of teaching pragmatics, effective approaches to teaching pragmatics, and teachers' roles in teaching pragmatics.

The importance of teaching pragmatics was stressed by Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991): "Teaching pragmatics empowers students to experience and experiment with the language at a deeper level, and thereby to participate in the purpose of language – communication, rather than just words (p. 13).

Regarding the importance of teaching pragmatics, according to Kasper and Rose (2001), adult learners receive a considerable amount of L2 pragmatic information without instruction because some pragmatic features are universal and others may be successfully transferred from their first language. For example, people in different communities use the same principles as the Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) and politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Furthermore, Kasper and Rose (2001) also maintain that "Learners may also get very specific pragmalinguistic knowledge for free if there is a corresponding form-function mapping between L1 and L2, and the forms can be used in corresponding L2 contexts with corresponding effects" (p. 6).

However, learners do not always use the knowledge that they already have. Kasper and Rose (2001) concluded that instruction may be necessary for the acquisition of L2 pragmatic proficiency; the purposes of this intervention are not to teach learners new knowledge, but to make them realise what they know already and encourage them to make use of their

universal pragmatic knowledge or transfer it to L2 contexts. Other researchers also realise the importance of teaching pragmatics in second language learning (Belz, 2007; Cohen, 2008; O'Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011; Rose, 2005; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009). The importance of teaching pragmatics will be discussed afterwards with empirical evidence from the present research as it is one of the sub-categories in teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching.

Teaching pragmatics has been shown to be important, but the question is "Which approaches are effective in teaching L2 pragmatics?" At present, there exist two approaches: explicit/deductive and implicit/inductive. Explicit teaching means students are provided with language input that has pragmatic information taught and highlighted, whereas implicit teaching means students are provided with input without metapragmatic information and gradually acquire pragmatic rules through practice (Ishihara, 2010d). Rose (2005) reviewed various studies on the effects of explicit and implicit instruction and found that explicit teaching is generally more effective than implicit teaching. This will be discussed in detail in the next section. In the context of teaching EFL, such as in Vietnam, teachers need to teach pragmatics explicitly because there is a lack of language environment and mere exposure to language is considered to be insufficient (Schmidt, 1990; 1993). This entails the roles of teachers in providing pragmatic knowledge to students, which will be discussed in the next section.

Regarding the teachers' role in teaching pragmatics, Cohen (2008) suggests teachers' provision of strategy instruction about pragmatics and referral to websites where learners can learn pragmatic information according to their own interests. Referring to websites may be a good idea in the Western context, but may not be a good and realistic one in Asian contexts, such as Vietnam, where learners expect their teachers to give them more guidance. Furthermore, teachers need to raise awareness among students, because developing and improving pragmatic competence cannot be done by teachers alone. This study provides empirical evidence to how teachers taught pragmatic knowledge in a university context. The next part will discuss these three key issues in teaching pragmatics in detail.

2.3 Research on direct instruction and L2 pragmatic development

In foreign language contexts, such as in Vietnam, where English is spoken as a foreign language, learners have little access to pragmatic input (Soler & Martinez-Flor, 2008); the main input students receive is through instruction. This section deals with the role of instruction in L2 pragmatic development. Research about the role of instruction in L2 pragmatic development is concerned with:

(a)   whether pragmatic targeted features are teachable;

(b)   whether pragmatic instruction is beneficial and necessary; and

(c)   whether different approaches result in differential outcomes (Rose, 2005).

Research on pragmatic instruction also examines factors deciding learners' development of pragmatic competence, such as level of proficiency, length of stay, pragmatic transfer, and learning environment.

Research regarding the role of input in pragmatic development is generally based on the Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990; 1993; 1995; 2001; Schmidt & Frota, 1986) and Bialystok's (1993) two-dimensional model of L2 proficiency development. Schmidt (1990; 1993; 1995) proposed that learners need to notice or attend to some particular form in the input in order for that input to become intake and be subsequently processed. Bialystok (1993) argues that adult second language learners already possess formal and explicit pragmatic categories. Therefore, the key problem for them is to realise the symbolic relation between forms and contexts that are appropriate to the second language.

There have been a great number of studies dealing with these issues (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012; Farahian, Rezaee & Gholami, 2012; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Ifantidou, 2013; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Li, 2012; LoCastro, 1997; Narita, 2012; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001; Taguchi, 2007; Takahashi, 2001). The most popular method is experimental with the design of pre-test/instruction/post-test with or without a delayed post-test. The reviewed studies are

31

grouped into three themes relating to the role of instruction in L2 pragmatic development as previously mentioned.

2.3.1   Teachability of targeted pragmatic features

Olshtain and Cohen (1990) carried out a study to find out whether teaching complex features of the speech act of apology in English is effective. Eighteen Hebrew-speaking, advanced adult English learners took part in the teaching programme in which the learners completed pre- and post-teaching questionnaires before and after three 20-minute treatment sessions. The participants also included 11 native speakers of American English, who filled out the same questionnaires and, thus, produced data to establish the native norms for the situations used in the study.

The teaching materials included six different components: (1) the teachers' explicit explanation of speech act behaviour in English apology realisations; (2) information sheets representing the main points of the lessons; (3) role-play activities concerning the apology situation and the relations between participants; (4) pair work activities in which students discussed appropriacy of apology realisations in given contexts; (5) listening to dialogues between native speakers involving the use of apologies; and (6) classroom discussion of the ways in which apologies are realised in English.

The findings indicated that the overall efficacy of the speech act behaviour instruction could not be validated by the quantitative data. However, the qualitative data analysis showed that the subtle features of speech acts behaviour, such as types of intensification and downgrading, subtle differences between strategy realisations, and awareness of situational factors, can and should be taught in second and foreign language classrooms.

Due to the limited scope of the study and the short treatment time (20-minute sessions), it is considered insufficient for learners to master the advanced features of apology (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The small and homogeneous sample, together with the discourse completion test (DCT), as the single instrument for data collection, may have affected the validity of the study to some extent.

Also in the area of speech acts, LoCastro (1997) conducted a research over a nine-week study time of an intensive English programme for 42 Japanese first-year university students at a college of liberal arts in Tokyo. The study aimed to investigate the effect of explicit teaching of politeness strategies (requesting answers, directing the talk, and seeking agreement) in group discussion about acquiring pragmatic competence. The findings showed no positive changes in the subjects' use of language after the teaching period. This study and Olshtain and Cohen's (1990) are two of the rare studies that counter the argument for the effectiveness of explicit teaching. The lack of instructional effects of this study may have been due to the measures LoCastro used to assess learners' learning, which was based on transcripts of a group discussion to see whether instruction regarding politeness strategies was beneficial (Rose, 2005). In other words, it was possible that the participants did not have sufficient time and opportunity to show what they had learned in a single discussion.

To see whether level of input enhancement affects the learning of target request strategies and whether learners' confidence in formulating their request strategies is influenced by the type of input condition, Takahashi (2001) studied 138 Japanese college students divided into four groups, each receiving one input condition. The conditions were: explicit teaching, form-comparison, form-search, and meaning-focused. The instruction was provided for 90 minutes per week over four weeks.

Takahashi's study adopted a pre-test/post-test design. DCTs were used to collect the main data in the pre-test and post-test. One week after the post-test, follow-up questionnaires were employed to obtain data from the participants in the form-comparison, form-search, and meaning-focused groups to see whether they noticed target request forms in the transcripts.

It was found that the meaning-focused input was less effective than explicit instruction. The consciousness-raising tasks conducted with the form-comparison and form-search groups were also found to be less effective. It was concluded that learners acquired pragmatic features most effectively when they were provided with a relatively high degree of input enhancement accompanied by explicit metapragmatic information.

Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) were interested in learners' use of conventional expressions. They conducted an experimental study of 36 international students, from various backgrounds, in two levels of English proficiency (Levels 4 and 5 of a seven-level programme) at a large-sized public university in the American Midwest. The participants were divided into two groups of equal numbers. Group A comprised 84% of Level 5 students and Group B was made up of 78% of Level 4 students. Four teachers provided the students with input activities for 50 minutes per week for three weeks between the pre-test and post-test. The two groups were taught two different sets of 15 conventional expressions.

The findings showed that both groups improved significantly on the target set of expressions instructed to group B, but neither group showed significant gains on the other set, indicating that improvements can be credited to intervention, but restricted by the learners' grammatical level and the transparency of the expressions.

The different level of proficiency between the two groups, and having more than one teacher, may have affected the findings of the study. Another limitation, acknowledged by the researchers, was that, as the learners resided in an English-speaking environment where expressions such as *Thanks, No problem, I'll call you later* are common, the instruction may not wholly contribute to the participants' improvement.

In a longitudinal study of 173 English-language majors from the University of Athens, Ifantidou (2013) delved into the effects of explicit instruction on learners' different aspects of pragmatic competence. The informants were divided into three groups: the developmental group, group 1, and group 2. The developmental group of 90 students was assessed for pragmatic development in terms of pragmatic awareness before instruction in October 2009 and re-assessed after explicit instruction in June 2011.

Group 1 consisted of 31 learners from the developmental group, who were randomly chosen to take the pragmatic test for the assessment of immediate effects of pragmatic instruction on implicature retrieval in a global context. This group received explicit instruction in 2011 (fourth semester). Group 2 was made up of 53 participants in their sixth semester, who were selected at random to take the pragmatic test for the assessment of delayed effects of

34

pragmatic instruction on implicature retrieval in a global context, with explicit instruction offered in the spring semester of 2010. This was to assess long-term effects of pragmatic instruction provided a year earlier by comparing it to the immediate effects of explicit instruction in the case of group 1. Groups 1 and 2 took the same test, but group 2 had a one-year lapse of time from exposure to explicit instruction and was exposed longer to the programme of English Language and Literature.

The main findings were: (1) the developmental group showed a marked improvement before and after explicit instruction in October 2009 and June 2011 respectively, which means that the long-term impacts of instruction about implicatures were maintained; (2) the data from groups 1 and 2 confirm the short-term and long-term effects of explicit instruction; and (3) different aspects of pragmatic competence, namely, speech acts, isolated implicatures, and pragmatic inference in a global context, can be taught with systematic and lengthened explicit instruction.

Ifantidou's (2013) longitudinal study confirmed the effectiveness of explicit instruction on developing learners' pragmatic competence by assessing various aspects of pragmatic competence through the use of different instruments, such as multiple-choice questionnaires (MCQs), DCTs, close-ended and open-ended questions, and newspaper editorials. This triangulation can be regarded as an innovation in methodology in assessing pragmatic ability. However, the long-term effects found in group 2 may not have been wholly attributed to the explicit instruction. In other words, the participants' pragmatic competence may have developed partly due to their immersion in the English language programme that they were following.

So far, not all of the reviewed studies highlighted the teachability of targeted pragmatic features. However, it was found that, when instruction is appropriately taught and measured, pragmatic features can be taught. The features included request strategies (Takahashi, 2001), conventional expressions (Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012), as well as fine pragmatic features, such as isolated implicatures and pragmatic inference (Ifantidou, 2013). This highlights the importance of providing learners with pragmatic knowledge.

2.3.2   Instruction versus exposure

Another central issue in pragmatic instruction for L2 learners is whether pedagogical intervention is more effective than simple exposure. The next section of this review tries to find the answer to this question.

Taguchi (2007) examined the effects of exposure on the development of pragmatic comprehension in terms of speed and accuracy. To measure learners' understanding of implied indirect refusals and indirect opinions, Institutional Testing Program Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) listening tests were given to 20 native speakers and 92 Japanese college freshmen before and after a seven-week period of instruction. Each week, the students received between 16 and 18 hours of content-based instruction during an intensive English programme using an integrated skills approach to provide students with academic English skills and knowledge with no lessons about pragmatics.

Taguchi's (2007) study found that exposure without instruction can be beneficial to learners' pragmatic ability. The findings showed a significant increase in the learners' accuracy and comprehension speed. The study relied on the data collected from responses to TOEFL listening test items, which are not authentic. This may make the findings less persuasive. However, Taguchi (2007) found that instruction of pragmatic comprehension can be effective for learners with low proficiency. This is congruent with the results of earlier studies conducted by Tateyama (2001), Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, and Thananart (1997), and Wildner-Bassett (1994). The finding is related to the issue of when to teach pragmatic knowledge to learners in the present research and will be further discussed later in Chapters 5 and 6.

In another experimental study with a pre-test/instruction/post-test/delayed post-test design, with a DCT over a 12-week period, of 26 Chinese learners of English at a tertiary education institution in Britain, Halenko and Jones (2011) aimed to assess the effects of explicit instruction on the development of pragmatic awareness and production of spoken requests in an English for academic purposes context. The participants were divided into two groups. One group received six hours of explicit instruction about requests and the other received no

pragmatic teaching. After the instruction and data collection from the DCT were completed, two students from the treatment group were interviewed about their thoughts and comments regarding their lessons about requests.

The study found that explicit instruction enhanced learners' pragmatic development of request language, although the effect was not maintained after a six-week period. Halenko and Jones (2011) also suggested that the language environment to which the students had exposure did not necessarily boost their pragmatic competence. Furthermore, qualitative data revealed that the learners valued pragmatic instruction.

It can be argued that the six-hour instruction was not long enough for the impact to last long. Interviews with only two students did not validate the qualitative data. The study, however, was in agreement with the results from the study by Koike and Pearson (2005) that the pragmatic development or gain is not maintained in the long run.

Narita (2012) examined the effects of pragmatic consciousness-raising (PCR) activities on the development of hearsay evidential markers of learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL). This quasi-experimental study followed a pre-test/post-test/delayed post-test format and involved 41 students of JFL at universities in the United States of America (US), who were divided into two groups: the PCR treatment group and the control group. The PCR group received instruction in four 30-minute sessions just before the post-tests.

The findings showed that the PCR group outperformed the control group in both the post-tests and delayed post-tests. This study supports Schmidt's (1990; 1993; 1994) *Noticing Hypothesis* that raising awareness is needed for learning to occur, but it also claims that only noticing pragmatic features would be enough for learning to occur. This is actually against Schmidt's hypothesis that awareness of the form of input is necessary, but not sufficient for learning to occur. This claim would have been more convincing if the time between the immediate post-tests and the delayed post-tests, of only one month, had been longer. It is not certain whether the learners can retain their pragmatic gains after that.

Similar to Halenko and Jones (2011) and Narita (2012), Kim and Taguchi (2015) conducted an experimental study adopting a pre-test/immediate post-test/delayed post-test format to

examine the effect of task-based pragmatic instruction on 73 Korean, female junior high school students with English proficiency ranging from high beginner to high intermediate. The participants' oral interaction was recorded and analysed by the number of pragmatic-related episodes (PREs).

The participants were divided into three groups: simple, complex, and control. Before the task, participants were given a handout with an explicit explanation of target pragmatic forms in two dialogues, one featuring a PRE-high request and the other featuring a PRE-low request. In each dialogue, the learners were introduced to pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic variables. The pre-task guiding lasted five minutes. The 90-minute interventional instruction was in the form of a task in which the learners were asked to write the script for a scene. The simple group received detailed scenario descriptions and matching pictures that contained speech bubbles and into which participants inserted request-making forms, whereas the complex group only received the pictures without the scenario descriptions; they needed to figure out the relationship between the two speakers and the nature of the request.

The findings showed that the level of task complexity influenced the occurrence of PREs. To be more specific, both treatment groups outperformed the control group, but only the complex group retained their pragmatic gains after four weeks. Although there were limitations in the sampling (all participants were female) and in the intervention (only the drama script completion task was used), this study showed that using tasks can be an alternative to teaching pragmatic features and that task complexity can help students to maintain their pragmatic learning.

Alcon-Soler (2015) studied 60 Spanish, upper-intermediate students of English in six international language schools in England, from September 2011 to June 2012, about the impact of instruction and length of stay on their use of email request mitigators, measured by a pre-test, a post-test, a delayed post-test, and a post-delayed test. The participants were divided into two groups: intervention and control. Both groups were exposed to email requests and had opportunities to make email requests during their study abroad time, but

38

only the treatment group received instruction about email requests, both inductively and deductively, from 12 British female teachers of English.

Alcon-Soler (2015) found that instruction had an instant effect on the learners' use of email request mitigators, but this effect diminished after a longer period of study abroad and vanished at the end of the study abroad year.

It can be seen from the reviewed studies that, generally, instruction is more effective than exposure. In all of the studies, the interventional group(s) outperformed the group that did not receive pragmatic instruction. Only Taguchi's (2007) research showed that simple exposure can enhance learners' pragmatic ability. Therefore, it can be concluded that instruction is beneficial and necessary.

2.3.3   Outcomes of different approaches to teaching pragmatics

Apart from the two aforementioned issues is the question of whether different approaches to teaching pragmatics lead to different outcomes. In other words, the issue whether explicit teaching may have different effects from implicit teaching remains to be validated. The main difference between these two approaches is that there is metapragmatic information provided in explicit instruction.

In order to see whether instruction in compliments and compliment responses in a foreign language context was beneficial to learners and whether inductive/implicit and deductive/explicit instruction yielded different effects, Rose and Kwai-fun (2001) studied 103 undergraduate students at the City University of Hong Hong and first year university undergraduates at the University of Illinois.

These students were divided into seven groups. The control group and two treatment groups completed a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ), a written DCT, and a metapragmatic assessment questionnaire (MAQ). Each treatment group received 30-minute instruction about compliments and compliment responses per week for a period of six weeks. The two experimental groups were taught identical content, which included watching film segments containing compliment exchanges; the only difference was that the inductive group was

exposed only to the film segments and supplementary examples, and given questions to help them discover pragmatic patterns or generalisations without any metapragmatic information. On the other hand, the deductive group received metapragmatic information prior to analysing compliment and compliment responses data.

One of the two American groups completed the MAQ, the other completing the DCT. The last two groups were Cantonese students who did the same as the two American groups. A tentative conclusion was reached that instruction about pragmatic features may be effective in a foreign language context and that deductive teaching can be more effective for both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

Koike and Pearson (2005) implemented a study about the effect of instruction about Spanish learners' suggestions on building pragmatic proficiency. Ninety-nine native speakers of English enrolled in four third-semester Spanish courses at the University of Texas at Austin and at Bowling Green State University were divided into five groups. The first group received explicit pre-instruction and explicit feedback, the second group had explicit instruction and implicit feedback, the third group were given implicit pre-instruction and explicit feedback, the fourth group got implicit pre-instruction feedback and implicit feedback, and the fifth one obtained neither pre-instruction nor feedback. The instruction was provided by five instructors, including two native Spanish speakers.

The two explicit pre-instruction groups were shown a set of common forms of suggestions in Spanish and ways to respond to them, and received comments about them from their instructor. All four treatment groups were given instruction in which they saw three sample dialogues and heard their teachers read them in three approximately 20-minute sessions afterwards. The informants also filled out multiple-choice questions about directness and pragmatic force, and answered questions to locate actual suggestions and responses used by the speakers in the dialogues. The participants were given a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test to measure the effects of the teaching and feedback giving, and the retention of pragmatic knowledge.

The results indicated that the groups provided with instruction and feedback, both explicitly and implicitly, seemed to be aware of more choices for the expression of suggestions and a need for pragmatic mitigation more quickly than the control group. However, the delayed post-test showed that the pragmatic knowledge learned from the intervention was not retained in the longer term.

Koike and Pearson's (2005) study showed the efficacy of explicit and implicit instruction, but did not indicate which one was more effective. In addition, the time for instruction and testing was relatively short, which may have reduced the validity and reliability of the study.

In a recent study by Rezvani, Eslami-Rasekh, and Vahid Dastjerdi (2014), the effects of explicit and implicit intervention on Iranian EFL learners' development of requests and suggestions were investigated. The participants were 60 Iranian students majoring in English Translation at a university in Iran and were divided into two groups: an Explicit Group (EG) and an Implicit Group (IG). The treatment was implemented over 14 weeks, during which the EG watched a video clip, accompanied by explicit awareness-raising activities and discussion about both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. The EG also took part in various production tasks and role-plays. The IG watched the same video clip, with captions about the sociopragmatic factor of the situation. They were given input enhancement and recasts while they were involved in production tasks.

The findings revealed that both explicit and implicit intervention resulted in a significant improvement to the learners' production of requests and suggestions. In other words, explicit instruction with metapragmatic information and implicit instruction with input enhancement and recasts led to similar pragmatic gains. One implication that can be drawn from the study is that implicit teaching can be effective in developing L2 pragmatics if it is taught systematically and appropriately. Therefore, EFL teachers can rely on this approach to teaching pragmatics.

What Rezvani, Eslami-Rasekh, and Vahid Dastjerdi's (2014) reported in their study was not in line with a previous study, also about Iranian EFL learners, by Salemi, Rabiee, and Ketabi (2012), who found that explicit treatment was much more effective than implicit treatment.

One can explain that the two studies had differential findings due to different interventions and assessment measures.

The reviewed studies in this section showed that both explicit and implicit instruction is beneficial to learners' pragmatic development. However, the question of which approach is more effective remains inconclusive. Only Rose and Kwai-fun's (2001) study indicated that explicit instruction can be more effective. This finding was not in agreement with the finding by Rose (2005). Rose (2005) reviewed various studies related to the explicit and implicit teaching of L2 pragmatics and concluded that, in most cases, learners who had received metapragmatic information performed better than those who did not. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted in order to find the most effective approach to teaching L2 pragmatics.

The findings from the studies and articles discussed earlier in this section are summarised below:

There is significant evidence that a range of second language pragmatic features are teachable. These consist of pragmatic conventional expressions (Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012), implicatures, pragmatic inferences (Ifantidou, 2013), hearsay evidential markers (Narita, 2012), and a variety of speech acts (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Ifantidou, 2013; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001; Takahashi, 2001).

With respect to the issue of instruction versus exposure, it can be concluded that instruction is beneficial to the target language pragmatic development (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Narita, 2012). To be specific, learners who receive instruction outperform untaught learners in developing L2 pragmatic systems that are close to native speakers' norms, in both production and comprehension (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Rose, 2005). Adult learners, who already have a considerable amount of L2 pragmatic information, still need instruction for the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence; the purposes of this intervention to make them realise what they know already and encourage

them to make use of their universal pragmatic knowledge or transfer it to L2 contexts (Kasper & Rose, 2001).

Both explicit and implicit instruction about pragmatic features are beneficial to learners (Koike & Pearson, 2005; Rezvani et el., 2014; Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001). Explicit instruction helps to focus attention on forms and meanings in the input, a precondition for subsequent processing (Schmidt, 1990; 1993; 2001). This finding lends support to Schmidt's (1990; 1993) Noticing Hypothesis. In addition, Kasper and Rose (2002) concluded that, generally, explicit instruction accompanied by activities and tasks for practice of the new pragmatic knowledge generates the greatest results. Nonetheless, it cannot be concluded which approach is more effective (Koike & Pearson, 2005; Rezvani et el., 2014).

With regard to whether pragmatic learning is maintained or not, the following points are made. In order for the teaching of pragmatic knowledge to be effective and retainable, it is not sufficient to give students an adequate amount of instruction and length of intervention sessions (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Ifantidou, 2013; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Koike & Pearson, 2005). To be specific, studies by Alcon-Soler (2015), Halenko and Jones (2011), and Koike and Pearson (2005) all showed that pragmatic gains were not retained, regardless of the length of treatment. While it can be claimed that the disappearance of pragmatic learning was due to the short period of treatment, as shown in the studies by Koike and Pearson (2005) and Halenko and Jones (2011), Alcon-Soler (2015) found that the effects of instruction were not maintained during the year-long study abroad period.

Contrary to the evidence that pragmatic gains are not retainable, Ifantidou (2013), Kim and Taguchi (2015), and Narita (2012) reported retainable pragmatic gains in their studies. The retained gains in Ifantidou's (2013) study were due to repeated explicit instruction, while Kim and Taguchi (2015) showed that the maintenance of pragmatic gains was credited to the complexity of the tasks that learners worked on. Narita (2012) found that the efficacy of pragmatic consciousness-raising instruction was maintained. However, the time between the post-test and the delayed post-test was only a month; it was not certain whether the learners could retain the instructional effect afterwards. With these conflicting results, further research needs to be done to see how to maintain learners' pragmatic acquisition.

The literature review also yielded these findings: acquiring pragmatic features (conventional expressions) is influenced by learners' linguistic level and the transparency of the features (Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012), and pragmatic instruction can benefit learners with low proficiency.

The present study focuses on teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and how they teach pragmatic knowledge when teaching English, in general, at a tertiary institution in Vietnam. This area has been much underresearched in the Vietnamese EFL classroom with a curriculum focusing primarily on the discrete linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, syntax and grammar. The literature review shows the effects and benefits of teaching pragmatics. However, as previously mentioned, Vietnamese EFL teachers do not seem to focus on developing pragmatic competence in learners. This research takes an overall perspective of teaching pragmatics, not focusing on any particular pragmatic knowledge or feature, such as speech acts, conventional expressions, and the effects of pragmatic teaching. The next section deals with research about cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics.

2.4 Studies of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics

Now, as English is increasingly used as a lingua franca, communication is likely to be cross-cultural because it involves speakers with different cultures, conceptualisations, and first languages. A lingua franca is "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication" (Firth, 1996, p. 240). These speakers use a common language to communicate, but they also employ a "pragmatically highly diversified instrument of communicating representing, not only different cultures, but also different norms and values" (Putz & Aertselaer, 2008, p. ix). Cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) was generated to identify and explain different communicative styles among speakers of different cultures.

Cross-cultural pragmatics is used to indicate "comparative cultural studies obtained independently from different cultural groups" while intercultural pragmatics is used for "intercultural interaction where data is obtained when people from different cultural groups

interact with each other" (Trosborg, 2010, p. 2). In the present study, CCP and intercultural pragmatics are used interchangeably. More details on these two concepts are elaborated in the next chapter.

Cross-cultural pragmatics investigates how speakers' use of language is influenced by their underlying values, beliefs, cultural assumptions, and communication strategies (LoCastro, 2003; 2012). Cross-cultural studies deal mainly with speech act realisations in different cultures, cultural breakdowns, and pragmatic failures (Kecskes, 2012). The principal concept in CCP is that members of different cultural societies speak differently and act differently (Wierzbicka, 1991).

There has been an increasingly growing interest in cross-cultural differences, and this is reflected by a growing body of research in this area (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Cutrone, 2014; Guan, Park, & Lee, 2009; Hendriks, 2008; Maiz-Arevalo, 2014; Nelson, Batal, & Bakary, 2002; Nelson, Carlson, Batal & Bakary, 2002; Nguyen, 2005; 2008; Nureddeen, 2008; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Woodfield, 2008). These studies are mainly concerned with speech act realisations in different cultures and pragmatic transfer and usually involve EFL learners.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) reported a project examining cross-cultural speech act realisation patterns. The project aimed to identify the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' realisation patterns in two speech acts of requests and apologies in each of the languages studied by comparing across languages the realisation patterns of these two speech acts. The project focused on eight languages or varieties: Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian. The theoretical assumption underlying this study was that the perceived diversity in speech act realisation may originate from at least three different variabilities: intracultural and situational, cross-cultural, and individual.

The instrument to obtain the data was a DCT developed by Blum-Kulka (1982). There were 400 participants in each group, with equal numbers of male and female university students in

their second and third years studying any subject except linguistics. Half of the students-informants were native speakers, half non-native speakers.

In the study, three working hypotheses were mentioned regarding universal features for requests: (1) it is possible in requesting behaviour to distinguish among central phenomena such as strategy types as different internal and external modification; (2) requesting behaviour is inherently based on choices from a variety of options ranging from direct to indirect; (3) the scale of indirectness encompasses at least three main types of option (direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect). Two working hypotheses for apologies on which the analytical framework for the examination of speech acts in this study is based were also mentioned: (1) it is possible in apology to delimit linguistic markers of pragmatic force (i.e., illocutionary force indicating device; IFIDs); and (2) additionally (or alternatively) to IFIDs, apologies can be realised by reference to a set of specified propositions. These five working hypotheses have been built into operational dimensions for data analysis.

The results of the analysis appeared to be in agreement with the basic theoretical assumptions informing the study. On the one hand, the phenomena such as strategy types captured by the main dimensions were supported by the data and might be considered as potential representatives for universality. On the other hand, the cross-linguistic comparison of the distribution of speech act realisation patterns showed rich cross-cultural variability.

This study can be considered as a landmark work because of its large scale. However, at the time the report was written, the project had not been completed. Therefore, no clear conclusions had been made.

Similarities and differences between Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals were examined by Nelson, Carson, Batal, and Bakary (2002). The participants were 30 Americans aged from 24 to 30 years, all with bachelors' degrees and 25 Egyptians aged from 19 to 39 years, who either had bachelors' degrees or were students. Data were collected through the use of a DCT with 10 situations requiring a refusal: two requests, three invitations, three offers, and two suggestions. An interviewer read aloud each situation on the DCT to the

46

participants and requested them to respond verbally on audiotape. The data collection yielded 298 American refusals and 250 Egyptian refusals.

These refusals were analysed to compare the frequency of strategy use, the types and frequencies of indirect strategies, and the effect of interlocutor status on strategy use across groups. The findings did not show discrepancies in the kinds of strategy used or the frequency of strategies between the American and Egyptian refusals. The researchers pointed out the limitation of the DCT methods as failing to reveal the complexities of the sociopragmatic aspects of this kind of speech act. This study did not show the results expected by the researchers, but did show the perplexity of research on speech act use.

Almost the same group of researchers (Nelson, Batal, & Bakary, 2002) carried out another study on the same subjects with a slightly different focus (directness and indirectness between Egyptian Arabic and US English communication styles). They found that Egyptians and Americans used similar strategies with a similar frequency in responses using direct and indirect refusal strategies. The differences were that the American refusals were longer than the Egyptian refusals and that Egyptian males made use of more direct strategies than the Americans. These two studies found that generally there were no differences between the way Americans and Egyptians communicate with respect to the use of refusal strategies.

Hendriks (2008) investigated request performance by Dutch learners of English compared to Dutch native speakers and English native speakers. The learner participants included 46 Dutch university students (advanced) and 55 secondary school pupils (intermediate). The English native speaker participants were 24 English university students and 35 English secondary school pupils; the Dutch native speakers group consisted of 63 university students and 49 secondary school pupils. The data were collected through an oral production questionnaire (DCT) consisting of 12 request situations classified into power distance, social distance, and context and a written judgement questionnaire in which respondents were requested to give their opinions about the degree of power and social distance and the extent of formality of the setting of the 12 situations used in the DCT. Both the production and judgement tasks were completed in one session.

It was found that while there were no significant differences spotted in the requests made by the Dutch and English native speakers, Dutch learners of English were different from native speakers of English with regard to request modification: they used less lexical and syntactic modification and a relatively narrow range of request modifiers when compared to English native speakers. The sample size of this study was big enough to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

In an attempt to investigate the type and extent of use of apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic, Nureddeen (2008) studied 1082 responses to a DCT consisting of 10 different social situations of varying severity of offence, strength of social relationship and power between hypothetical speakers and listeners. The responses were recorded by 110 college-educated adults in Khartoum, Sudan.

The strategies identified from the corpus were: IFID, explanation, taking responsibility, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, concern for the listener, intensification, minimisation, denial of responsibility, and humour. The two most-frequently used strategies were explanation (70%) and IFID (65%) whereas the least common one was promise of forbearance (1%). The results from this study agree with earlier findings which suggest the universal features of apology strategies and reinforce the culture-specific aspect of language use reflected through the selection of apology strategies.

Unlike other studies focusing on speech acts, Cutrone (2014) investigated backchannel behaviour and its effect on intercultural communication (IC) by studying 30 dyadic conversations in English between Japanese and American participants. The researcher recruited a total of 43 participants, made up of 30 Japanese EFL speakers, three native English speakers from the United States, and 10 American participants functioning as observers in the study. All of the 30 Japanese EFL speakers were university students who achieved the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores from 350 to 700. The native English speakers all spoke American English and had parents born in the United States.

48

The instruments for data collection were observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Thirty dyadic conversations in English between Japanese EFL and US native English speaking participants were recorded. The participants were requested to talk as informally and naturally as possible about anything they liked for 30 minutes. A 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire containing statements with seven choices was designed to assess conversational satisfaction. During the interviews, two members of each dyadic conversation were interviewed one after another. During the interview, the researcher played back part of the video recorded dialogue and asked each participant a few questions concerning the behaviour shown in the dialogue. The main purpose of the interviews with the American speakers was to see how they felt about their Japanese counterparts' listenership while in the interviews with the Japanese participants, the researcher aimed to fully understand why Japanese EFL speakers used backchannel the way they did and to diagnose if there were any misunderstandings or miscommunications triggered by its use in the recorded dialogue.

The results of the study showed discrepancies in the way backchannels were performed by the Japanese EFL speakers and their American interlocutors with regards to frequency, variability, placement, and function. The findings of this research also support the hypothesis that the differences in backchannel conventions between cultures can contribute to miscommunication, negative perceptions, and stereotyping.

Maiz-Arevalo (2014) analysed a data sample generated by a group of 10 international masters students from various cultural backgrounds who used English as a lingua franca (ELF) to see which pragmatic rules they stuck to in IC with respect to the speech act of disagreement. The participants were all female and were studying a course in English Linguistics. The data, collected through the use of an online forum where the students discussed and negotiated to complete a group assignment, resulted in 15,598 words. From the data, disagreement expressions were analysed and divided into two main categories: strong and mitigated disagreement.

The findings showed that on the whole, the participants tended to avoid strong disagreement. The students with a high linguistic proficiency used a wider range of strategies and abided by the strategies used by native speakers. Specifically, they observed

the pragmatic rules of British English. Students with lower proficiency used much less mitigating strategies and preferred to use non-native expressions of regret and hedging.

It is interesting to see that highly proficient speakers of ELF stuck to a native speaker model (British English) and that students with lower proficiency preferred to use non-native expressions when they communicated with each other. However, the small and gender-biased sample did not make the findings of the study convincing enough. Further research on a larger scale may generate more accurate results. This study involved the concept of ELF which is related to one of the theoretical constructs used in the present study. In the present study, it is argued that English teachers and users in Vietnam should follow the model of ELF. More detailed discussion of this will be presented in Chapters 3, 6, and 7.

In an early study conducted in Vietnam, Nguyen (2005) investigated the pragmatic development of Vietnamese learners of English, focusing on the use of criticism and responding to criticism. Participants were 36 learners of EFL, divided into three sub-groups of 12 high beginners, 12 intermediate learners, and 12 advanced learners. The native speaker participants were 12 native speakers of Vietnamese and 12 native speakers of Australian English.

The learners' data were obtained through a peer-feedback task, a written questionnaire, and a retrospective interview. In the peer-feedback task, the students were required to work together on an essay they had previously written and locate at least one unsatisfactory point from their peer's essay and discuss the point(s) with him or her. Then the students were asked to write responses to eight criticisms eliciting situations in the questionnaire. These data were then analysed with reference to L1 and L2 baseline data gathered from 12 Vietnamese and 12 Australian native speakers with the same instruments. Each of the 36 students then participated in the retrospective interview, in which they were asked about the content of their peer-feedback task and their recorded conversations were replayed.

There were four main findings discussed: (1) the learners performed their criticism and response to criticism very differently from the native speakers; (2) the learners' proficiency in L2 showed little effect on their use of the two speech acts; (3) the students' production of

these two speech acts showed evidence of pragmatic transfer; and (4) the data from the interviews with learners revealed four main sources of influence on their pragmatic decision-making: insufficient L2 pragmatic knowledge, transfer of communication and learning, processing difficulty, and learning experience. These results suggested two pedagogical implications, which involved the need for instructional pragmatic intervention and the presentation of these two speech acts to L2 learners via classroom discourse and teaching materials.

This well-designed and well-conducted study underpinned the importance of pragmatic instruction and pragmatic content in classroom teaching and material development. The triangulation of data made the comparison valid and reliable.

The speech act of criticism was further studied by Nguyen (2008), who investigated criticism strategies used by Vietnamese learners of EFL. The interlanguage data came from 36 adult learners through a peer-feedback task, a written questionnaire, and a retrospective interview. First and second language baseline data were gathered from a group of 12 Vietnamese native speakers and another group of 12 Australian English native speakers through the same peer-feedback task and written questionnaire.

The findings indicated that English learners and Australian native speakers criticised differently in terms of their preference for realisation strategies, their semantic formulae, and their choice and frequency of the use of softening devices. Nguyen (2008) mentioned a number of factors influencing the choices learners make when criticising in the target language: (a) their limited L2 linguistic competence, (b) their lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge, and (c) the influence of L1 pragmatics.

Allami and Naeimi (2011) probed into the production of refusals by Iranian EFL learners by examining (a) the frequency, (b) shift and content of semantic formulas considering the language proficiency of the learners, (c) the status of interlocutors, and (d) the kinds of eliciting acts on realisation of the strategies. The participants were 31 Persian-speaking learners of English and 31 Persian native speakers. The learners completed a DCT in English with 12 situations to which the participants were asked to respond with refusals; the

Persian native speakers completed a similar DCT in Persian. The data from the DCTs completed by the EFL learners were then compared to the data collected from the Persian native speakers and from a study conducted by Kwon (2004, cited in Allami & Naeimi, 2011) of 37 American university students who had responded to the same DCT.

The results demonstrated that Iranian and American speakers differed in the frequency, shift and content of semantic formulas used in refusals when responding to a higher, an equal, or lower status person. The findings also indicated that there was a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and pragmatic transfer and that there was more transfer of sociocultural norms from L1 to L2 and more pragmatic mistakes made by upper-intermediate students. It was argued that making refusals in a L2 is complicated because it requires a thorough understanding of sociocultural standards of the target culture.

Pragmatic transfer or the influence of L1 on L2 pragmatics was seen in three previously reviewed studies (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Nguyen, 2005; Nguyen, 2008). This finding confirms Trosborg's (1987) findings that Danish learners of English transferred sociopragmatic strategies from their L1 to their performance of English apologies. It was also found that Danish learners transferred past-tense modal forms from Danish and German to English (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). Pragmatic transfer was defined as the "use of L1 pragmatic knowledge to understand or carry out linguistic action in the L2" (Kasper, 1997, p. 119). Pragmatic transfer can have positive or negative effects on learners' use of L2. While positive transfer leads to successful communication, negative transfer may lead to imperfect pragmatic use in L2, that is, non-native use of speech acts, semantic formulas, or linguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

Nguyen's (2005) and Allami and Naeimi's (2011) studies, however, showed contrasting results relating to learners' proficiency: Nguyen (2005) found that learners' proficiency showed little effect on the use of speech acts while Allami and Naeimi (2011) reported that there was a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and pragmatic transfer and that there were more pragmatic mistakes made by learners with higher proficiency. This confirms Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) positive correlation hypothesis, that is, pragmatic transfer is positively correlated to second language proficiency. Schauer (2008) also argued that

52

transfer of pragmatic norms and strategies from L1 was one of the factors influencing EFL learners' pragmatic improvement in the studying abroad context.

These findings showed the positive effect of L1 on L2 in developing pragmatic knowledge and competence as well as English proficiency in general. The interactive process as evidenced in linguistic transfer in a bilingual context could be well-explained in the scheme of research on symbolic interactionism, one of the key theoretical constructs utilised in the present study. To be specific, it is proposed in this study that the way Vietnamese teachers teach English is influenced by the way they have learned it and their L1 and that this influence is reflected in teachers' perceptions of teaching EFL as well as their approach to teaching L2 pragmatics. The influence of L1 on L2 will be further discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

The review of studies of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics produced the following findings. Nearly all of these studies on CCP involved a DCT as the main instrument for data collection and focused on different types of speech acts: request and apology (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Hendriks, 2008; Woodfield, 2008), refusal (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Nelson et al., 2002), apology (Guan et al., 2009; Nureddeen, 2008), criticism and responses to criticism (Nguyen, 2005; 2008), and responses to compliments (Tang & Zhang, 2009). Except for the study by Nelson et al. (2002), all the others yielded the same findings that EFL speakers and native speakers of English differ in their use and perceptions of speech acts and other aspects of pragmatics. To be specific, the studies by Nguyen (2005; 2008), Hendriks (2008), Woodfield (2008), Allami and Naeimi (2011), and Cutrone (2014) all showed that learners of English (Vietnamese, Dutch, German, Iranian, and Japanese) and native speakers of English were different in the way they performed different speech acts and backchannels although different instruments were used for data collection.

These findings confirm findings from previous studies by House and Kasper (1981), Trosborg (1987), Faerch and Kasper (1989), Suszczynska (1999), and Guan et al. (2009). These findings are also in line with the claim of universality made by Austin (1962), Searle (1969, 1975), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) and the spirit of CCP and intercultural pragmatics. On the one hand, learners should realise that there are universal

features shared by different languages and cultures. On the other hand, they should also be aware of the necessity of spotting cultural discrepancies. For example, differences between the way native speakers' and non-native speakers' produce speech acts were previously classified as choice of speech acts, semantic formulas, and content (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). These differences reflect different beliefs, values, and traditions of speakers with different cultures.

Given these cultural differences, it can be argued that teachers should be aware of the universality, the transferability, as well as the uniqueness of pragmatics of different cultures and languages. Vietnamese EFL teachers need to raise awareness of cultural differences, not only between Vietnamese and the target cultures, but also between Vietnamese and cultures of other non-native speakers. They also need to develop activities focusing on cultural differences and tasks that allow students to compare and contrast Vietnamese cultural features and features of other cultures. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of the thesis.

The literature review of studies of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics yielded the finding that EFL speakers and native speakers of English show differences in their use and perceptions of speech acts and other aspects of pragmatics. This is an important finding because a knowledge of cultural differences is essential in communicating successfully in a global context. Ignorance of cultural differences may lead to feelings of discomfort or even communication breakdowns. This knowledge of cultural differences forms the basis of intercultural competence which will be elaborated in Chapter 3.

2.5 Pragmatic content in textbooks and curricula

Kasper and Rose (2001) observed that in many contexts of second and foreign language teaching, curricula and materials developers designing English programmes include strong pragmatic components or even adopt a pragmatic approach as their organising principle. However, this is not always the case, especially in the Vietnam context. This section aims to provide an overview of contents in English textbooks both in the Vietnam and international

contexts. This review is divided into two categories: language in textbooks and pragmatic content in textbooks.

2.5.1   Language in textbooks

In order to see if there was a match between language in textbooks and authentic speech, Boxer and Pickering (1995) conducted a content analysis of seven English textbooks that taught functions with a focus on the speech act of complaint. Four of the seven textbooks analysed were from the United States (*Say it Naturally: Verbal Strategies for Authentic Communication, Speaking Naturally, Expressways, and The Culture Puzzle*) and three from the United Kingdom (*Functions of English, Meaning into Words, and Cambridge Advanced English*). The findings indicated a mismatch between real-life speech and spoken discourse items produced by the "native-speaker intuition" of textbook writers and a paucity of context or relationship between interlocutors (Boxer & Pickering, 1995, p. 56). It was concluded that in order for language learners to receive a correct explanation of the etiquette of speaking in a second or foreign language, they need exposure to materials showing how native speakers really speak, not how they are supposed to speak.

The lack of detailed description of the process of the textbook review together with the small sample of texts lessened the authors' arguments. The strength of this project was the focus on complaint. However, the findings would have been more convincing had more speech acts been investigated.

Similar to Boxer and Pickering (1995), Wong (2002) evaluated 30 dialogues from eight ESL textbooks, using conversation analysis as the research method. The textbooks examined were *Word of Mouth, Day by Day, All Talk, Life Prints* (Book 2)*, Expedition into English, Survival English* (Book 3), *New American Streamline: Departures, and Expressways*. The telephone dialogues from these textbooks were compared to real dialogues analysed by conversation analysts. The results indicated a gap between authentic telephone exchanges and the telephone conversations in the investigated textbooks. To be more specific, summon-answer, identification, greetings, and how-are-you sequences, which are usually present in real-life telephone dialogues, did not occur in those of the investigated textbooks.

With the same focus on textbook language, Gilmore (2004) compared and contrasted discourse features of seven dialogues of authentic interactions found in textbooks published between 1981 and 1997. The situations were hiring a car from a car rental shop, telephone enquiry about a flat for rent, telephone enquiry about flights, telephone reservation of a hotel room, asking for directions in the street, asking for help at a tourist information centre, and telephone enquiry about train times. All were taken from the following textbooks: *Inside English 1, Task Listening, International Express Intermediate, Making Headway, and Fast Forward 1*. The study found that there were considerable differences between the language in the textbook conversations and natural language in terms of various discourse features: length and turn-taking patterns, lexical density, number of false starts and repetitions, pausing, frequency of terminal overlap or latching, hesitation devices, and back-channelling.

Gilmore (2004) also investigated the occurrences of the same discourse features in three dialogues taken from more recently published course books, *New Headway Intermediate* (1996), *Getting Ahead* (1999), and *Cutting Edge* (2001), and compared them with the data from the five previously examined textbooks and authentic conversations. The data showed that the three more recent textbooks had included more discourse features, but the frequencies of these features were still much lower than those found in authentic data.

It can be observed that there were only ten dialogues analysed in Gilmore's (2004) research. That was less than one conversation per textbook. It may make his argument less convincing as one dialogue may not be sufficient to reach a conclusion about the content of a textbook.

It is observed that all three studies by Boxer and Pickering (1995), Wong (2002), and Gilmore (2004) showed discrepancy between naturally occurring language and the language found in textbooks. This finding is similar to the findings in studies by Scotton and Bernsten (1988), Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds (1991), and Grant and Starks (2001). There are reasons for textbook writers to use inauthentic language in textbooks. One is that a lesson or part of a lesson is usually designed to teach a particular feature of the target language. However, from the perspective of the users, it can be argued that learners using these textbooks are not exposed to the language spoken outside of the

56

classroom and thus they may find it difficult to communicate in real life because real language is different and much more complex than what is learned in textbooks.

2.5.2   Pragmatic content in textbooks

With the aim of investigating pragmatic content in textbooks, Vellenga (2004) conducted a page-by-page content analysis of four textbooks of English as a Second Language (ESL) and another four of EFL. The four ESL textbooks were grammar textbooks (*Focus on Grammar High-Intermediate, Grammar Links 3, Intermediate Grammar: From Form to Meaning and Use,* and *Understanding and Using English grammar*) whereas the four EFL texts were integrated skills textbooks (*Headway Upper Intermediate, Interchange 2, Passages 1,* and *Voyages 2*).

The framework developed by Vellenga (2004) divides pragmatic information into general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, speech acts and metapragmatic directives. Apart from the content analysis, Vellenga carried out short telephone and email interviews with four Canadian and American teachers with experience in teaching ESL and EFL and asked three general questions about their use of and familiarity with the textbooks, their views on contextual language presented in the textbooks, and whether additional information was provided in their classroom teaching.

The content analysis findings showed that the textbooks did not contain sufficient explicit metapragmatic information. At the same time, the interview results showed that the majority of input came from textbooks, and that teachers hardly had the time, tendency, or expertise to provide additional pragmatic information in their lessons. It was concluded that learning pragmatics from textbooks is improbable and not practical. Vellenga (2004) suggested a textbook which included pragmatic awareness-raising activities, authentic samples of speech acts with metapragmatic information, and rich cultural information.

Vellenga's (2004) study provided a comprehensive framework to analyse pragmatic content in a textbook, which can be used by other researchers for textbook analysis. However, the choice of textbooks, to some extent, weakened the author's arguments: all of the EFL textbooks were integrated skills whereas all the ESL textbooks were grammar texts. Another

limitation was that the teachers interviewed on the phone and via email did not provide reliable data because none of them were using any of the eight textbooks at the time the study was conducted.

In a more recent study, Ji (2007) investigated the pragmatic input included in College English textbooks used in China as part of her project on pragmatic teaching. Eight textbooks were reviewed on a page-by-page basis. The main findings were that neither College English textbooks nor College English classroom teaching supplied learners with sufficient pragmatic content in terms of quantity and quality; that the range of pragmatic knowledge in College English textbooks and classroom teaching was limited; and that pragmatic content was mainly on metapragmatic information, metalanguage, speech acts, and cultural information.

In the context of Vietnam, Nguyen (2011c) evaluated pragmatic content of a newly published set of English textbooks for upper-secondary education in Vietnam. The textbooks analysed were *English 10, English 11, and English 12*, intended for students in upper secondary schools. The focus was on how speech acts are distributed and presented and the type of contextual and metapragmatic information that accompanies the speech acts. The findings indicated that the textbooks did not always provide accurate and sufficient pragmatic content. Nguyen (2011c) pointed out that it is necessary to develop models to teach pragmatics that include adequate explanation of rules of use in order to facilitate learners' development of pragmatic competence in the target language and urged textbooks writers to broaden the range and variety of cultural information to be included in the curriculum.

This study touched upon a timely issue in language teaching in Vietnam: textbooks and materials development. This issue urgently needs attention because in Vietnam there seems to be a lack of a systematic approach to designing textbooks and teaching materials. However, the process of analysing the textbooks was not explicitly described and more importantly, this study only looked at speech acts, one type of pragmatic information.

In a recent study, Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013) investigated many ESL textbooks for pragmatics and oral fluency activities on a page-by-page basis. Twelve integrated skills textbook series with a total of 48 textbooks from the most popular publishers such as Oxford

University Press, Pearson Education, Longman, Pearson Longman, and Cambridge University Press were examined to see to what extent they presented pragmatic content and fostered oral fluency. Pragmatic focus included speech acts, conversation strategies such as interpreting conversation cues and illocutionary force, and idioms while oral fluency activities were categorised into formulaic speech, role-plays, repetition, and preplanning.

In terms of pragmatic content, it was found that there was a lack of consistency in coverage of pragmatics as well as a lack of systematic approach to pragmatics in most of the series. In addition, there was a paucity of metapragmatic information and contextualisation. With respect to oral fluency activities, it was found that formulaic speech and role-play activities were well-represented while repetition and especially preplanning were much less attended to. However, oral fluency was not a central interest of the surveyed textbooks.

The strength of Diepenbroek and Derwing's (2013) project was that it covered as many as 48 textbooks published by famous and influential publishers in the English textbook market so that it could, to some extent, provide an overall picture of how textbooks presented pragmatic content and facilitated oral fluency. However, the exclusion of textbooks written by local writers may be a weakness of this study. It was not known how textbooks designed by local authors deal with the issues mentioned in the study.

Pragmatic content incorporated into three EFL textbooks for high school students in Iran was also the focus of a study by Gholami (2015). *English Book 2, English Book 3, and Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students* were explored with respect to speech acts, politeness strategies, lexical and syntactic classification, tense in temporal deixis, adjacency pairs, and hesitation marks.

The results revealed the dominance of speech acts in the types of pragmatic knowledge, but a lack of metapragmatic information to accompany the speech acts and politeness strategies. There was also a dearth of hesitation markers and adjacency pairs, which partly contributed to the artificiality of the language in the textbooks. On the whole, it seemed that Iranian EFL textbooks writers were not interested in developing pragmatic competence for learners when they incorporated pragmatic information into these textbooks. Gholami (2015)

suggested including more pragmatic knowledge into textbooks to raise the authenticity of the textbook language and to improve pragmatic ability for Iranian EFL students.

Gholami's (2015) study corroborates previous research on textbooks, which showed a lack of metapragmatic discussion and authenticity by exploring pragmatic content with a range of types of pragmatic knowledge. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the textbook *Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students* did not seem to be a good choice from its title. This book is not expected to develop pragmatic competence for its users.

These reviewed studies have reached a similar conclusion in that there is a lack of pragmatic content in the surveyed textbooks. Specifically, there is a paucity of metapragmatic information and contextualisation to accompany speech acts and politeness strategies (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Gholami, 2015; Nguyen, 2011c; Vellenga, 2004). More importantly, Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013) found there was a lack of consistency in coverage of pragmatics and a lack of systematic approach to pragmatics in most of the 12 series of the textbooks they analysed.

The literature review also found that textbooks written by both native authors (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Diepenbroke & Derwing, 2013; Grant & Starks, 2001; Vellenga, 2004; Wong, 2002;) and non-native writers (Gholami, 2015; Ji, 2007; Nguyen, 2011c) did not always provide accurate and adequate pragmatic content and that there exists a gap between real language and the language contained in textbooks (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Gilmore, 2004; Wong, 2002).

It was also found that there is an urgent need to develop English textbooks that provide authentic language and are rich in pragmatic knowledge as well as metapragmatic information and cultural information to help learners develop their pragmatic competence. In the Vietnam context, this need seems to be more urgent. So far, there have been no English textbooks designed by Vietnamese experts for university students. As previously discussed, the locally written textbooks used for upper secondary students showed a paucity of pragmatic knowledge (Nguyen, 2011c). Also, there has been no research on pragmatic content contained in textbooks and curricula at the tertiary level in Vietnam. The present

research aims to see how much pragmatic knowledge is contained in the English textbooks and curriculum used in the targeted university. The empirical evidence from this research will illuminate this area and will allow implications to be drawn with regard to instructional material development in teaching English pragmatics at the tertiary level.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has traced the developments of research on pragmatics in terms of understanding and definitions and reviewed systematically previous studies on pragmatics in a thematic approach. In the process, links between the studies reviewed relating to the various themes were forged with the present study. These themes can be broadly grouped into four categories: (1) instruction and L2 pragmatic development, (2) teaching English and pragmatics in Vietnam, (3) research on cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and (4) pragmatic content in textbooks and curricula. Main findings from the literature review are discussed in detail and they include: (a) when instruction is appropriately taught and measured, pragmatic features can be taught and instruction is generally more effective than exposure; (b) both explicit and implicit teaching of pragmatic features benefit learners. However, the question of which approach is more effective remains inconclusive; (c) studies conducted in Vietnam showed that it is necessary to revise the curriculum as well as textbooks and teaching materials and to reconsider appropriate teaching methods and practices; (d) learners' mother tongue influences their pragmatic development as well as their English proficiency in general and EFL speakers and native speakers of English differ in their use and perceptions of speech acts and other aspects of pragmatics; and (e) there is a discrepancy between naturally occurring language and the language found in textbooks and textbooks do not always provide accurate and adequate pragmatic content.

The findings above showed the effects and benefits of teaching pragmatics. However, as previously argued, the teaching of pragmatics seems to be neglected in Vietnam and there has been no research on teaching pragmatics at a university in Vietnam. The majority of studies on pragmatics have been conducted in Western contexts. There is a need to gather empirical evidence from research conducted in different, particular eastern contexts to strike

a balance. This study intends to fill this niche. Furthermore, a connection was found that there is interaction between learners' mother tongue and their target language.

The literature review has also identified differences in how EFL speakers and native speakers of English use and perceive speech acts and other aspects of pragmatics—an issue of much attention to research on cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, particularly the relationship between culture and identity in language teaching and learning.

A further link that emerged from the literature review is the role of the curriculum materials and tasks for teaching pragmatics in the classroom. The findings as reported in the reviewed studies indicated a general lack of pragmatic content in the existing textbooks for ESL/EFL teaching. This is also one of the research foci of this thesis with a hypothesis that textbooks used for Vietnamese EFL teaching and learning lack a systematic treatment of pragmatics.

Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is derived from research and theories of three intellectual traditions: symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching. These three broad theoretical perspectives are closely interrelated, providing a conceptual framework and an analytical tool to inform and explore the core theme of teaching pragmatics in a Vietnamese university context. The key dynamics and their interplay can be illustrated in the following diagram.
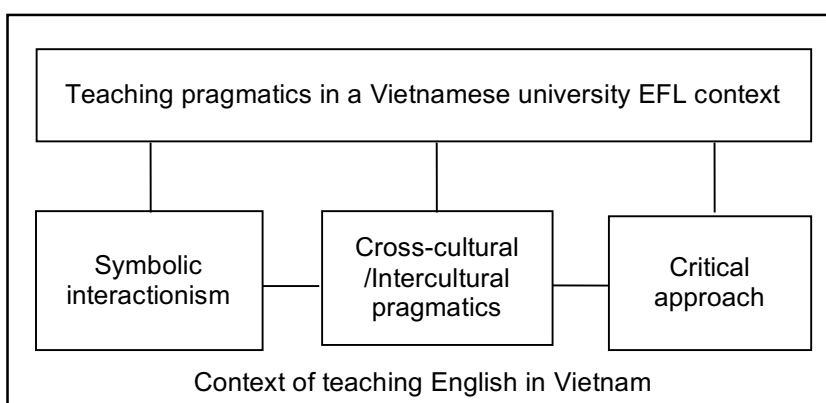
Figure 3.1   **Three theoretical constructs in relation to teaching pragmatics**

3.1 Symbolic interactionism

In Blumer's (1969) terms, the foundations of symbolic interactionism were laid by George Herbert Mead, who described symbolic interactionism in his posthumous work, *Mind, Self and Society* (Mead, 1934). This seminal work is actually a collection of Mead's lectures and papers compiled by his students at the University of Chicago. Mead's most prominent student was Blumer (1969), who later developed and refined symbolic interactionism, and who made the following three fundamental assumptions: (1) "that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them"; (2) "that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows"; and (3) "that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (p. 2).

The central idea of symbolic interactionism is that humans, through the process of interaction with others, learn their basic symbols, their formation of self, and the definitions they affix to social objects (Denzin, 1978; 1989). Interaction is considered to be symbolic because it is concerned with the handling of symbols, words, meanings and languages (Denzin, 1978; 1989).

According to Blumer (1969, pp. 6-20), symbolic interactionism is grounded on a number of tenets or "root images". These are "nature of human society or human group life", "nature of social interaction", "nature of object", "the human being as an acting organism", "nature of human action", and "interlinkage of action". Some of the key ideas in several of these tenets will be mentioned. Society consists of individuals that interact with one another. There are two levels of social interaction in human society: "the conversation of gestures" and "the use of significant symbols" (Mead, 1934, as cited in Blumer, 1969, p. 8). Blumer (1969) named them "non-symbolic interaction" and "symbolic interaction", respectively. Non-symbolic interaction takes place when one reacts directly to the action of another without interpreting that action whereas symbolic interaction involves interpretation of that action. People in society, when interacting with one another, are required to take account of the actions of one another as they establish their own actions. They perform this by a reciprocal process of showing to others how to act and of interpreting the indications made by others.

As Morris (1972) wrote in the introduction to Mead's *Mind, Self, and Society*, "Indeed, every action of the individual at either the non-linguistic or linguistic levels of communication changes the social structure to some degree, slightly for the most part, greatly in the case of the genius and the leader" (p. xxv). The human being is seen as an organism that is able to respond to others on both the non-symbolic and symbolic levels. He can do this by possessing a "self", which means that a human being is an "object to himself; and he acts towards himself and guides himself in his actions towards others on the basis of his own action" (Blumer, 1969, p. 12).

3.1.1 The "I" and the "me" in the "self"

Mead (1934) divides the human being's self into the "I" and the "me". The "I" is the response of the individual to the attitudes of the others. The "me" refers to the attitudes and expectations of the others which the individual himself assumes. In this relationship of the "I" and the "me", the "I" responds to "a social situation which is within the experience of the individual (Mead, 1934, p. 177). These two are separate but co-exist within the "self", and each supports the other; they appear in the organism's experience and constitute the personality.

Second language learning becomes a "process of resocialisation through interaction with an emerging stock of signs and meanings in an emerging social group, which provides the semiotic tools and interpretive mechanism for re-producing and re-signifying meanings in relation to group norms" (Lam & Kramsch, 2003, p. 147). Individuals in a social group or society may form their interaction according to the ideologies and norms shared by that society. The process is the same in a monolingual/cultural society as in a bilingual/cultural transnational context including an EFL classroom.

The adoption of symbolic interactionism in this study is based on the premise that learners of English have interaction with, and are influenced by, their learning and other people around them, that is, their peers, teachers, parents or "the generalized others" as Mead (1934) puts it. Learners possess their own personality, identity and culture (their own selves). Therefore, when investigating teachers' perceptions, it is necessary to look at how they acquired pragmatic knowledge as this will influence the way they teach English in general and pragmatics in particular. Thus, teachers are viewed as participants in the interactive process of social and intellectual encounters as language learners and teachers.

An approach of symbolic interactionism attempts to understand the social groups studied by figuring out the relationship between the social structure and especially, "the meanings by which individuals interpret and create their social world" (Byrne & Heyman, 1997, p. 95). From this point of view, EFL teachers' perceptions under examination are largely shaped by their way of learning English, their professional training, and the perspectives from which

they view and teach English. As a key focus, this study examined in detail teachers' perceptions of pragmatic knowledge by analysing the way a group of Vietnamese university EFL teachers view, interpret and routinise a social world, which is their English classroom they have created. Teachers, on one hand, interact with others in the way they interact and respond to others as human organisms. On the other hand, they do so by interpreting how other people see them.

Furthermore, symbolic interactionism is useful in discussing the interaction between L1 and L2 as well as the culture of the learners and the culture of the speakers of the target language. As shown in the literature interview, Vietnamese EFL learners transfer their way of using L1 to L2 (Nguyen, 2005; 2008). This transfer shows the influence that L1 has on L2. Vietnamese EFL teachers, therefore, may need to take this influence into account when they plan their lessons. Taking a symbolic interactionist perspective means that Vietnamese EFL teachers need to change their perceptions of the type of English they desire to teach their students. To be specific, the English that Vietnamese students learn will be a variety of English that is influenced by the Vietnamese language and is appropriate to Vietnamese culture. The most salient influence is probably shown in the accent. Other influences include the grammatical structures and lexicons, and at a deeper level, pragmatic and cultural norms.

The influences mentioned here coincide with Wang's (2014) list of four types of transfer: sounds transfer, words transfer, syntax transfer and culture transfer. Wang (2014) observes that L2 learners' accent is greatly influenced by their first language and thus, diverges from the native speakers' accent. In Vietnam, teachers and learners of English tend to have a preference for native-speaker English, especially British and American English (Ton & Pham, 2010). This has raised the issue of practicality to acquire a native-speaker accent in language learning for students and teachers in a foreign language context, an issue which will be examined further in the light of research on critical language awareness in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

The employment of symbolic interactionism has assisted the researcher in structuring the literature review, designing the questionnaire and questions for the interview, discussing the

results, and proposing recommendations of the study. Specifically, the spirit of symbolic interactionism is related to a finding gained from the literature review that learners' mother tongue influences their pragmatic development as well as their English proficiency in general. Items 14 and 17 in the questionnaire and questions 11 and 12 in the interview were informed by symbolic interactionism. Section 6.1.5 about influence of the mother tongue in the Discussion Chapter and Sections 7.2.2.2 and 7.3.1 in the conclusion were all based on this theoretical construct.

Teaching pragmatics is also related to teaching culture. The language-culture relationship, much in agreement with Mead's symbolic interactionism, can be explained or analysed by the theory of CCP, which is described in the following section.

3.2 Cross-cultural pragmatics/Intercultural pragmatics

3.2.1 Language and culture

Culture is mostly intangible, but present in people's everyday activities. Culture is described as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 4; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6). According to these writers, culture is always a collective phenomenon because people who live in the same social environment share the common features existing in that environment. In other words, culture designates how a person thinks, acts and feels as a member of a group and in relation to other members of that same group (Trosborg, 2010).

Culture is defined as "the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notion of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving" (Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 1998, p. 36). This broad definition points out different aspects of life from spiritual and intangible concepts such as religion, beliefs, and attitudes to physical and tangible things such as behavious and artifacts. Figure 3.2 shows different elements of culture in the form of an iceberg. According

to Ting-Toomey (1999), what can be seen or heard is only the top layers of cultural artifacts and verbal and non-verbal symbols; to really understand a culture, we need to match its hidden values precisely with its corresponding norms, meanings, and symbols. The way people think, act, and behave is governed by these underlying values and beliefs within the confinement of the culture(s). The hidden set of values and beliefs makes it hard for an outsider of a culture to understand it. In the case of a cross-cultural encounter, this renders it a more complex process.

Cultural artifacts
(e.g., fashion, popular culture)

Language and verbal symbols
Non-verbal symbols

Symbolic meanings
Cultural norms
Cultural values
Cultural beliefs
Cultural traditions

Universal human needs
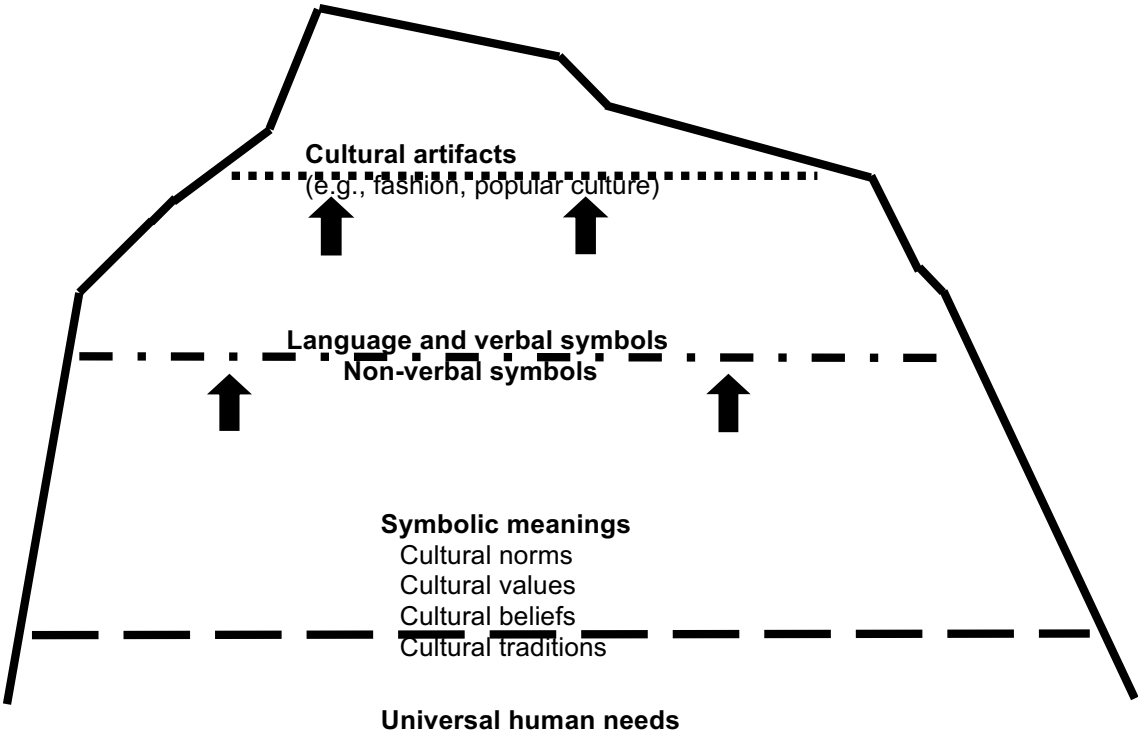
Source: Ting-Toomey (1999, p. 10)

Figure 3.2   Culture as an iceberg metaphor

The relationship between language and culture has received attention in the field of language education for the past three decades or more (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Culture and language are closely related and interwoven (Kramsch, 1998; Sharifian & Palmer, 2007) and influence each other (Trosborg, 2010). According to Garret and Baquedano-Lopez (2002), language is "the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, negotiated and contested, reproduced and transformed" (p. 339). Language and culture cannot be separated. Therefore, understanding the culture of the target language can aid learners in learning that language. An implication that can be drawn for Vietnamese teachers of EFL is that teaching culture plays a crucial role in teaching

68

English. The present study is about pragmatic teaching in a university in Vietnam. Pragmatics examines the relations between linguistic forms and their functions in a particular context (Cekic, 2010). This context is greatly related to the culture of the language. Another concept that is related to the relationship between culture and language is identity and its tie with culture.

3.2.2 Identity and culture

Identity is defined by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as "the social positioning of self and other" (p. 586), viewed as the emergent product and therefore is a social and cultural phenomenon, and it is shaped, realised, and negotiated through interaction with others. In other words, identity is formed through modes of communication that show how people see who they are and "how they want to be seen by others" (Paltridge, 2015, p. 23). Developing identity has become an important issue in language teaching (Paltridge, 2015).

Identity is typically seen as constructed, not given, and language plays an essential role in forming identity (Block, 2006; Hall, 1997; Joseph, 2004; Riley, 2007). Similarly, Norton (2010) argues that "every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world" (p. 350). This argument highlights the relationship between the use of language and issues of identity and power. Phan (2008) goes further by claiming that identity is communicated, confirmed, constructed and negotiated through language. It can be concluded that language, culture and identity are intimately interrelated.

The present study explores Vietnamese teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in EFL teaching. Specifically, it examines whether teachers think it is important for their EFL learners to keep their identity and L1 culture when learning a foreign language. The complexity of this issue and answers to address the related research questions as well as implications for teaching and learning will be examined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

3.2.3 Cross-cultural pragmatics

Cross-cultural pragmatics investigates how speakers' use of language is influenced by their underlying values, beliefs, cultural assumptions, and communication strategies (LoCastro,

2003; 2012). Yule (1996) pointed out that "the study of differences in expectations based on cultural schemata is part of a broad area of investigation generally known as cross-cultural pragmatics" (p .87). Cross-cultural studies deal mainly with speech act realisations in different cultures, cultural breakdowns, and pragmatic failures (Kecskes, 2012). The principal concept in CCP is that members in different cultural societies speak differently and act differently (Wierzbicka, 1991).

Because cultural differences may cause misunderstandings or communication breakdowns, it is necessary for teachers to develop cross-cultural competence for their learners. Part of this job is to raise cross-cultural awareness among learners. Cross-cultural awareness involves discovering and understanding one's own cultural norms and values as well as the cultural patterns of others (Damen, 1987). There are three levels of cross-cultural awareness: "awareness of very visible cultural traits", "awareness of significant and subtle contrastive traits", and "awareness of an insider's point of view of a given culture" (Hanvey, 1979, p. 53, as cited in Damen, 1987, p. 141).

LoCastro (2003) classifies CCP into two subcategories: contrastive pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. Regarding contrastive pragmatics, researchers compare speech acts between cultures and languages to see how the users' backgrounds are reflected in their linguistic actions. Interlanguage pragmatics investigates non-native speakers' use and acquisition of pragmatic competence of a second or a foreign language.

Meanwhile, interlanguage pragmatics and CCP differ in the following way, according to Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) and Boxer (2002). Interlanguage pragmatics focuses on how learners acquire and make use of pragmatic norms in L2 (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993) whereas CCP recognises that individuals from two different communities interact with one another according to their own set of rules or norms, often entailing a "clash in expectations" and misperceptions about the other group (Boxer, 2002, p. 151).

These misperceptions are usually reciprocal with native speakers misunderstanding non-native speakers and vice-versa (Singh, Lele, & Martohardjono, 1988). For example, Wierzbicka (2003, p. xv) mentioned Chinese immigrants in Canberra who could be perceived

70

as offensive when they used the imperative (e.g., "cut down that branch – we don't want it on our side of the fence") talking to their Anglo neighbours. In this example, a lack of understanding of culture and language use can indeed create undesired tension between the interlocutors of two different cultures. The Chinese did not mean to be impolite when using the imperative, but were judged to be so by their Anglo neighbours, who did not know that using imperatives is not usually considered to be rude in the Chinese way of speaking.

In this study interlanguage pragmatics is positioned under CCP. Cross-cultural pragmatics maintains that for effective cross-cultural understanding and communication, it is important not only to know the conventions of a given society but also the relationship between these conventions and cultural values (Wierzbicka, 2003). This theory will be helpful to examine the differences in the conventions and cultural values between the cultures of non-native English users and native speakers' culture.

3.2.4 Intercultural pragmatics

Intercultural pragmatics is a newly emerging discipline originating from the fact that communication across languages and cultures has posed a new challenge for research in pragmatics in the 21st century (Kecskes & Romero-Trillo, 2013). Intercultural pragmatics investigates "how the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language and, usually, represent different cultures" (Kecskes, 2012, p. 608).

Intercultural pragmatics aims to view intercultural interaction from a multilingual rather than a monolingual perspective (Kecskes & Romero-Trillo, 2013). In the present era, communication has become more and more intercultural and more and more people who use ELF have to rely on intercultural pragmatic knowledge to be successful language users. Research in intercultural pragmatics focuses on four main areas: interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers of a language, lingua franca communication in which none of the speakers have the same L1, multilingual discourse, and language use and development of individuals who speak more than one language (Kecskes, 2012). Discussion

of intercultural pragmatics would be incomplete without mentioning intercultural communication, interculturality, and intraculturality.

3.2.4.1   Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication (IC) is defined as "acts of communication taken by individuals identified with groups exhibiting intergroup variation in shared social and cultural patterns" (Damen, 1987, p. 23). Intercultural communication as an academic field has developed from theories of linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication and provided theoretical foundations for research/practice in cross-cultural awareness, intercultural communicative skills/training, and second language learning/teaching (Damen, 1987).

Intercultural communication takes place "whenever a person from one culture sends a message to be processed by a person from a different culture" (McDaniel, Samovar, & Porter, 2009, p. 7). It is a complex notion and deserves attention because when communication becomes more intercultural, knowing how to communicate with other speakers of different cultures is a crucial competence. IC can pose challenges to interactants who are ignorant of cultural differences or do not know how to behave properly when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds.

3.2.4.2   Interculturality and intraculturality

Intracultural communication is "the type of communication that takes place between members of the same dominant culture, but with slightly different values" (Samovar & Porter, 2001, p. 95) while IC is the communication between people from two or more different cultures. Interculturality is a phenomenon that is not only formed through interaction between speakers in the communication process but is also regulated by cultural models and norms that represent the different speech communities to which the interactants belong (Kecskes, 2011). That means interculturality occurs in particular contexts and situations and depends on static cultural norms. It has "both an a priori side and an emergent side that occur simultaneously in the communicative process" (Kecskes, 2011, p. 376). To be competent interlocutors, it is important for speakers to pay attention to cultural features of other

72

speakers as well as the interaction taking place at the time so that they can deal with miscommunication and breakdowns that may occur. This is illustrated in the following conversation involving students from Brazil, Colombia, and Hong Kong (Kecskes, 2011, p. 376).

> B: Have you heard about *au pair* before?
>
> Col: No, what is *au pair*?
>
> HK: It's a French word.
>
> B: … we come as an exchange to take care of kids.
>
> Col: What kids?
>
> B: Kids in the host family. We live with the host family.
>
> HK: By the way, how about the kids? How do you know what to do with them?
>
> B: We have to go to training.

In this conversation, speakers of Portuguese, Spanish, and Cantonese use ELF. They establish an interculture, within which they discuss the French term *au pair*. This term designates prior knowledge which is shared by some but not all of them. They achieve a smooth discussion and there is no miscommunication because each interlocutor makes an effort to use semantically transparent language.

The main difference between cross-cultural communication and IC is that "While cross-cultural communication is usually viewed as a study of a particular idea(s) or concept(s) within several cultures that compares one culture to another on the aspect of interest, IC focuses on interactions among people from different cultures" (Kecskes, 2004, pp. 1-2). However, for the purposes of this study, CCP and intercultural pragmatics are used interchangeably.

An adoption of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics in this study means that culture is an important element in research design, data collection and analysis. The importance of understanding the target culture when learning a language has been well-acknowledged. For Vietnamese EFL learners, it is necessary to develop understanding of not only the culture of native speakers of English but also the cultures of other non-native speakers. In other words, they need to take an intercultural perspective when they communicate with others.

73

Vietnamese EFL teachers can help their students understand the underlying values and beliefs of other cultures by asking them to compare and contrast their culture with other cultures. Chapter 7 will provide more details on teaching cultural knowledge. The following section describes three key competences that are considered to be important in teaching and learning pragmatics.

3.2.4.3 Pragmatic competence, communicative competence, intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence

Pragmatic competence refers to "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes" (Chomsky, 1978, p. 224, as cited in Kasher, 1998, p. 104). Later, it was broadly defined by Taguchi (2009) as "the ability to use language appropriately in a social context" (p. 1). It was also defined as "the ability of the second language learner to use language according to the pragmatic rules that govern the use of linguistic utterances as used by native adult speakers" (Nureddeen, 2008, p. 280). Pragmatic competence is a "set of internalised rules of how to use language in socio-culturally appropriate ways, taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place" (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 19). The last definition by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) describes pragmatic competence in the most detail. It refers to rules of how to use language appropriately in social and cultural contexts and emphasises the roles of participants and context in the communication process.

Being pragmatically competent requires knowledge of both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (see 2.1.1 for definitions) as well as processing skills to use the knowledge in real communication (Taguchi, 2009). The importance of pragmatic competence has been pronounced both in theory and practice (Taguchi, 2009). Theoretically, pragmatic competence plays a crucial role in models of communicative competence (Bachman, 1989; 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; 2010; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980), interactional competence (Young, 2000; Young & He, 1998), and symbolic competence (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). On the practical side, these theoretical frameworks of communicative competence have been used in second language teaching and assessment (Taguchi, 2009).

The notion of communicative competence was introduced by Hymes (1972) and is formulated in four considerations below.

(a)   Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;

(b)   Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;

(c)   Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate*;

(d)   Whether (and to what degree) something is done. (pp. 284-286)

Hymes' (1972) introduction of the notion of communicative competence was a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence. While Chomsky's (1965) concept of competence is concerned with an abstract set of rules which is grounded on a language faculty and is independent of actual usage, Hymes' (1972) concept of competence refers to the knowledge needed to adequately communicate in real situations (Duranti, 1998). Hymes' communicative competence points out the connection between linguistic knowledge, social knowledge, and context.

Although Hymes' (1972) notion of communicative competence has influenced a considerable number of subsequent writers on communicative competence and intercultural communicative competence, it has not been without criticism. One of the limitations of this notion is that Hymes' communicative competence hinges on an idea of a native speaker who functions in a given speech community of which he has extensive knowledge, and this idea poses problems in the context of IC and ELF, as it may be hard or impossible to define what a typical member of a community is and the common knowledge that he shares with other members of the community (Baker, 2015).

Around the same time as Hymes, Savignon (1972) defined communicative competence as the ability of language leaners to communicate with other speakers, to form meaning, although this ability is different from their ability to perform on tests of grammatical and lexical knowledge. Communicative competence refers to the ability of a speaker to use language in a communicative way (Cook, 2001). This characterisation of communication competence has been around for more than four decades, but is still relevant now, at least in

the context of Vietnam. As discussed in Chapter 1, Vietnamese EFL learners may score high on examinations and tests but fail to communicate effectively in English.

The concept of intercultural competence has been important within IC research (Baker, 2015). The difference between cultural competence and intercultural competence is mentioned by Fantini (2012). Cultural competence is something that is developed subconsciously through a process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, language, and social skills through interaction with their first language, culture and society, and it is something all people have to communicate successfully in their first culture. Intercultural competence requires the ability to communicate with people from other cultures, and it is something that needs to be explicitly acquired. It is not developed naturally like cultural competence.

Intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence are at times used interchangeably (Jandt, 2010). However, according to Baker (2015), intercultural communicative competence actually combines intercultural competence and communicative competence. Intercultural competence may be criticised for focusing on communicative strategies while paying little attention to linguistic competence whereas communicative competence can be condemned for concentrating too narrowly on linguistic competence.

Pragmatic competence, communicative competence, intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence are mentioned in different models. The following models are discussed because they are influential and relevant to this study.

3.2.4.4   Canale and Swain's model

Canale and Swain (1980) and later Canale (1983) suggested a theoretical framework for communicative competence consisting of four main components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence includes features and rules of the language such as vocabulary, phonology, morphology, syntax, and sentence-grammar semantics. Grammatical

competence is considered an essential component because it is needed to understand and express the literal meaning of utterances.

Sociolinguistic competence deals with appropriate use of utterances in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on such factors as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction. Appropriate use of utterances consists of both appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form. Appropriateness of meaning addresses how communicative functions, attitudes, and ideas are considered to be suitable in a particular context. Appropriateness of form concerns the ability to convey meaning via an appropriate verbal and non-verbal form within a sociolinguistic context.

Discourse competence refers to mastering how to incorporate grammatical forms and meanings to produce a unified spoken or written text in various types of text. Unity of a text is established with the use of cohesion devices such as pronouns, synonyms, ellipsis, conjunctions and parallelism and consideration of coherence in meaning.

Strategic competence is made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that deal with communication breakdowns due to difficulties in actual communication or to a lack of competence in one or more of the other elements of communicative competence and to improve the effectiveness of communication.

The principal goal of a communicative approach to is to facilitate the integration of these four competences, which are of equal importance in this model of communicative competence, (Canale, 1983) and to strike a balance between the four components to achieve mastery of the language in overall learner competence (Trosborg, 1994).

3.2.4.5   Bachman's model

Bachman (1989; 1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996; 2010) proposed a model in which communicative language ability is divided into *language competence, strategic competence,* and *psychophysiological skills*. Under the umbrella of language competence are *organisational competence* and *pragmatic competence*. Organisational competence includes *grammatical competence* and *textual competence*, while pragmatic competence has

illocutionary and *sociolinguistic competences* under its scope. Figure 3.3 describes language competence and its components and sub-components in Bachman's (1990) model of communicative competence.

To be grammatically competent means to master knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology while in order to be textually competent, one needs to have knowledge of cohesion and rhetorical organisation.

Illocutionary competence is defined as the "knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions" (Bachman, 1990, p. 90). This competence, introduced by theories of speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), involves the ability to perform ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions (Bachman, 1990).

To be able to perform *ideational functions* means knowing how to express or interpret meaning in terms of one's experience of the real world. These functions include using language to inform, to express or exchange information about ideas, knowledge, or feelings. *Manipulative functions* include the ability to use language to affect the world around us. These include instrumental functions, which are performed to tell other people to do things for us; regulatory functions, which are performed to control what other people do; and interpersonal functions, which are used to form and maintain interpersonal relationships. "Knowledge of heuristic functions enables us to use language to extend our knowledge of the world around us. Knowledge of imaginative functions enables us to use language to create an imaginary world or extend the world around us for humourous or aesthetic purposes" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 47).

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to perform language functions appropriately in a given context and is divided into sensitivity to differences in dialects or variety, to differences in register, and to naturalness and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech.

Sensitivity to differences in dialects or variety means knowing the features of social and regional varieties of language use. Sensitivity to register includes familiarity with different levels of formality in language use. Naturalness means being able to use expressions that

78

are not only structurally correct but also expressed in the same manner as a native speaker. Knowledge of cultural references includes understanding extended meanings given by a certain culture to particular events, places, or people while figures of speech means understanding figurative language such as metaphors, similes, personifications, and symbols.

Source: Bachman (1990, p 87)

```
Language          Organisational      Grammatical       Vocabulary
competence        competence          competence
                                                         Morphology

                                                         Syntax

                                                         Phonology
                                                         /Graphology

                                      Textual            Cohesion
                                      competence         organisation

                                                         Rhetorical
                                                         functions

                  Pragmatic          Illocutionary       Ideational
                  competence         competence          functions

                                                         Manipulative
                                                         functions

                                                         Heuristic
                                                         functions

                                                         Imaginative
                                                         functions

                                     Sociolinguistic     Sensitivity to
                                     competence          dialects or variety

                                                         Sensitivity to
                                                         register

                                                         Sensitivity to
                                                         naturalness

                                                         Cultural
                                                         references and
                                                         figures of speech
```

Figure 3.3   Components of language competence

From these two theoretical frameworks, it is obvious that pragmatic competence, or sociolinguistic competence in Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) model, is an essential component of communicative competence. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Vietnamese university English students' inability to use the language appropriately may be due to the neglect of the teaching of pragmatics. This is a claim that needs to be validated by research evidence gathered from this thesis as an enhanced understanding of Vietnamese teachers'/learners' pragmatic competence can be achieved by a detailed examination of teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their teaching of pragmatic knowledge.

3.2.4.6   Byram's (1997) model for intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate successfully with people from cultures one recognises as being different from one's own (Guilherme, 2000). Speakers with intercultural communicative competence have the ability to be aware of, respect, tolerate, and understand cultural differences (Fantini, 1995). The most comprehensive description of intercultural communicative competence has been provided by Byram and his fellow researchers (Byram, 1997; 2008; 2012; Byram & Fleming, 1998; Byram & Grundy, 2003). Byram (1997) proposed a model for intercultural communicative competence. This model originated from van Ek's (1986) model of communicative ability, which consists of six competences: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, socio-cultural competence, and social competence. Byram's (1997) intercultural competence includes the following five factors:

Attitudes: Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (p. 50).

Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (p. 51).

Skills of interpreting and relating: Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own (p. 52).

Skills of discovery and interaction: Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (p. 52).

Critical cultural awareness/political education: An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (p. 53).

Intercultural competence involves being aware of and respectful to cultural difference and the ability to "see oneself through the eyes of others" (Kramsch, 2005, p. 553). Acquiring intercultural competence can help speakers successfully communicate with other people from different cultures by understanding not only the language but also the cultural phenomena displayed in the interaction in which they are involved (Byram, 1995). To be interculturally competent means not only having competence in the target language and the target culture but also having competence to deal with other non-native speakers who use a common target language (Fantini, 1995). I argue that learning English is not solely learning the culture of native speakers, but more importantly, learning to be interculturally competent. This entails a shift in the focus in the aims of language learning. If the native speaker is replaced by the intercultural speaker as a model for learners, "the implication that they should submit themselves to the values of the native speaker and try to imitate a native speaker standard grammar and pronunciation disappears" (Byram, 1997, p. 112).

Recently, there have been various definitions of intercultural competence. Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) define intercultural competence as a "complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 12). Witte (2014) looks at intercultural competence in a wider sense. Intercultural competence includes "domain-specific knowledge", "(meta)-cognitive strategies", and "emotional dimensions" (Witte, 2014, p. 336). Domain-specific knowledge is knowledge which relates to the subject matter as such. (Meta)-cognitive strategies include those of approaching and coping with the intercultural problem at hand based on one's own knowledge of one's own cognitive abilities. Emotional dimensions refer to attitudes and feelings to dealing with the problem.

In Witte's (2014) definition, intercultural competence does not only include knowledge of cultural patterns and social norms of interaction in everyday life but also needs to be extended into emotional, habitual, and psychological domains. There is a shift from intolerant and ethnocentric attitudes to empathy, adaptability, and flexibility. The definitions suggested by Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) and Witte (2014) supplement Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence.

A lack of intercultural knowledge can cause misunderstanding in communication between speakers of different cultural backgrounds. For example, intercultural conflict can be observed in the following conversation taking place on a Sunday afternoon in the winter of 1986 in Brussels. A is a Western European; B is an African.

> A: Do you want a cup of coffee?
>
> B: No, thank you, I'm not hungry.
>
> A: Do you want a cup of COFFEE?
>
> B: No, thank you, (short pause) I'm not hungry. (pause)
>
> A: Would you like to go and have a drink?
>
> B: Yeah, sure, it's cold outside.
>
> A: Some coffee perhaps?
>
> B: Sure, fine. (Blommaert, 1991, pp. 23-24)

In this dialogue, misunderstanding happens due to different perceptions the two speakers have of the word "coffee". In the African's culture, coffee is considered a kind of food whereas in Western European culture it is a drink. B was a member of the Haya people of Tanzania who consider coffee as a symbol of friendship, hospitality, and prosperity. The host offers some dry coffee beans to a visitor to chew for hospitality and appreciation. Therefore, the notion of coffee as a food held by B is in conflict with A's categorisation of coffee as a hot drink. The conflict is resolved only when A does not give up and attempts to negotiate by asking a couple of questions to ensure what he wants to communicate is understood by B. This miscommunication is resonated to the incident I alluded to at the beginning of this thesis, though in this instance, the matter was resolved via the negotiation of meaning, a

process which is crucial in IC. Hence, the issue of language learners' critical awareness in learning the target language is also raised.

Cross-cultural/Intercultural pragmatics has aided the researcher throughout the research process. The adoption of this theory helped shape the literature review, design the questionnaire, the interview, and the framework for textbook analysis, report and discuss the research results as well as write the conclusion. For example, Section 2.5 in Chapter 2 is about studies of cross-cultural/Intercultural pragmatics. Items 9, 10, 14, 16, 19, and 21 in the questionnaire and questions 3 and 5 in the interview were informed by cross-cultural/Intercultural pragmatics. Sections 5.1.2.3, 5.1.3.3, 5.2.1.3, 5.2.1.4, 5.4.2.4 in Chapter 5 and Sections 6.1.3, 6.2.3 in Chapter 6 were all presented and discussed with reference to this theory.

3.3 Critical approach to language teaching

Critical approach is a pedagogy to teaching that "seeks to examine critically the conditions under which language is used and the social and cultural purposes of its use, rather than transmitting the dominant view of linguistic, cultural and other kinds of information" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 134). According to Janks (1991), a critical approach to language teaching tries to find relationships between language and power and should "provide students with an understanding of the dialectic in which social relations shape linguistic forms and linguistic forms shape social relations" (p. 192). With the same perspective, Martinez (2003) proposed a critical applied linguistic approach which "directly confronts and contests the power issues that abound in language education" (p. 6).

Considering teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), Pennycook (1999) described three main themes that form the foundations of critical approaches to TESOL: critical domains, transformative pedagogies, and critical theory as problematising practice. Critical work has concentrated on such issues as class, race, or gender and has recently attempted to extend the scope of these issues to focus on sexuality, ethnicity, and representation of Otherness while trying to examine how these domains are interlinked (Pennycook, 1999).

This theoretical framework is drawn mainly from research informed by the perspective of English as a lingua franca (ELF). According to Partridge (1958), the term lingua franca as in *la lingua franca* originally meant "the language of the Franks" (p. 234), which consisted basically of Italian but also contained Spanish, French, Greek and Arabic, and it originally served as the common language of the Mediterranean Sea and ports. The current meaning of lingua franca is extended to refer to a common language used by people who do not share a mother tongue to communicate with each other (Kirkpatrick, 2011b). The term *English as a lingua franca* is "a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages" (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339).

Nowadays, the world has become smaller due to the ease of travel and the development of technology. English has become an international language and a lingua franca. The implication from this is to reconsider the process of teaching and learning English. Learners of EFL in Vietnam have a tendency to attempt to speak like a native speaker, that is, to acquire an American or British accent. This is understandable, but seems to be an unrealistic goal. Instead of trying to develop learners' native-like pronunciation and language use, Vietnamese teachers need to teach students how to communicate effectively with native speakers as well as other non-native speakers who speak ELF. This issue will be revisited in Chapters 6 and 7.

Kachru's discussion of the concept "world Englishes" can be considered as important to teaching non-native Englishes (Kachru, 1992a; 1997; 2006). Kachru's (1992a) models for non-native Englishes proposed five points when suggesting non-native speakers' changes in their attitude toward English. Two of these arguments are relevant to the present study. They are: (1) it is necessary to distinguish between the national and the international uses of English, and (2) non-native speakers need to develop an identity with the local model of English without feeling that it is a "deficient" model (Kachru, 1992a, p. 68). In Vietnam, there currently seems to be a lack of belief in Vietnamese English. Ton and Pham (2010) found that Vietnamese EFL teachers and learners tend to prefer native-speaker English (British or American English). Kachru's (1992a) idea of developing an identity with the local model of English seems to be relevant in Vietnam's context. This idea for setting up models for non-

native Englishes can serve as a starting point and a guideline for Vietnamese teachers and learners to reconsider the kinds of English that should be developed and can also help shape their perceptions of teaching and learning EFL.

Pennycook's (1994) book *The cultural politics of English as an international language* seemed to echo Kachru's (1992a) arguments. Pennycook (1994), in discussing the worldliness of English and a critical pedagogy to language teaching, argued that "all education, culture and knowledge is political" (p. 302). He also proposed two primary aspects to this approach. Firstly, there is a need to provide students with access to the standard forms of the language; secondly, "that students are encouraged to use English in their own way, to appropriate English for their own ends" (p. 316). In other words, a key issue for critical pedagogy is to address the relationship between the necessity to give students access to the standard forms of language, culture, and knowledge that are valued within a society and the need to help learners develop their own forms of language, culture, and knowledge that often oppose the central standards.

A critical approach to language teaching offers teachers and researchers another perspective to language teaching, enabling them to compare different teaching styles and to teach while taking into account information about learners' culture, learning habits, and beliefs. Currently, there seems to exist a perception among Vietnamese teachers and learners of English that Western approaches should be prioritised and adopted, and this entails constant efforts to acquire American or British English, which is obviously impossible for most learners. This critical approach gives the researcher an alternative angle to examine teachers' perspectives of pragmatic teaching. For example, the notion that English belongs to its native speakers and speakers of English need to follow standard English (Quirk, 1985) would be challenged.

Critical approach to language teaching served as one of the theoretical bases for this study. The literature review, the research design, and the analysis of data were informed by the issue of identity in language learning and teaching, a key idea of this theory. The employment of this theoretical construct guided the discussion of teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching, approaches to teaching pragmatics as well as shaped the

content of the framework for teaching pragmatics in Vietnam proposed by the researcher at the end of the thesis (see 7.2.1.2).

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical framework on which this thesis is based has been described. Symbolic interactionism holds a broader view of communication through interaction via the use of gestures and interpretation of symbols with a premise that there is constant interaction between L1 and L2 in the case of EFL learning of this research. This perspective has provided the theoretical foundation to discuss the relationship between Vietnamese and English as well as the influence of Vietnamese on Vietnamese EFL students when learning the English language.

Cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics focuses especially on interaction between people of different cultures and languages. In the context of Vietnam, where teachers and learners use English as well as their mother tongue in the process of teaching and learning English, CCP can be used to raise awareness of cultural differences and possible miscommunication, and to examine Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in EFL teaching.

A critical approach to language teaching looks at teaching English in general and teaching pragmatics, in particular, from a different angle. Specifically, this approach considers how learners and teachers perceive language learning and teaching in the context of EFL or ELF. From this perspective, Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of pragmatic teaching will be examined with regards to the model(s) of English they should teach to accommodate students' L1 and L2 as well as their first culture and the target culture. These three interrelated theoretical constructs serve as solid theoretical foundations for this study in research conceptualisation, literature review, data collection, data analysis and theorisation.

To be specific, the employment of the framework in this study helped conceptualise the research design, map and structure the literature review. The framework also guided the process of data collection and data analysis. The items in the questionnaire, interview, and framework for textbook analysis were constructed in the light of symbolic interactionism,

cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approaches to language teaching. Furthermore, the discussion of results and the conclusion of the thesis were also completed with reference to the three theories forming the framework for this study. Without the theoretical framework, this project would not have had a strong and solid ground to build on.

Chapter 4   Research methodology

Framed by the three theoretical constructs described in the previous chapter, this chapter describes in detail the research design and the methods of data collection and analysis best suited to investigate the research questions set out in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The overall design follows Crotty's (1998) model with four layers for social qualitative research process: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. The instruments used in this research for data collection were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a focus group, classroom observations, and documents. A detailed description of the selection of the case, the participants, and the process of data collection and analysis is also presented. The chapter concludes with measures to ensure reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations.

4.1 Research design

The methodological design of this research adopted Crotty's (1998) model for qualitative research consisting of four levels for social qualitative research process. These four elements are:

> Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology. Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria. Methodology is concerned with the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes. Methods refer to the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis. (p. 3)

In other words, epistemology is an approach to understanding and justifying our knowledge of a subject and how we realize this knowledge. It provides a philosophical base for determining what kinds of knowledge are possible and what we can do to ensure their adequacy and legitimacy. Theoretical perspective refers to a way of seeing the world and

making sense of it. Research methodology is the research design that determines and justifies why we choose and use specific methods and connects them to the intended outcomes. Finally, research methods refer to techniques or procedures and activities we plan to use for data collection and analysis. These four elements are interrelated and their relationship is presented in Figure 4.1.

The notion of reciprocity as an ontological perspective has been chosen for the research. In this epistemology, the teaching and learning of English are viewed as interrelational processes, that is, the way learners learn English is influenced by their first language and the way teachers teach English is influenced by the way they have learnt it. This epistemology acknowledges the interaction between the learner's first and second languages in the process of learning and teaching a language.

As shown in Figure 4.1, this single case study is grounded in the three theories of symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching. These theories, which are interrelated and are related to teaching pragmatics, inform the researcher of the processes of designing instruments for data collection, collecting data, analysing and interpreting data. It is necessary for a case study in social sciences to have a theoretical foundation as without a foundation a case study will possess little value for broader generalisation (Vaus, 2001).

This research employed case study as its methodology. This single case study was conducted at a medium-sized public university in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. In selecting the site, I emailed Deans of the Faculties of English at three public universities in the region, explaining the study design and expressing interest in collecting data from these institutions. However, I received a positive reply from only one Dean who thought the study might benefit their lecturers and students. The other universities did not agree due to concerns of possible interference into classroom teaching and working schedules of the lecturers.

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Epistemology:          │
│                             │
│      Reciprocity            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Theoretical perspective:  │
│                             │
│   Symbolic interactionism   │
│  Cross-/Intercultural pragmatics │
│     Critical approach to    │
│      language teaching      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Methodology:         │
│                             │
│         Case study          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Methods:           │
│                             │
│       Questionnaires        │
│   Interviews and a focus group │
│        Observations         │
│       Document analysis     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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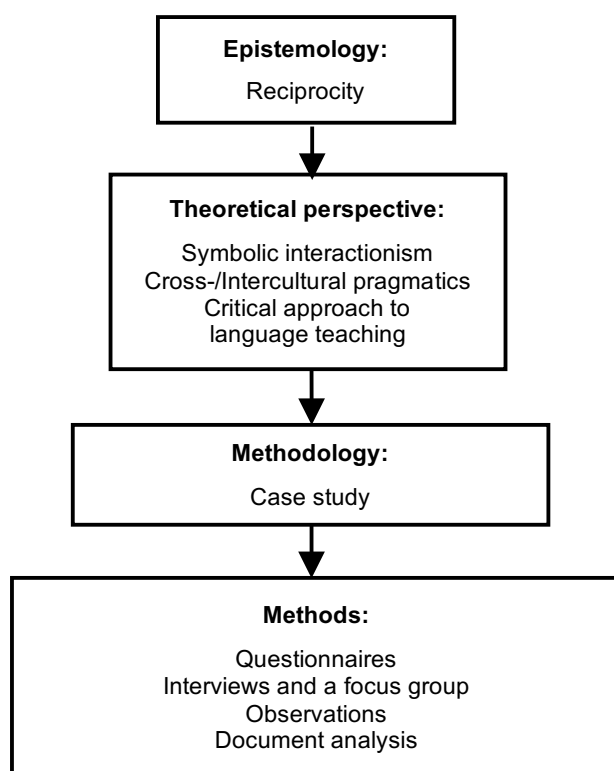
Adapted from Crotty (1998, pp 4-5)

Figure 4.1   Four layers of the research with related components

A public university was selected because public universities in Vietnam are more common

and generally more influential and prestigious than private institutions. To be specific, the

statistics released by MOET (2013) show that in the academic year of 2012-2013, there

were 153 public universities out of 207 universities in Vietnam and there were 1,275,608

students studying in public universities compared to 177,459 students enrolled in private

institutions. The choice of a public university can provide a typical example of a university in

Vietnam and, to some extent, help shed light on English teaching at higher education

institutions in Vietnam.

This target university provides English instruction to both English majors and non-English

majors. There are approximately 2,000 students studying English as their foreign language

and about 180 English majors per academic year. This study is only interested in how EFL

teachers teach pragmatics to students who do not major in English because at the target

university and at most other universities in Vietnam, the number of students studying general

English is much higher than that of students majoring in English. The focus on non-language students is believed to create a stronger impact.

Case study research is a qualitative methodology in which the researcher explores a case or cases over time through detailed, in-depth data collection that involves different sources of data such as interviews, observations, audio-visual material, and documents and reports (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative case study has played a significant part in research on applied linguistics, especially in studying language acquisition (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). It gives researchers the flexibility to use multiple methods to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied (Denscombe, 2007; Silverman, 2005). Using case study as the primary strategy for this research allows the researcher to investigate the phenomena thoroughly with the logic that examining the individual case can provide insights into the issues, aiming to shine light on the general trend by focusing on a particular phenomenon (Denscombe, 2010).

In this case study, qualitative analysis was the dominant approach in the analysis of data. However, for the purpose of data triangulation, quantitative analysis was also used to enhance the objectivity of the findings. Triangulation refers to the use of different data sources and different methods of data collection in the examination of a phenomenon (Freeman, 1998). Rossman and Wilson (1985) suggested three reasons of linking qualitative and quantitative data: (1) qualitative and quantitative data corroborate each other; (2) qualitative and quantitative can elaborate each other to provide richer detail; and (3) a combination of the two types of data can initiate new lines of thinking and suggest areas for further analysis. According to Sandelowski (2003), mixed-method studies can boost their validity as they can assist to overcome "the shortcomings of singles method studies, in general, and of quantitative and especially qualitative studies, in particular" (p. 322). Furthermore, mixed-method research can expand the scope and breadth of a study with the employment of different methods in different components (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). It is believed that quantitative data can confirm qualitative data to assist the researcher of the present study to gain insights into teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their teaching.

Case studies stress an understanding of the whole case and viewing the case within its context because by examining the context in which the case exists, the researcher can develop a fuller and more detailed picture of a particular phenomenon (Vaus, 2001). This theory building case study aimed to examine teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their pragmatic teaching and eventually to develop a framework to for teaching pragmatics at a tertiary institution in Vietnam with reference to the empirical evidence from the case. The teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their teaching are seen in a broader context of teaching EFL at the tertiary level in Vietnam. This way, implications drawn from the study can be more significant as they can apply to a wider context.

Case study is considered the optimal approach to examining teachers' perceptions and pragmatic teaching at a university because it allows the researcher to employ different research methods and various methods of data collection to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomena in this case (Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). It may be impossible to make a generalisation about teaching English pragmatics through this case. However, the empirical evidence gained from this study will provide insights into the practice of teaching English pragmatics at a tertiary institution in Vietnam.

This study employs a research design with four layers proposed by Crotty (1998). The four research components are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. As discussed earlier, this study has chosen the notion of reciprocity as its epistemology. The theoretical perspective of this study has been built on three constructs of symbolic interactionism, cross-/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching. Case study has been employed as the methodology of this study in which both qualitative and quantitative data are gathered and believed to support each other. The methods of data collection and analysis include questionnaires, interviews and a focus group, classroom observations, and document analysis.

4.2 Data collection

4.2.1   Participants

The participants in the study included 29 lecturers of English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at a university in the Vietnam. There were, at the time of data collection, 31 Vietnamese lecturers of English as Foreign Language (EFL), excluding two American lecturers, providing English lessons for students majoring in English as well as students majoring in other disciplines offered by the university.

All of the 31 EFL teachers were invited to participate in the research on a voluntary basis through the use of an email in which they were fully informed of the purpose and significance of the study, and 29 accepted the invitation. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

4.2.2   Instruments

A range of instruments were used in this study for data collection including survey questionnaires, interviews and focus group, classroom observations and documents.

4.2.2.1   Survey questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to investigate teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their pragmatic teaching. Questionnaires are "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Brown, 2001, p. 6). The questionnaire is one of the instruments for quantitative data collection that can help researchers have a broad perspective from the research participants (Denscombe, 2003). Apart from efficiency of time, effort, and financial resources, advantages of questionnaires also include provision of standardised answers, as all participants respond to the same questions, and ease of data collection and handling (Bryman, 2001; 2008; Dornyei, 2003).

Before the questionnaire was finalised, it had been piloted with two teachers from the Faculty. The researcher modified the items in the questionnaire based on the feedback and comments provided by the two respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of 27 items and their construction was broadly informed by key concepts from symbolic interactionism, CCP, and critical approach to language teaching, and partly drawn from Ji (2007), who studied a similar phenomenon in China, a context quite similar to Vietnam. The piloting of the items in the questionnaire was believed to test the validity and reliability of the items. After the items in the original questionnaire were responded to by two teachers, some items were either reworded or omitted based on the teachers' comments and the researcher's observation of the teachers while they were completing the questionnaire. In addition, as previously mentioned, the researcher made use of several items that had been used in Ji's (2007) study. These items were employed and proved that they helped Ji (2007) to carry out a successful project.

Part 1 of the questionnaire asked for respondents' demographic information: gender, teaching experience, qualifications, overseas English learning experience, and pragmatic knowledge gained during training. This demographic information provided a basis for the selection of participants for the subsequent interviews, focus group, and classroom observation. Part 2 consisted of 13 Likert-scale items with five options dealing with teachers' perceptions of English pragmatic teaching. A Likert scale is a "scaled response continuum measured from extreme positive to extreme negative (or vice versa) in five, seven, or nine categories" (Rea & Parker, 2005, p. 262). The benefits of using Likert-scale questions are to avoid an immense workload for the participants and to ensure an accurate report of the reality under examination (Buckingham & Saunders, 2007; Yuan, 2012). This part also included closed- and open-ended questions on pragmatic knowledge taught in class, tasks used by teachers, difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge, and ways to develop pragmatic competence. Most of the items in the questionnaire were expected to yield quantitative data. However, there were three open-ended questions designed to gain qualitative data. A sample questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Twenty-seven of the questionnaires were conducted in person in the office of the Faculty, where the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, provided instruction on how to complete them, and received the completed questionnaires. The in-person distribution and completion of the questionnaires enabled the researcher to gain a full understanding of the items in the questionnaires by giving necessary explanation to the participants.

This approach, although criticised for the fact that the researcher can influence the responses (Nardi, 2006), was necessary due to the complexity of some of the terms in pragmatics used in the questionnaire, which were found to be difficult to understand to even experienced university lecturers. Another advantage of this method is the high percentage of completion. Two questionnaires with detailed instruction of how to answer the questions were sent and completed via email because when the survey was being conducted, two of the full-time lecturers were overseas pursuing their doctorate courses in Australia and Japan. I also requested that the participants respond to items to which they had forgotten to respond or had not completed in the way I intended. For example, some respondents answered items numbered 20-25 without ranking the options.

The small number of questionnaires distributed may not be able to warrant generalisations; however, the focus was on how teachers at the Faculty of Foreign Languages perceived pragmatic knowledge and their own teaching. The results of data analysis from the questionnaires served as a cross-check about data gained from the interviews, the focus group, and the classroom observations.

4.2.2.2 Interviews and focus group

Apart from administering the questionnaire, the interview was relied upon for in-depth data collection. Interviewing is a most often used and powerful strategy for data collection to gain participants' insights into social phenomena (Dornyei, 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2003). Through interviews the researcher is able to use a range of probes or other techniques to obtain in-depth information in terms of penetration, exploration, and explanation (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2004). In other words, the interview permits the interviewer to examine fully all of the

factors underpinning interviewees' answers such as reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs and this accommodates the explanatory evidence that is an important component of qualitative research. Similarly, Patton (1990; 2002) pointed out that the principal advantage of using interviews as a tool to collect data is that the researcher can investigate things about the participants that he/she cannot directly observe such as experiences, intentions, thoughts and feelings.

Interviews can be categorised into *unstructured, semi-structured*, and *structured* depending on the formality of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Nunan, 1992). The semi-structured interview is useful as it falls between the structured and unstructured interview formats and is partly interviewer-led and partly interviewee-led (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

I chose the semi-structured interview to examine teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and their classroom teaching because I believed this format permitted me to interact with the participants by asking follow-up questions, offering guidance and direction about the questions, and being sensitive to their views expressed in the interview (Merriam, 1998). The features of the semi-structured interview are described by Dornyei (2007) as follows:

> The semi-structured interview is suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story. (p. 136)

The demographic information from the questionnaires, while foregrounding the context of the study, assisted with the recruitment of potential teachers for the interviews and the focus group. After assessing the responses from the completed questionnaires, five full-time teachers and one visiting lecturer were recruited for individual interviews. Purposeful (convenience) sampling was considered to be effective and practical in this case and was used for the interviews. Despite its limits to generalisation, this type of sampling is frequently used in social research (Bryman, 2008). This sampling technique can ensure a high response rate and allows the practitioner to gain in-depth information from co-operative

96

informants. Among the six interviewees, there was one male lecturer, which truly reflected the male-female proportion of the sample.

The semi-structured interview consisted of 12 questions covering various issues such as the importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge, correcting pragmatic mistakes, imitating native speakers' accents and language use, influence of the mother tongue, issues related to culture and identity in teaching EFL, tasks and materials in teaching pragmatics and challenges when teaching pragmatics. These 12 questions were developed mainly based on the three theoretical constructs of the research and adapted from Ji's (2007) questions. After the questions for interviews were generated, two colleagues were chosen to pilot them. This piloting process facilitated the interaction when participating teachers were asked to provide comments and suggestions on the content as well as the comprehensibility of the questions used in the interview. A decision was later made to omit, add, or modify the items. During the piloting stage, the researcher also had an opportunity to develop his interviewing skills. A copy of the questions for interviews is included in Appendix B.

The researcher recruited the participants for interviews by asking them in person and on the phone if they were willing to take part in an interview. All of the teachers who were asked agreed to be interviewed. The selection of the participants for the interviews and focus group was based on different variables such as teaching experience, overseas English learning experience, highest degrees obtained, and pragmatic knowledge gained when studying for degrees. This can create a representative sample of the participants. To be specific, among the six interviewees, there were one male teacher with a doctorate degree and more than 15 years of teaching experience, one female teacher with a bachelor's degree and less than five-year experience, and four female teachers with master's degrees. Among those with master's degrees, one had from five to 10 years of experience, one had 10 to 15 years of experience, and the remaining two teachers had more than 15 years of experience. All the interviewees had received pragmatic knowledge when studying for their degrees and five of them had had overseas English learning experience.

The interviews took place in the office of the Faculty, the language laboratory, and several classrooms on campus. Before the interviews, the researcher sent the questions to the

participants via email so that they could attend the interviews prepared. The interviews were approximately 40 minutes long, ranging from 36 minutes to 43 minutes. All the questions in the interviews were in English, and the interviews were conducted in English. All of the participants were comfortable expressing their ideas in English due to their high proficiency of English and the rapport established between the researcher and the interviewees. During the interview time, the interviewer tried not to interrupt the interviewees but asked them for clarification and explanation of a point when there was confusion or contradiction in their answers. The interviewer never tried to influence the interviewees' thoughts and opinions. It was noticed that the participants were supportive and informative as they were interested in the project and thought their information could benefit themselves. Specifically, some informants said that contributing to the data collection process provided them with a chance to reflect on their teaching and gave them more knowledge on how to conduct a study.

Four female lecturers with teaching experience ranging from five years to more than 15 years expressed their interest in participating in a focus group. All of them had a master's degree; two had overseas English learning experience and three had received pragmatic knowledge when training. Four participants is believed to be optimal for members of a focus group as with this group size, members can interact with each other and exchange information in a manner that can be managed by the interviewer.

The focus group method is "an interview with several people on a specific topic or issue" (Bryman, 2008, p. 473). The use of focus groups allows an in-depth exploration of a specific theme. With this kind of data collection, the researcher can see how different people react to each other's view and come up with an overall view of the interaction taking place within the group (Bryman, 2008). Since the mid-20th century, focus groups have developed as a research technique most noticeable in market research (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001), but now they are considered as a mainstream method for various fields of social research and are extensively employed and viewed as a research approach of great value (Finch & Lewis, 2003). One advantage of focus groups in grounded theory research is that people with similar interests will yield informative conversation when participants interact with each other and that people with diverse perspectives and different levels of experiences

can contribute considerably to category development of grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2010; 2015). However, focus groups are difficult to arrange because they involve gathering the participants at an agreed time and venue (Birks & Mills, 2010). In this case, it was difficult to find a time suitable for all of the members because they had different timetables and high teaching loads.

Both an individual interview and a focus group interview were used for qualitative data. Although the same set of questions was used for both, the individual interview and focus group interview were expected to generate a more diverse set of data. While the individual interview produces data collected from a single participant, the focus group discussion has the potential to yield data that reflects the interaction between participants with different and unique personalities. This was illustrated by the actual individual interview and the focus group discussion. For example, a focus group discussion of whether students should imitate native speakers' accent and use of language generated the following data.

> I think that they should, because if they don't use the language appropriately, maybe they can cause misunication, and it can affect their confidence in communication, in communicating in English with other people maybe in school and later in their job, so I usually ask my students to imitate not the accent, but the ways of using language. But if they can imitate the accent, it's good, but if they cannot, I don't think it is important compared to the ways of using the language. (Anh, FG: 24 May 2013)

My, another focus group member, said, "In my opinion, many young people they want to imitate native speakers' accent and they want to use the language, even the accent like native speakers, and it seems to make them feel more confident when they speak English" (FG: 24 May 2013).

> Yes. Imitating the use of language I think we need to concern about. Accent I think it depends. Students should imitate the use of language from native speakers and about accent, you understand that pragmatics, you use language in a suitable context, so if they try to imitate native speakers' accent, sometimes it's not very good for the other people right in the context. In Vietnam for example, maybe some students, a lot of

students don't understand what their friends say when they speak English with a native speaker's accent. You need to use the language correctly. (Thao, FG: 24 May 2013)

Thao also added:

And many students when they contact with native speakers, they try to imitate their accent, it's good, it's good, but not many students have the same accent as them, they try a lot, but they can't. But the use of language is important. Even us, we try to imitate the accent but we still have our accent, to keep it right, not the same as them. When you go to Australia to study, if you have some Australian accent, you have to consider if it's good or bad for you. We don't know. (FG: 24 May 2013)

Nuong, another member, commented, "It's ideal when students can use the language like native speakers, but it's impossible" (FG: 24 May 2013) while Anh added, "They should if they can" and My agreed by saying "They should".

The focus group took place in the university's language laboratory. The interviewer asked the questions in order of appearance in the following manner: posing the question, calling on a specific member when no interviewee wanted to start, making sure that every participant expressed their ideas, without pressure, and involving those who had not spoken.

The focus group lasted an hour and thirty-four minutes and went smoothly. There was a great deal of discussion and interaction among the members with participants sometimes challenging each other's ideas and laughing comfortably. This ensured a formal discussion accompanied with feelings of relaxation and ease, which was believed to make the conversation go naturally without moving off the topic. The great deal of interaction between participants provided valuable data for the study.

All of the interviews and the focus group discussion were recorded with an iPhone 5. Afterwards, the recordings were transferred to a MacBook Pro and saved onto a back-up hard drive. They were later transcribed verbatim for the purposes of coding, backing up the data, and quoting to support the researcher's arguments and final theory.

The participating teachers were asked follow-up questions via email to verify a point or when there was inconsistency between what a participant said in the interview and how he/she answered the questions in the survey questionnaire. For instance, I asked the teachers an additional question on their perspective about teaching English pragmatics via email. All of the interview and focus group transcripts were then sent back to the participants, providing them with an opportunity to read through the conversations to see whether any clarification or correction of ideas was necessary. However, none of the interviewees made any changes to the transcripts.

4.2.2.3   Classroom observation

Classroom observation was employed as an additional instrument for data collection in this study. Observation has been described as "the fundamental base of all research methods" in the social sciences (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389). Observation is a unique instrument for data collection because it is based on the researcher's direct knowledge as he or she witnesses a phenomenon him or herself (Denscombe, 2003). The main purpose of this classroom observation was to investigate how teachers taught pragmatics in their actual practices. Therefore, the data from the observation helped validate teachers' responses to the questions in the questionnaires, the interviews, and the focus group. Another purpose of the observation was to see if there was a match between what the teachers claimed to teach and what really happened in their classrooms. Classroom observation in this study can help the triangulation of data and, at the same time, can improve the validity and reliability of the results.

Three of the interviewed instructors were chosen and asked if they could be observed in a classroom situation. Their teaching experience covered the whole range of years of teaching. Each teacher was observed in two sessions of two and a half hours with a break of 30 minutes. The researcher and the teachers agreed on the time and the class to be observed beforehand. The students were informed of the observation time after they agreed to be observed by signing their names on a consent form provided.

The observation schedule was adapted from Spada and Frohlich (1995). The aim of developing an observation scheme is to provide the observer with a framework on which he or she can rely to record data systematically and to produce consistent data (Denscombe, 2003). The teachers were observed in terms of pragmatic tasks and activities, pragmatic materials, pragmatic knowledge, and approach to teaching pragmatics. A copy of the classroom observation scheme is included in Appendix C.

The fact that the lecturers were observed after completing the questionnaire and interview may have affected their ways of instruction in the English class when they gave lessons to their students. For example, teachers may have focused more or less on a certain point. This could be an inevitable weakness of collecting data through observation and may have some impact on its reliability. However, this was the only official way to see how language teaching was organised in a real classroom.

4.2.2.4   Documents

Documents were analysed to find the answer to the research question "How much pragmatic content is represented in textbooks and the curriculum?" and involved investigation into the contents of the curriculum set by MOET, the curriculum drafted by the university, and mainly the textbooks used by the university lecturers.

Content analysis has the longest history as a method of text analysis among the empirical methods of social research (Herkner, 1974; Holsti, 1968; Silbermann, 1974, as cited in Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Content analysis originally dealt with quantitative data and relied on counting the frequencies of word appearances in text content (Titscher et al., 2000). Content analysis was defined as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). Content analysis also embraces interpretations of latent content (Holsti, 1969). In other words, qualitative content analysis expands beyond mere word counts to include meaningful inferences and conclusion from the data. Furthermore, content analysis can provide objective data as it is an unobtrusive method because it does not involve participants in a study (Neuman, 2003).

The set of textbooks used by the lecturers to teach English to non-language majors was chosen for analysis. It consisted of three textbooks (English 1, 2, and 3), which were the 12 units of *face2face Pre-Intermediate Student's Book* (Redston & Cunningham, 2005) and *Workbook* (Tims, Redston, & Cunningham, 2005). The 12 units of the integrated Student's Book provide the materials for approximately 80 hours of classroom teaching and are said to be compatible with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division, 2001). Each unit consists of four two-page lessons, supplemented with pair work and group work activities, language summaries, recording scripts, and other referential information found at the back of the book.

The textbook was analysed on a line-by-line basis. The choice to analyse the textbook used by non-English majors was based on the fact that they made up a much larger group than the number of English major students at the university, as previously mentioned. Also, I carried out an informal survey that showed that 19 out of the surveyed 20 universities and colleges in Northern, Central, and Southern Vietnam were using textbooks written by English-speaking writers and published by world famous publishers such as Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, and McGraw-Hill Education. This was expected to help shed light on the content of textbooks being used to teach non-English majoring students at the tertiary level in Vietnam.

A framework for textbook analysis was adapted from Vellenga's (2004) classification of pragmatic information and Kachru's (1992b) classification of English users. In this framework, pragmatic content includes pragmatic information and pragmatic tasks. Pragmatic information includes general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, speech acts, and cultural knowledge. General pragmatic information consists of information related to politeness, appropriacy, formality, and register (Vellenga, 2004).

Information on metalanguage style refers to "the use of different sentence types (declarative, imperative, interrogative) when introducing topical units, particular linguistic forms, collocations, usage information, or student instructions" and coded as Description, Instruction, Introduction and Task-related (Vellenga, 2004, p. 4). Description includes explicit metalanguage on how to construct a particular form, usually accompanied by example

sentences, such as, "Phrasal verbs have two or three parts: a verb and one or two particles" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 72). Instruction is language that gives information on usage of a particular form, "We use –ed adjectives to describe how people feel: Many people are worried about how much TV children watch" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 127). Introduction metalanguage is information provided to prepare students for a following activity by focusing their attention on a topic: "Write the names of two friends from different times in your life. When did you last see them? What did you do together?" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 74). Task-related metalanguage refers to information on how to carry out the practice activity, which could be listening, speaking, reading or writing, "Listen and practise the sentences in 4a). Copy the polite intonation" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 82).

Speech acts were investigated in terms of explicit mentioning and metapragmatic description. Cultural knowledge was coded as cultures of speakers of English as a native language (ENL) and cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. Pragmatic tasks included pragmatically oriented tasks and culture-oriented tasks. Cultural knowledge was under general pragmatic information according to Vellenga's (2004) model but was treated as a category in this analysis because one aim of this study was to highlight the role of culture in language learning and teaching.

The framework for textbook analysis is presented in the table below. The data were coded and entered on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Table 4.1   Framework for textbook analysis

Pragmatic information

    General pragmatic information

        Politeness

        Appropriacy

        Formality

        Register

    Metalanguage style

        Description

        Instruction

        Introduction

        Task-related

    Speech acts

        Explicitly mentioned

        Metapragmatic description of speech acts

    Cultural knowledge

        Cultures of speakers of ENL
        Cultures of speakers of ESL/EFL/ELF

Pragmatic tasks

    Pragmatically oriented tasks

    Culture-oriented tasks

Adapted from Kachru (1992b); Vellenga (2004)

Note. ENL = English as a native language, ESL = English as a Second Language, EFL = English as a Foreign Language, ELF = English as lingua franca

4.3 Data analysis

Grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2010; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1996) and content analysis (Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1969; Krippendorff, 1980; Titscher, et al., 2000) were used in the categorisation and analysis of data. The data from the questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations were coded following the process of open coding, axial coding, and theoretical or selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) whereas document analysis was used to analyse the documents from MOET and the university and the textbooks.

4.3.1 Data from questionnaires, interviews and focus group and observations

The questionnaire data were analysed in the following order. The returned questionnaires were first numbered from 1 to 29, which helped the researcher locate the participants' response in case a mistake was made in entering the data from the items. Then the data were recorded on a Microsoft Excel workbook and coded and organised into categories. The answers to the items, except the answers to the three open-ended questions, were numerically coded. For example, for question No. 1, Male was coded 1, Female 2. This made entering the data a convenient and time-saving job.

All recordings of the interviews and the focus group were transcribed verbatim and coded with the assistance of NVivo 10 software. The data obtained from classroom observation were coded and grouped into categories: pragmatic tasks and activities, pragmatic materials, pragmatic knowledge, and approaches to teaching pragmatics. All the data from the three sources were coded in a process that included open coding, axial coding, and theoretical or selective coding, described in detail in the following section.

Open coding is the "process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). In axial coding, the coded categories and sub-categories were grouped and labelled into main categories according to the relationship between them (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

During the stage of axial coding, the categories and sub-categories were modified or omitted. The main categories emerged and their sub-categories are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   Main categories and sub-categories

1. Teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching

       Importance and justification of teaching pragmatics

       Teaching pragmatic knowledge versus other linguistic knowledge

       Grammatical and pragmatic errors: Which are more serious?

       Imitation of native speakers' accents and ways of using language

       Need for learners to keep identity and culture

       Need for learners to understand other Englishes

       Influence of the mother tongue

2. Teaching pragmatic knowledge and English in general

       Materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics and English in general

       Knowledge and skills taught in class

       Types of pragmatic information taught

       Difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions

       Ways of correcting pragmatic errors

       Approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge

The summary table shows that two major categories emerged. One focuses on the teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its importance as a key element among others, such as, grammar, accent, role of L1 as well as the issues of bilingual traits. The other is concerned with practical issues in teaching pragmatics such as materials and tasks, pragmatic information, difficulties, and approaches to teaching pragmatics and correcting pragmatic errors. The analysis of data was conducted based on the three theories used in this study. In other words, the theoretical framework assisted the researcher in analysing the data. For example, specific sub-categories were developed using one of the three constructs. To be specific, the sub-category of "influence of the mother tongue" was developed out of the theory of symbolic interactionism. Another sub-category, "need for learners to keep identity and culture" emerged from the theory of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics. The application of critical approaches to language teaching helped yield the sub-category of "need for learners to understand other Englishes".
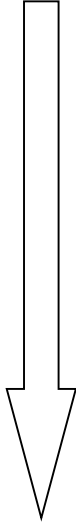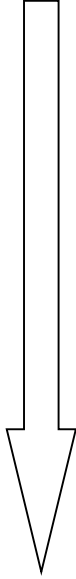
Open coding	Importance and justification of teaching pragmatics
	Grammatical and pragmatic errors and correcting them
	Imitation of native speakers' accents and way of using language
	Need for learners to keep identity and culture
	Need to learners to understand other Englishes
	Teachers' perspectives when teaching pragmatics
	Types of pragmatic information taught
	Teachers' thoughts of teaching pragmatics
	Native speakers' needs to understand cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF
	Exposure to native speakers/English speaking environment
	Materials and tasks to teach pragmatics
	Difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions
	Influence of the mother tongue
	Approaches to teaching pragmatics
Axial coding	1. **Teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching**
	Importance and justification of teaching pragmatics
	Teaching pragmatic knowledge versus other linguistic knowledge
	Grammatical and pragmatic errors: Which are more serious?
	Imitation of native speakers' accents and ways of using language
	Need of learners to keep identity and culture
	Need of learners to understand other Englishes
	Influence of the mother tongue
	2. **Teaching pragmatic knowledge**
	Materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics and English in general
	Knowledge and skills taught in class
	Types of pragmatic information taught
	Difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions
	Ways of correcting pragmatic errors
	Approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge
Selective coding	Framework for teaching pragmatics

Figure 4.2   The coding process

Theoretical coding or selective coding refers to the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. In other words, selective coding is the "process of integrating and refining categories" to develop a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). The core category of this study is teaching pragmatics. The incorporation of

the grounded theory in this research is to develop a framework for teaching pragmatics. The coding process is presented in Figure 4.2.

4.3.2   Data from document analysis

Content analysis was employed to analyse the textbook on a line-by-line basis. The main categories under pragmatic information were general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, speech acts, and cultural knowledge.

4.3.3   Data triangulation

Triangulation is a technique used in surveying, military strategy and navigation whereby the position of a point is located by two known landmarks or reference points (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) were among the pioneers to use this term in the social sciences. Basically, triangulation involves the use of multiple sources, different methods, researchers or theoretical constructs to collect data (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

Denzin (1989) mentioned the necessity of triangulation by arguing that no single method can entirely meet the requirements of interaction theory, or can entirely disclose all the relevant features of empirical reality that is needed to test or develop a theory. Denzin (1970; 1978) introduced the concept of multiple triangulation, which consists of *data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation*, and *methodological triangulation*. Data triangulation refers to the use of different methods to collect and interpret the data. For example, the researcher can use interviews, observations, and diary accounts to investigate a phenomenon with the rationale that the weaknesses of one method can be compensated by the strengths of the others. Investigator triangulation means using different interviewers, researchers, and observers to compare and check data collection and interpretation. The benefit of using more than a single observer is to remove potential bias and to improve reliability in observations. Theory triangulation involves approaching the study with different theoretical perspectives and hypotheses. Methodological triangulation means the use of a variety of methods to compare the data (e.g., qualitative and quantitative).

The present research made use of data triangulation and methodological triangulation to add to the credibility and validity of the findings as well as to the conclusions drawn from the study. Specifically, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse methods of data collection such as questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The use of triangulation can minimise bias and can build stability and confidence in interpreting the data and in the findings (Freeman, 1998).

4.4 Validity and reliability

A good qualitative research design is related to whether it generates data which is valid and reliable (Lewis, 2004). The validity of findings or data traditionally means the "correctness" or "precision" of a research reading (Lewis & Richie, 2004). Validity also refers to whether the researcher is examining what he or she claims to be examining (Arksey & Knight, 1999) and is supported by diverse types of evidence (Bachman, 2004). The findings of this study can be validated through the aforementioned triangulation.

Reliability is concerned with the "consistencies of data, scores or observations obtained using elicitation instruments, which can include a range of tools from standardized tests administered in educational settings to tasks completed by participants in a research study" (Chalhoub-Deville, 2006, p. 2). In other words, it means whether the findings would be consistent if another study, using the same or similar methods or instruments, was implemented (Lewis & Richie, 2004). Specific information about the research process such as sampling, data collection, data coding, and data analysis was provided in the current study to increase the reliability of the findings. For example, the sample selection was representative of the target population; the data analysis was conducted systematically and comprehensively; and the interpretation was fully supported by the empirical data.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were considered in conducting this research because it involved human beings. The project was approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the University of

Sydney before the data were collected. The permission to collect data at the target university was granted by the Board of Rectors and the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

The participants were provided with copies of Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms before taking part in the data collection process. They were requested to return the signed Consent Forms but encouraged to keep the Participant Information Sheets. The questionnaires, interviews, focus group, and classroom observations were conducted on a voluntary basis, and all of the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the project at any time. All of the participants were informed of their roles in advance, enabling them to be well-prepared for their participation in the research. All participants were assured that the information provided by them would be used for the purposes of research only.

All of the gathered data were securely and confidentially stored in the researcher's office at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Sydney. Pseudonyms were used in the entire process of data collection, transcription, data analysis, and report writing to ensure the confidentiality of the data and the participants. The name of the study university was intentionally kept confidential.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodology and described the processes of sampling, data collection, data analysis, and data reporting in detail. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group, classroom observations, and documents. All the data from the diverse sources were used in the process of triangulation in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. Procedures related to ethical considerations have also been described.

The coding process of the raw data prior to data analysis led to the finding of three central themes: (1) teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching, (2) teachers' application of pragmatic understanding to their teaching practice, and (3) pragmatic content in the textbooks and curriculum. Results clustered around the three themes will be reported in great detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5   Results

This chapter presents the findings from data gained from the survey questionnaires, interviews and the focus group, classroom observations, and document analysis. The results are presented and grouped according to the research questions. Specifically, the findings from the questionnaires, interviews and the focus group and classroom observations were pooled together according to the broad themes that emerged in relation to research questions 1 and 2, which are about teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching and their teaching of pragmatics in the classroom.

The sub-categories of *teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in English teaching, need for learners to understand other Englishes, influence of the mother tongue and other people* under the first main category of *teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching* are all related to the framework. To be specific, the sub-category of *teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in English teaching* is related to cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics. The *need for learners to understand other Englishes* is related to the critical approach to language teaching and *influence of the mother tongue and other people* is much in alignment with the theory of symbolic interactionism.

The second main category consists of *types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class, the types of knowledge and skills taught, how teachers teach cultural knowledge and appropriate language use, the types of tasks used in class, the ways teachers used to teach information on language use, the difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge, the tasks to help students develop communicative competence, and the most effective ways to develop pragmatic competence*. These sub-categories are all related to teaching pragmatics, the core of the framework.

The findings yielded from the categorisation process of document analysis were also organised in broad themes related to research question 3 with a specific focus on the pragmatic content found in the textbooks and the curriculum.

112

5.1 Survey questionnaire data

This section reports on the findings from the questionnaire data in relation to the first two research questions: 1) *What are teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching?* and 2) *How do teachers apply their pragmatic understanding to their teaching practice?* The data were grouped into two main categories: teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching and teachers' teaching of pragmatics in the classroom. The sub-categories under the first main category are teachers' views about teaching linguistic knowledge versus teaching pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively, teachers' perceptions of correcting pragmatic mistakes and teaching pragmatic knowledge, teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in English teaching, need for learners to understand other Englishes, influence of the mother tongue and other people, and the pragmatic content in textbooks.

The second main category consists of types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class, the types of knowledge and skills taught, how teachers teach cultural knowledge and appropriate language use, the types of tasks used in class, the ways teachers used to teach information on language use, the difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge, the tasks to help students develop communicative competence, and the most effective ways to develop pragmatic competence.

Prior to reporting the results obtained from the data analysis, the participants' demographic information is presented.

5.1.1   Participants' demographic information

Among the 29 participants, there were five male and 24 female teachers. As can be seen from Table 5.1, though the participants' teaching experience varied from less than five to more than 15 years, it was noticed that the percentage of teachers with 10 or more years of experience (62.07%) was much greater than that with less than 10 years of experience (37.93%).

With respect to qualifications held by the instructors, about 27% had a bachelor's degree and the majority of teachers (68.97%) had a master's degree whereas only one (3.44%) had a doctorate degree. About 62% of the teachers had studied overseas or had had overseas English learning experience. The countries where the teachers had studied included Australia (9), Canada (4), the United States (3), the United Kingdom (1), France (1), Denmark (1), Japan (1), and Taiwan (1). Around 86% of the participants indicated that they had received pragmatic knowledge when pursuing their tertiary education. A word of caution is needed here. The demographic information is to help foreground the context of the study but it is not going to be used for a detailed factor analysis, though some of the statistics may be used purely for illustrative purposes, and to back up data analysis and interpretation.

Table 5.1   Participants' demographic information

Teaching experience	Less than 5 years 17.24%	5 to less than 10 years 20.69%	10 to 15 years 24.14%	More than 15 years 37.93%
Qualifications	Bachelor 27.59%	Master 68.97%	Doctorate 3.44%	
Overseas learning experience	Yes 62%	No 38%		

5.1.2   Teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching

Thirteen Likert-scale statements were designed to investigate teachers' views on teaching linguistic knowledge versus teaching pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively, teachers' perceptions of correcting pragmatic mistakes and teaching pragmatic knowledge, teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in English teaching, need for learners to understand other Englishes, influence of the mother tongue and other people, and the pragmatic content in textbooks. The mean and standard deviation were used in the analysis of these statements. Although the data were ordinal by nature, the mean, not the median, was used. Rea and Parker (2005) recommended that the arithmetic mean should be the proper measure of the central tendency in the case of scaled responses because it gives more information than the median.

5.1.2.1 **Teaching linguistic knowledge versus pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively**

Statements 7, 8, and 13 investigated teachers' thoughts about teaching linguistic knowledge versus pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively.

Table 5.2   Teaching linguistic knowledge versus pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively

Statement	Strongly disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)	M	SD
7*	2 (6.90)	9 (31.03)	4 (13.79)	13 (44.83)	1 (3.45)	3.07	1.1
8**	1 (3.45)	1 (3.45)	2 (6.90)	15 (51.72)	10 34.48	4.1	0.94
13***	14 (48.28)	12 (41.38)	3 (10.34)	0 0	0 0	1.62	0.68

*Statement 7 I believe learning English means learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

**Statement 8 I think that linguistic knowledge (e.g., pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary) is as important as the knowledge of how to use the language.

***Statement 13 I think teaching English communicatively is not as important as teaching grammatical points and vocabulary items.

The results of Statement 7 (M = 3.07, SD = 1.10) show that the respondents had mixed opinions about what learning English meant. To be specific, nearly 45% of the participants agreed that it meant learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, more than 31% disagreed and about 14% chose to be neutral. The high standard deviation (1.1) shows the teachers' varying opinions about this statement.

The results of Statement 8 suggest that the participants believed linguistic knowledge is as important as pragmatic knowledge, demonstrated with a mean score of 4.1 with 51.72% agreeing to the statement and 34.48% strongly agreeing. This means that the participants realised the importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge.

Statement 13 was designed to measure teachers' perception of the importance of teaching grammatical points and vocabulary items rather than teaching English communicatively. The findings showed that nearly 90% of the subjects disagreed with this statement and believed that teaching English communicatively was more important.

The data show that the teachers expressed an agreement on the importance of linguistic

knowledge and pragmatic knowledge in learning English and on the importance of teaching

English communicatively.

5.1.2.2   Correcting pragmatic mistakes and teaching pragmatic knowledge

Statements 9, 10, 11, and 14 were intended to survey teachers' thoughts of correcting

pragmatic mistakes and teaching pragmatic knowledge.

Table 5.3   Correcting pragmatic mistakes and teaching pragmatic knowledge

Statement	Strongly disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)	M	SD
9*	0 (0)	2 (6.90)	9 (31.03)	14 (48.28)	4 (13.79)	3.69	1.1
10**	4 (13.79)	18 (62.07)	4 (13.79)	3 (10.34)	0 (0)	2.21	0.94
11***	0 (0)	4 (13.79)	8 (27.59)	15 (51.72)	2 (6.90)	3.52	0.68
14****	3 (10.34)	1 (3.45)	6 (20.69)	10 (34.48)	9 (31.03)	3.72	1.25

*Statement 9 I often correct the mistakes my students make when they use inappropriate words although the sentences are grammatically correct.
**Statement 10 I don't think I know how to provide students with cultural knowledge and appropriate language use.
***Statement 11 I think raising students' awareness of getting information on culture and appropriate language use is more useful than teaching specific pragmatic knowledge.
****Statemet 14 I believe teachers should teach pragmatic knowledge when students reach a certain level of language proficiency.

The data in Table 5.3 show that 62.25% of the respondents often corrected students when

they used improper words even though the sentences were grammatically correct. Only

6.90% disagreed and 31.03% had a neutral view. Thus the majority of teachers considered it

important to correct mistakes regarding inappropriate language use.

Nearly 76% of the respondents did not agree with Statement 10. Only 10.34% agreed and

13.79% were neutral. Thus, three-quarters of the teachers thought they knew how to teach

students pragmatic knowledge.

More than 58% of the respondents thought that raising awareness of obtaining information on culture and appropriate language is more useful than teaching specific pragmatic knowledge. However, 13.79% disagreed and 27.59% gave a neutral response.

The participants also gave varying responses to Statement 14 where more than 65% believed that pragmatic knowledge should be taught when students achieve a certain level of proficiency. Nearly 14% disagreed and more than 20% gave a neutral response.

The data show that the teachers thought it was important to correct errors related to pragmatic knowledge and that they knew how to teach pragmatics. However, they did not seem to agree on the effect of raising awareness of pragmatic knowledge and on when to teach this knowledge.

5.1.2.3   Identity and culture in English teaching and the need to understand other Englishes

Statements 12 and 15 examined teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in language teaching. As shown in Table 5.4, more than half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with Statement 12, and only 20.69% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 17.24% had a neutral attitude. That means more than half of the participants wanted their students to speak English like native speakers. However, the responses to Statement 15 seemed to yield conflicting data: 44.83% agreed and 13.79% strongly agreed with the statement while 27.59% were in a neutral position. On the one hand, the subjects thought it was important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture. On the other hand, they wanted to have students speaking English like native speakers.

Table 5.4   Identity and culture in English teaching and need to understand other Englishes

Statement	Strongly disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)	M	SD
12*	2 (6.90)	4 (13.79)	5 (17.24)	14 (48.28)	4 (13.79)	3.48	1.12
15**	0 (0)	4 (13.79)	8 (27.59)	13 (44.83)	4 (13.79)	3.59	0.91
16***	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (20.69)	19 (65.52)	4 (13.79)	3.93	0.59
17****	0 (0)	3 (10.34)	6 (20.69)	15 (51.72)	5 (17.24)	3.76	0.87

*Statement 12 I want my students to speak English like native speakers.

**Statement 15 I think it is important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture.

***Statement 16 I think learners of English as a second language need to understand other Englishes apart from native speaker English (e.g., American, British).

****Statement 17 I think native speakers of English need to understand the culture of speakers of English as a second language.

Item 25 of the questionnaire, designed to measure teachers' preferences on the types of English they want their students to speak, can contribute to understanding teachers' perceptions of identity and culture in English teaching. Figure 5.1 shows that 58.62% of the subjects wanted their students to speak American English, 34.48% selected British English and only 6.90% chose other English, that is, "international, correct, or intelligible". It is worth noting that none of the participants wanted their students to speak Vietnamese English.

The data collected from items 12, 15, and 25 show that the teachers did not think that speaking Vietnamese English could help create their students' identity. Speaking Vietnamese English can be considered as a way for Vietnamese learners to keep their identity when learning English. However, none of the surveyed teachers wanted their students to speak English with a Vietnamese accent. This issue of identity will be further discussed in the next chapter.
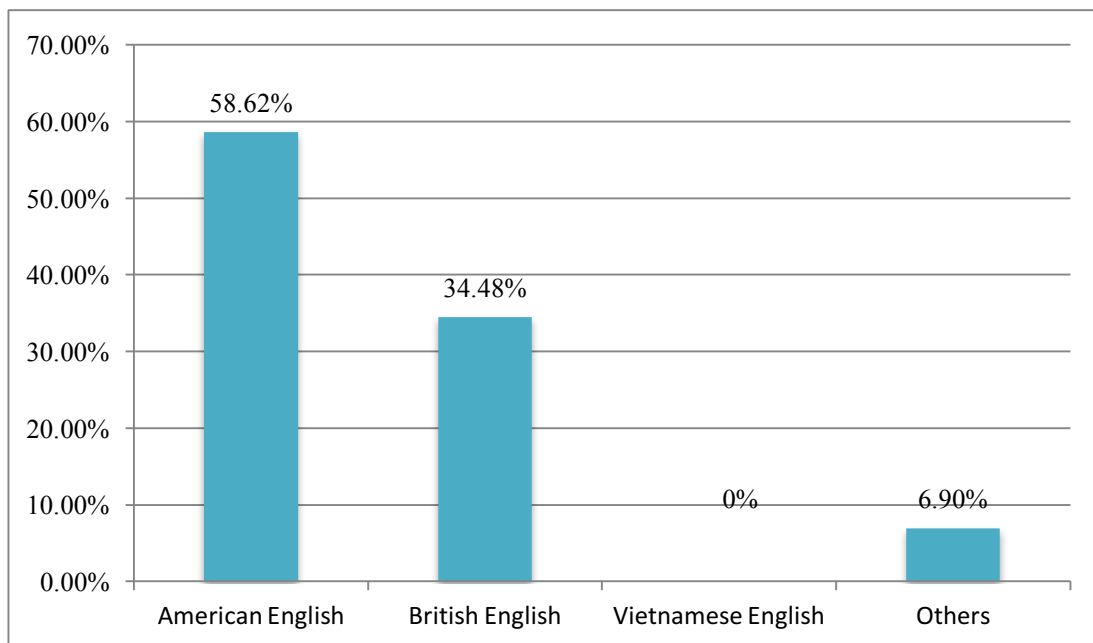
Figure 5.1   **Types of English teachers wanted their students to speak**

Teachers' perceptions of students' need to understand other Englishes and native speakers' need to understand cultures of speakers of English as a second or foreign language were explored through their responses to Statements 16 and 17.

As seen from Table 5.4, the teachers realised the importance of understanding other varieties of English apart from native English. This is demonstrated in the percentage of teachers agreeing (65.52%) and strongly agreeing (13.79%) with Statement 16. The teachers' awareness of the need to understand other Englishes apart from English spoken by native speakers is in harmony with the notion of ELF or World Englishes, which is related to critical approach to language teaching and will be elaborated in the next chapter. Data yielded from Statement 17 were presented but were not used in the analysis of data because they were related to native speakers.

5.1.2.4   Influence of the mother tongue and other people

Statement 18 was used to examine whether teachers thought their ways of learning and teaching English were influenced by their mother tongue and other people. More than half of the participants believed that their L1 and other people had an impact on their learning and teaching English whilst about one-quarter of those surveyed disagreed and about the same

chose to be neutral. This finding consolidates the premise that L1 has an impact on learning and teaching L2, informed by symbolic interactionism and will be further discussed in the next chapter with the data from the interviews and focus group.

5.1.2.5   Pragmatic content in textbooks

Teachers' perceptions of the pragmatic content in textbooks used at the Faculty were investigated through Statement 19 (M = 3.14, SD = 0.88). The results showed that the instructors had divergent thoughts about this. About 38% thought that there was adequate pragmatic content in textbooks used at the Faculty, 28% disagreed with the statement and 35% were neutral. This will be compared with the data from the textbook analysis and discussed in the next chapter.

5.1.3   Teachers' pragmatic classroom teaching

Investigation of the types of pragmatic knowledge taught, the skills and knowledge taught, the ways and the tasks teachers used in class to teach pragmatics was conducted through Questions 20 to 24. In these questions, the participants were requested to make choices from multiple options and rank their choices in order of importance or frequency ranging from 1 = the most frequently taught to 5 = least frequently taught. The following are the descriptions of their answers.

5.1.3.1   Types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class

Table 5.5   Types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%
General pragmatic information	15	4		1		20	68.97
Speech acts	5	6	6			17	58.62
Metalanguage	3		3	3	1	10	34.48
Cultural knowledge	4	15	5	1		25	86.21
Other			1			1	3.45

Note. 1 = most frequently taught, 5 = least frequently taught

The results showed that cultural knowledge was chosen by 25 teachers (86.21%), followed by general pragmatic information (20, 68.97%), speech acts (17, 58.62%), metalanguage

(10, 34.48%), and other (1, 3.45%). However, general pragmatic information was ranked first as the most frequently taught by the highest number of teachers. Thus the data showed that general pragmatic information and cultural knowledge were the types of pragmatic knowledge most frequently taught.

5.1.3.2 Types of knowledge and skills taught in class

Table 5.6   Types of knowledge and skills taught in class

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%
Linguistic knowledge	11	9	4	1		25	86.21
Semantic usage and collocation		4	7	7		18	62.07
Appropriateness of language use	6	6	11	4		27	93.10
Communicative skills	13	9	2	4		28	96.55
Other						0	0

Note. 1 = most frequently taught, 5 = least frequently taught

From the data in Table 5.6, it can be observed that communicative skills were taught by nearly all the teachers (96.55%) and selected to be the most often taught by 44.83% of the teachers. Pragmatic knowledge, in the form of appropriateness of language use, was taught by 93.10%. Linguistic knowledge was considered to be important to the teachers with 86.21% mentioning teaching it and 37.93% ranking it the most frequently taught. These data are in agreement with the participants' thoughts about teaching linguistic knowledge versus pragmatic knowledge and teaching English communicatively discussed previously.

5.1.3.3 Ways to teach cultural knowledge and appropriate language use

Table 5.7   Ways to teach cultural knowledge and appropriate language use

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%
Using knowledge in textbooks	15	6	1	3		25	86.21
Using supplementary materials	4	11	6	4		25	86.21
Implementing tasks and activities	6	8	6	2		22	75.86
pGiving explicit instructions on cultural knowledge and appropriate language use	4	3	9	5		21	72.41
Other: using personal real experiences		1				1	3.45

Note. 1 = most frequently taught, 5 = least frequently taught

There were few differences in the ways the teachers used to teach cultural knowledge and language use. Nevertheless, as far as ranking is concerned, using knowledge in textbooks was ranked the most often used by 15 of the teachers (51.72%). The data in Table 5.7 show that teachers relied on textbooks and supplementary materials to teach pragmatics.

5.1.3.4   Types of tasks used in class

Table 5.8   Types of tasks used in class

	1	2	3	4	Total	%
Role-play	7	10	7		24	82.76
Pair work	11	10	3		24	82.76
Group discussions and debates	10	6	11		27	93.10
Other			2	2	4	13.79

Note. 1 = most frequently taught, 4 = least frequently taught

Group discussion and debates were employed as tasks used to teach pragmatics in class by more than 93% of the participants, followed by pair work and role-play. However, pair work was ranked the most often used by 11 participants (37.93%) and group discussion and debates were ranked first by 10 participants (34.48%).

5.1.3.5   Ways used to give students information on language use

Table 5.9   Ways teachers used to provide information on language use

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	%
Giving explanation	17	4	3	2			26	89.66
Using information sheets		3	4	3	2		12	41.38
Conducting role-play activities	5	5	7	1	4	1	23	79.31
Using dialogues, radio and TV programmes, and videos	2	1	5	1	1	1	11	37.93
Organising discussion	2	4	4	9	2	2	23	79.31
Using awareness-raising activities	3	4	3		4	3	17	58.62

Note. 1 = most frequently taught, 6 = least frequently taught

The data in Table 5.9 show that giving explanation, conducting role-play activities, and organising discussion were the most used by the teachers. Among these, giving explanation was at the top in terms of both the number of times mentioned by the teachers and the

ranking. Nearly 90% taught students how to use language by giving explanation and about 59% considered it as the most often used.

Three open-ended questions were used to ask the participants about the difficulties they encountered when teaching pragmatics, the tasks they found useful in developing communicative competence, and the most effective ways they used to develop pragmatic competence.

Question 25:   *What difficulties do you have when teaching pragmatic knowledge to students?*

The teachers listed various responses to this question. Some of the responses were not reported due to irrelevance to teaching pragmatic knowledge. The difficulties were grouped into different categories.

Table 5.10   **Difficulties in teaching pragmatics to students**

Difficulties perceived by teachers	• finding out appropriate approaches to teaching pragmatics • not knowing how to provide students with cultural knowledge and appropriate language use (2) • diversity of English variations • lack of materials on language use
Difficulties perceived by students	• making a lot of mistakes in grammar and pronunciation • being very influenced by L1, especially in writing (4) • not having much exposure to English usage • not being aware of the importance of pragmatics, hence just wanting to study grammar and vocabulary (2) • difference in proficiency levels (3) • shyness in carrying out activities concerning cultural matters • lack of intrinsic motivation (2) • lack of general knowledge and linguistic knowledge
Difficulties perceived by both	• lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts (9) • cross-cultural and cross-linguistic difficulties • lack of knowledge of English in use

Note. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of times a response was recorded.

The participants' answers shown in Table 5.10 indicate that they experienced difficulty teaching pragmatics due to a lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts, a lack of pragmatic knowledge (knowledge of cultures, language use), a lack of knowledge of varieties of English, not knowing how to teach pragmatic knowledge (cultural knowledge, appropriate language use, speech acts and metalanguage),

and a lack of materials on language use. It is remarkable that nine teachers reported a lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts as one of their difficulties in teaching pragmatics. One of the nine teachers remarked that limited first-hand experience of the culture of the target language could lead to bias, prejudice, and stereotyping, which might influence the knowledge taught to students. This will be further explored in the next chapter with in-depth data gained from the interviews and focus group.

Lacking experience in cultures and contexts (mentioned by nine out of 29 teachers) and being influenced by L1 (mentioned by four) were considered to be the biggest problems of students as reported by the teachers. Two participants listed unawareness of the importance of pragmatics and another two listed a lack of intrinsic motivation. From these results, it can be observed that the respondents realised the importance of culture and contexts and the influence of the mother tongue in teaching and learning English.

Question 26:   *In your opinion, what types of tasks can help students develop communicative competence?*

Table 5.11   **Tasks to help students develop communicative competence**

Task	Number of teachers who mentioned the task (N=29)	%
Role-play	20	68.97
Discussion and debates	16	55.17
Student presentations and speeches	8	27.59
Pair work	7	24.14
Group work	6	20.69
Watching films, video clips	3	10.34
Writing tasks	2	6.90
Interactive communicative tasks	2	6.90
Intensive listening and speaking tasks	1	3.45
Experience and opinion exchange	1	3.45
Reporting on authentic materials	1	3.45
Storytelling	1	3.45

As can be seen from the data in Table 5.11, nearly 69% of the participants indicated that role-play was the most effective in helping students develop communicative ability. Approximately 55% of the teachers thought discussion and debates were useful. Student

124

presentations, pair work and group work were chosen by 27.59%, 24.14%, and 20.14% of

the respondents, respectively. Other tasks were listed by a small number of teachers.

It is worth noting that the top five tasks the teachers mentioned were productive as well as

prepared while most other tasks were spontaneous. This may be related to the learning and

teaching culture in Vietnam, where students need preparation to complete a task well.

Question 27:   *What are the most effective ways to develop pragmatic competence?*

The responses to this question were grouped into different categories as shown in Table

5.12.

Table 5.12   **Most effective ways to develop pragmatic competence for students**

Using supplementary materials	• using films and videos (4) • using newspapers and magazines (2) • using authentic materials
Making use of tasks and activities	• role-plays including Reader Theater and other dramatic activities (7), discussion and debates • storytelling • pair work • giving feedback after student presentations • activities to develop students' sense of language, activities that bring students from behind the table to be involved in active and creative activities, activities that involve students emotionally and intellectually, activities that make students talk, think, read, and write
Encouraging in-class interaction and real communication	• interacting with foreigners and native speakers (4) • interacting with foreigners after being exposed to pragmatic knowledge via watching clips or reading texts • accessing online databases to learn real English • providing students with real-life experiences • giving students opportunities to interact verbally with each other in class (3) • increasing interaction between teachers and students
Focusing on language use	• showing how language is formed and how to use language appropriately in contexts • discussion of specific language use in contexts (2) • giving explanation and contexts to students • providing students with greater exposure to how language is used • explaining appropriateness of English use • using information sheets to provide students with language use • giving students input before asking them to produce language
Teaching cultural knowledge	• using information sheets to provide students with knowledge about culture and in turn knowledge of cross-cultural communication
Other	• asking students to imitate native speakers' pronunciation

Note. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of times a response was recorded.

The data in Table 5.12 show that using role-play as a mode of learning was suggested by the most teachers (7) whereas the favourite supplementary materials were films and videos, mentioned by four teachers. Seven instructors thought interacting with native speakers and foreigners as well as creating opportunities for students to interact with each other in class were effective in developing pragmatic competence.

5.2 Interview and focus group data

As mentioned in the previous chapter, NVivo was used to assist the researcher in the process of data analysis. The axial coding resulted in the emergence of main categories which were subsequently grouped with regard to the first two research questions. The samples of the coding of interview and focus group data were detailed in Appendix E. These main categories were teachers' perceptions of pragmatic teaching and teaching pragmatic knowledge. The former includes the importance of and justification for pragmatic teaching, pragmatic and grammatical errors, imitation of native speakers' accents and language use, need for learners to keep their identity and culture, need for learners to know other Englishes, how teachers have learned pragmatic knowledge, influence of the mother tongue, and perspectives from which teachers viewed their English teaching. The latter is divided into materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics, approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge, correcting pragmatic errors, kinds of pragmatic knowledge taught in class, and difficulties in teaching pragmatics and suggested solutions.

As explained in Chapter 4, six teachers were individually interviewed and four teachers participated in a focus group. All of the individual interviews and the conversation in the focus group were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In order to ensure anonymity, all of the teachers were given pseudonyms. The pseudonyms used to identify the individual interviewees were Giang, Tien, Nhan, Nga, Thanh, and Truc. The members in the focus group were referred to as FG.

5.2.1 Teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching

5.2.1.1 The importance of and justification for pragmatic teaching

All of the teachers in the interviews and focus group recognised the importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge to students. For example, Giang replied,

> It's very important to teach students pragmatic knowledge because if they know
>
> how to use English appropriately, they can use it effectively, and you can see
>
> that our students now study in not a very real English speaking environment, so
>
> it is very important to recognise what is appropriate and what is not appropriate.
>
> (15 April 2013)

Similarly, Truc remarked, "I think it is very important because pragmatics operates at the level of meanings and how others understand those meanings". (26 April 2013)

However, two teachers admitted in the interviews that they had been teaching pragmatic knowledge without knowing that it was pragmatic. In other words, they taught pragmatic knowledge "by accident" (FG: 24 May 2013). This seemed to show that teaching pragmatics did not receive adequate attention.

The importance of teaching pragmatics is justified because a lack of pragmatic knowledge can cause misunderstanding. Pragmatic knowledge helps students know how to use language appropriately. For example, Thanh remarked, "Because if we just know each word's meaning, but then we don't know how to use it in correct situations, then we can cause misunderstanding" (2 April 2013).

5.2.1.2 Pragmatic and grammatical errors

Generally, the subjects believed that pragmatic errors were more serious because they could cause misunderstanding and even communication breakdowns. For instance, a focus group member said, "When we compare [the] grammatical and pragmatic errors, I think pragmatic errors are more serious because they make other people or the listener misunderstand what the speaker wants to say" (24 May 2013).

Two interviewees thought it depended on the purposes of learning and the learner's level of proficiency. These teachers thought that students with low levels of proficiency should focus more on grammar and structure and those with higher proficiency should focus on pragmatic errors. Giang remarked:

> In my opinion, it depends on the level of students' proficiency because for those who have a low level of proficiency of English, it is very important for us to correct grammatical mistakes. However, for those with a higher level of proficiency, for example students at university, we have to focus more on pragmatic errors, because grammatical errors are important but now we should focus more on pragmatic errors to guide them deeply into some real situations so that they can express their opinions or feeling when they display or talk about a topic in an effective way. So I think that both are important, but it depends on what level the students are at. (15 April 2013)

Furthermore, some teachers reported changes in their perceptions of correcting grammatical and pragmatic errors. For example, Tien commented:

> To tell the truth, when I started teaching English, I thought that grammatical errors were more important, and I tried to correct all the grammatical errors of my students, but then later on when I get (sic) used to the idea that a language must be used in a way that it is used by native speakers, I am aware that it is more important to correct pragmatic errors than to correct grammatical errors because pragmatic errors can lead to misunderstanding, but grammatical errors don't as long as they [the students] can express their thoughts, their feelings. (6 May 2013)

This will be further discussed when compared to Ji's (2007) results that three out of four interviewed instructors responded that their focus on grammatical mistakes was far more than that on pragmatic errors (see section 6.1.2).

5.2.1.3   Imitation of native speakers' accents and language use

Accent is defined as "the way one sounds when speaking, the way one uses sound features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 4). Carr (2008) divided accent into segmental and suprasegmental features. Segments refer to vowel and consonant allophones whereas suprasegmental features are phonological phenomena such as word stress, intonation, and tone.

There was general agreement among the focus group members that learners should imitate native speakers' language use, but not the accent. One lecturer thought students should imitate native speakers if they could, but added that it would be impossible to be like native speakers (FG: 24 May 2013). Another teacher indicated that learners should imitate native speakers' accents and language use because it gives students confidence when they speak in English. This participant said, "In my opinion, many young people they want to imitate native speaker accent and they want to use the language, even the accent like the native speakers, and it seems to make them feel more confident when they speak English" (FG: 24 May 2013).

The interviewed teachers, however, were divided over imitation of native speakers' accents. Two teachers thought students should imitate native speakers' accent whereas another two teachers did not agree. Truc stated:

> I think Vietnamese learners of English SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED [emphasis added] to imitate British or American English native speakers to speak standard, authentic, and correct English. First, because, I think, of a psychological impact of accent: students don't usually feel very confident when they speak English with a Vietnamese accent. Second is the attitude towards Vietnamese accent; English with Vietnamese accent sounds very terrible.
> (26 April 2013)

Nga, on the other hand, stated, "Well, I think that you know, they shouldn't because, you know, I think the goal of communication is that the other person will understand what you say when you talk to them" (3 June 2013). Another teacher said, "It depends on the students'

purpose for their future job" (Thanh: 2 April 2013), while another mentioned there should be a combination of imitation and creativity (Giang: 15 April 2013).

It was noted that one teacher said, "English with Vietnamese accent sounds very terrible" (Truc: 26 April 2013). This comment is related to issues of identity and inferiority of Vietnamese English and critical approach to language teaching. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.2.1.4   Need for learners to keep their identity and culture

The members of the focus group were not congruent about the need for learners to keep their identity and culture. Two interviewees and one focus group member thought learners needed to keep their identity and culture. One focus group member said, "But you need to remember that you have your own culture, and if you communicate with other people from another country, you have to keep your own culture, to convey your language in the right meaning" (FG: 24 May 2013). However, one teacher was not worried about students losing their identity and culture. Another even thought it was not good if other speakers recognised her origin in her accent. This teacher said, "But if I am a Korean woman and when I speak English, and they know that I am from Korea, I think they can realise that my accent is not very good" (FG: 24 May 2013).

Five out of the six teachers in the interviews thought it was important for learners to keep their culture and identity. Giang said,

> Yes, they should keep their own identity and culture. … We can learn the
> differences in culture from other speakers. Whenever we talk to a foreigner,
> they always ask us something special about Vietnamese culture, so we should
> know our culture very clearly so that we can tell them. We play a role of
> ambassadors. (15 April 2013)

What Giang said highlighted the importance of knowing the culture of the first language and was related to cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics. This will be elaborated in the next chapter. Nhan was the only interviewee who disagreed with the others. He said, "I would give them the right to make a decision, the freedom. I don't think it is important to keep their

130

identity" (20 May 2013). In general, the teachers realised the importance of keeping learners' culture and identity.

5.2.1.5   Need for learners to know other Englishes

There was a discrepancy between the responses made by the lecturers in the focus group and those in the individual interviews. All the focus group members and one interviewee gave positive answers to the question "Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language need to develop understanding of other Englishes other than native English?" One focus group member said,

> In the context of Vietnam, that should be a must, because nowadays we have a lot of Chinese, Singaporean, Korean investors, and they speak English a lot …, but their Vietnamese employees should understand and should be able to communicate with them. (24 May 2013)

By contrast, five interviewed participants replied with negative answers. For example, Tien replied:

> Uh ... I don't think it is really important for learners to understand other Englishes. It is good if they have some information, some knowledge about not only English spoken by [people in] big countries like Britain or America. They should know that there are more than only so, but they don't have to understand more than that. (6 May 2013)

Similarly, Nhan indicated:

> It is not necessary to do that [to understand other Englishes] because the chance of exposure to Singaporean English or Indian English is not very high so they just learn English as they are taught, so when they have high proficiency of English they will naturally acquire the way of Singaporean English, for example. … The problem is not that vast, not too difficult for Vietnamese. If they understand English, let's say, British English well, Indian English or Singaporean English is not too far from British English. (20 May 2013)

131

Besides these two above-mentioned reasons, other reasons for not needing to understand other Englishes were that focusing on one type of standard English would help learners to improve their learning and that it is impossible to understand many varieties of Englishes. This is related to the concept of ELF and will be further discussed in section 6.1.4 in the next chapter.

5.2.1.6   How teachers learned pragmatic knowledge

The teachers reported various ways of acquiring pragmatic knowledge. They said they had learned pragmatic knowledge from the following. Thanh, Giang, Tien, and the focus group teachers learned pragmatic knowledge from their teachers, especially from their native teachers' explanation and stories.

Acquiring pragmatic knowledge from real communication and experiences was reported by Thanh, Nhan, Tien, Nga, Giang and the focus group members. These teachers had learned pragmatics by observing and imitating native speakers' behaviours or reactions, as well as their use of language functions, collocations and expressions. Tien reflected:

> One of the best ways is imitation, so one of my ways of learning English as a
> foreign language is imitation. I remembered when I started learning English, we
> didn't have a lot of books at that time, and so whenever I have one, I just read it
> very carefully, tried to remember how people use the language, yes, and tried to
> remember things like collocations, expressions, and then later on I related what
> I had already known with other information, other knowledge especially when
> we talk to a native speaker, try to realize how they use the language and then
> we use it later on. (6 May 2013)

For these teachers, learning from real communication and experiences is effective because of the long lasting effect it has on the learners. Giang commented:

> Experience. I think that experience is very important for us to learn English
> pragmatic knowledge because we can see that whenever I read something, it is
> easy for me to forget. However, if I have a chance to travel, to live in a real
> situation, I can remember it very well, maybe for my whole life, so that I can use

them to teach my students. So I think I can learn pragmatic knowledge from my experience. (15 April 2013)

The other sources from which the teachers learn pragmatic knowledge included textbooks, books, newspapers and magazines, TV programs, music, films and video clips, and the Internet. The teachers also indicated that they have learned from their colleagues, friends, and from teaching their students and their own children. It seemed that they realised their lack of pragmatic understanding, so they wanted to improve their knowledge whenever and wherever they had a chance.

5.2.1.7   Influence of the mother tongue

All of the participants thought their English learning had been influenced by their mother tongue. The influences were both positive and negative. The positive influences included making a comparison between the mother tongue and English, which helped them realise the cultural differences and improve their English. Thanh commented, "So then we can benefit from those principles (cooperative, politeness) from our language, that's universal" (2 April 2013). Truc replied:

> Yes, influenced because I can see the differences, I can compare. When I learned English, I compared to Vietnamese. And when I learn culture, I can see the differences and similarities between the culture in Vietnam and in an English-speaking country. (26 April 2013)

The negative impacts were at different levels. At the surface level was the influence of structures and pronunciation whereas at the deep level were thinking and behaviours. Nga said, "Because, you see, in some situations, I do not know the way to behave in that situation, and I often base on the way we often behave in our culture to apply to that situation" (3 June 2013).

Nga mentioned the influence that was shown in the way people performed the speech act of greeting. She said:

> Especially in you know in translation, we often apply the whole Vietnamese to the use of English. In greetings, yeah sometimes Vietnamese people have a habit of greeting people by saying "Bạn đi đâu đó?" ("Where are you going?"). And you know they often apply the same thing when they want to greet other people coming from the other countries. (3 June 2013)

Viewed from symbolic interactionism, one of the three working theoretical perspectives used in this study, it can be observed that the first language always influences the way the second language is acquired and used. In other words, there is constant interaction between the first and the second language, and this entails the unique way Vietnamese learners look at and use English and explains why Vietnamese English is different from Englishes spoken by Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Singaporean speakers.

5.2.1.8 Perspectives from which teachers viewed their English teaching

The teachers gave various responses when asked "When teaching English in general and pragmatic knowledge in particular, from which perspective do you look at your teaching (English perspective, Vietnamese perspective, or a combination of both)?" This question was an additional interview question asked via email. Among the ten participants (six interviewed teachers and four in the focus group) six replied.

Two teachers in the focus group indicated that they had an English perspective. Nhu said, "I guess I am toward the English perspective. For example, I usually ask my students to use that language in that situation or context as spoken by native speakers" (24 May 2013). Similarly, Hue commented:

> In my opinion, I'm trying to adopt [an] English perspective in my teaching. I try to focus on language, structures used in real contexts, even though these contexts come from textbooks, newspapers or other sources to help students know how to use the language. (24 May 2013)

134

Two interviewees showed they had both English and Vietnamese perspectives. Both mentioned comparison of the two languages and cultures. To be specific, Thanh replied:

> Before teaching the language of invitations, from the Vietnamese perspective, I tell students that Vietnamese people often keep silent or smile as an illustration for acceptance when they are invited to have a dinner while American/English people consider it a refusal. Then, I instruct them how they should/have to reply with either acceptance or refusal in English. This will be reinforced by role-plays so that they get used to it. I don't want them just to know the meanings/structures in class but in real conversations, [otherwise] they cannot use them appropriately. (2 April 2013)

The other two instructors thought that they visualised their English teaching from neither English nor Vietnamese perspective. They mentioned teaching students how to be able to communicate successfully in different contexts. Tien replied:

> But, as Pronunciation is one of my favourite subjects, I always tried to help my students to have a clear and correct pronunciation and stress patterns as what they can find in dictionaries since the aim was, I often told them, to be able to communicate successfully. (6 May 2013)

Tien argued that she would like her students to sound as close to native speakers as possible but added that in a language environment like Vietnam, it is unrealistic to expect students to speak like native speakers from the United Kingdom, United States, or Australia. This may be convincing considering that most students are taught by Vietnamese teachers. The other teacher, Nhan, had an intercultural perspective:

> For example, when we negotiate with a Japanese in a commercial talk, and we use English, then we must keep our understanding of Japanese ways of using language as well. In this case we can't apply the English ways of behaving in our conversation, which could possibly lead to disasters. (20 May 2013)

It can be observed that the teachers viewed their teaching from different perspectives, which reflects the variety and, at the same time, a lack of unity in teaching approaches and

methodologies. The next section presents findings related to the second main category, teaching pragmatic knowledge.

5.2.2 Teachers' pragmatic classroom teaching

This section reports how the participants actually taught pragmatics. It presents data with regard to materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics, approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge, correcting pragmatic errors, types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class, and the difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions.

5.2.2.1 Materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics

The participants generally relied on textbooks to teach pragmatics. Nga replied, "OK, let's talk about pragmatic materials. For the materials of teaching, I often use the textbooks" (3 June 2013). One focus group member commented, "We have to base on the textbooks to teach the students what the textbooks offer" (24 May 2013). Another added, "I think that our textbooks provide enough pragmatic knowledge" (FG: 24 May 2013). Materials used by the teachers consisted of written and spoken texts, authentic materials such as video clips and recordings from the VOA or BBC, newspapers, the Internet, movies, and visual aids such as posters or pictures. A focus group member responded, "So I use newspapers, videos, or recordings from the VOA or BBC. So I try to make use of authentic materials" (24 May 2013). The use of authentic materials was echoed by Nhan, who said:

> I am the one who prefers contexts, authentic language so in my class, I usually
>
> show clips to my students, or a story if I don't have clips, stories of myself, gives
>
> examples, or I cut a story in a newspaper, so I lead my students into what is
>
> going on in that context. So I will ask my student "What is this?", "Why is that?",
>
> "What does that man tell that woman?", "Why does that woman react like that?",
>
> for example. So after that, they will have a discussion, then I will try to explain
>
> what is going on, and that will help my students understand more about how to
>
> use language in that context. So I prefer authentic materials for example video
>
> clips, or stories, real stories, or a very short joke. For example, the word blonde,

in Vietnam we don't know a lot about the word blonde, so I give them some

examples of that. (20 May 2013)

Giang emphasised the importance of using audio-visual aids in teaching pragmatics when

remarking, "Just one short video clip or just one short film we show to the students and they

can copy and learn it very fast" (15 April 2013). It can be observed that the teachers seemed

to value the use of authentic materials in their classroom to provide a context as well as to

enhance the effect of instruction.

In terms of tasks used in class, the teachers made use of pair work, group work, role-play

and simulation, discussions and debates, problem-solving tasks, oral presentations, and TV

shows. A focus group member stated:

I use some tasks in class like pair work, group work, role-play activity, or

debate. Ah and I give them some situations, for ex some problem in a

restaurant, and they have to solve the problem, they can discuss in groups and

then I call each person in each group and they can have the role-play in front of

the class to solve the problem. They can use the language they can learn from

the textbook into the situations. (24 May 2013)

5.2.2.2   Approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge

The respondents mentioned a variety of ways to teach pragmatic knowledge. Three

interviewees mentioned giving explicit explanation on culture and language use. For

example, a focus group member said, "And you have to explain a lot of things related to

culture, a lot of aspects, not only aspects of grammar or meaning" (24 May 2013).

Two focus group members and three interviewees mentioned providing sample language or

input. Thao, a focus group member, gave the following reply, "When we give them more

practice, for example, reading or literature, they have the chance to approach the literature

or the culture. That means we teach pragmatic knowledge" (24 May 2013). Another focus

group member said:

So for example, uh, I mean in class for some speaking activity, role-play, for

example. I try to give the students the sample, sample conversation or use.

They can learn and I ask them what they learn from the video or the

conversation and they can speak out the language. (24 May 2013)

One interviewed teacher thought exposing students to other varieties of Englishes can be

useful. She said:

At least in my listening class, sometimes I have my students listen to an Indian

man speaking English and someone from Hong Kong or China speaking

English, and they should know how they speak English and should know how to

understand them. (Thanh: 2 April 2013)

What this teacher did was exactly what teachers teaching ELF should do (see section 3.3).

In this case, the students were exposed to a variety of English that is not spoken by native

speakers of English and were aware of other Englishes. This issue will be taken up further in

Chapters 6 and 7.

Other strategies of teaching pragmatics included inviting native speakers to class to provide

authentic language, raising awareness of the importance of pragmatics, providing sample

language in the form of written and spoken texts, video clips, and contexts. A focus group

member, revealed:

Yes, I asked Miss Jenny (an American teacher of English at the Faculty) to get

into my class and then let her talk to the class and the class listened to her real

language use. So I think it's also a good way to to provide authentic language to

the students especially when we learn English as Foreign Language, not as a

second language. (24 May 2013)

Some teachers followed specific steps such as: using a picture as a context, asking students

to have a discussion about how to behave in that context, then providing explanation if

necessary or providing linguistic features, showing students how to use them, giving them

practice and greater exposure to language use. For instance, Thanh shared what she did:

Before they can use that, they should know how people use that, right? If I
provide some vocabulary, and they will read it from the reading, and then
through the reading text, they can understand how people use that word or
expression in writing, for example. And then once they know that, later when
they want to use them by themselves, they will try to apply those or for the
listening and speaking. If they want to speak well, they should listen to see how
people use those expressions in the context, and I will explain to them later on
when I ask them to role-play or discussion. I ask them to use those specific
structures. I think that is just an example to teach them how to use language
properly. (2 April 2013)

Half of the teachers used their personal stories, real experiences or mistakes they had made
to teach pragmatic knowledge. For example, Giang said:

Whenever I tell them a story for them to learn, not for fun, and they say "Oh it is
very easy for me to remember" and they always give me some sincere thanks
for my stories, because they can learn something, not just for fun. This is
something personal and not from the books. And sometimes I pretend, too. I
read something from the book, but I tell them "Oh I have been in this situation"
and when I say so, it seems that they are more interested in listening to me. So
sometimes we have to tell a lie to make them involved and give them more
motivation to learn. (15 April 2013)

Truc, an instructor, mentioned her integration of different skills. First, she has her students
listen to a speech, and then they read a text about the same topic. The students then write a
summary of the speech and the text in their own words and give their own opinions.

5.2.2.3   Correcting pragmatic errors

Correcting pragmatic errors shares some features with teaching pragmatic knowledge. When
asked how they would correct pragmatic errors made by the students, the subjects reported
various ways, including explaining explicitly to the students and providing correct language
and examples of language use. A focus group member remarked:

I will tell them that in this case native speakers don't say this but say that. If the

mistake is just maybe made one time, maybe I'll ignore that, but for the second

time, this can be a kind of fossilised mistake, so I'll try to correct them, and I'll

say that native speakers don't say that. They say this. (24 May 2013)

Truc commented, "I explain the main points, the use, the meaning of the words. I give them

some examples so that they can use it in an effective way" (26 April 2013).

Other ways of correcting pragmatic errors included relating to the first language for

naturalness and raising awareness of the differences between the two languages. Thanh

said, "And try to raise awareness of it [pragmatic mistake]. At least the students must be

aware of this so that they can modify by themselves, I think" (2 April 2013). Tien shared her

way of correcting pragmatic errors:

I can explain the grammatical points very clearly and they understand it

because they can find it in textbooks, but when I correct their pragmatic errors,

normally they do not understand because they can't find any information about

that, so maybe I can try to show them many examples. For example, when I

correct my students' errors in the improper use of personal pronouns, I will have

to ask them "How do you say this to your parents?", "Do you say this this way to

your parents or not?" And they say "No, it doesn't sound Vietnamese", so I can

raise awareness of the differences between the language use. (6 May 2013)

These teachers realised the differences between Vietnamese and English and tried to ask

students to compare and contrast between the two languages so that they can be aware of

the differences. This way seemed to be fruitful because using L1 to help students

understand how to use the target language appropriately and naturally can be effective and

long-lasting.

A number of teachers followed specific procedures to correct pragmatic mistakes. A focus

group member said:

Yeah, I I normally ask the classmates to take notes of the mistakes and then

give feedback, give comments on the language use of [their fellow] students,

140

and then after that I will be the last person to give the comments on the

language use. (24 May 2013)

Another focus group member said:

I note down some pragmatic errors, inappropriate language use from students,

and after the presentations, I point out some of the mistakes during the time

they speak out. And I correct directly by using the wrong word, or inappropriate

language, and then give the correct language. For example, when we say "noi

da ga" in Vietnamese, but in some Western culture, they say "goose bumps".

Sometimes we have similar forms of language, but sometimes [we make

mistakes] because of using different words. (24 May 2013)

Truc corrected by giving students feedback by pointing out their mistakes, presenting correct

models, and directing them to self-correct.

5.2.2.4   Types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class

Cultural knowledge was reported by five interviewed instructors and two in the focus group to

be the type of pragmatic information needed to be included in classroom teaching. Truc

commented, "I teach cultural knowledge. I use the word sociocultural knowledge" (26 April

2013). Tien commented:

I can focus on language use because I have many options to talk to them about

language use. I think yes, it is important to include speech acts and cultural

knowledge. I very often I talk about cultural knowledge in my class so that they

will see the connection between language and culture. (6 May 2013)

Five teachers said they taught general pragmatic information. For example, Nhan replied, "I

think we should provide our students with information such as politeness, implicature and

cooperative principles" (20 May 2013).

Teaching speech acts was mentioned by three participants and metalanguage was

mentioned by one. Truc said, "And I talk to students about speech acts" (26 April 2013). Nga

commented, "Yeah, well, the most important thing I need to include in my classroom

teaching is metalanguage, the second one may be some general pragmatic information, and after that it may be some cultural knowledge" (3 June 2013).

5.2.2.5 Difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions

The teachers said they encountered difficulties when teaching pragmatics. The difficulties together with the participants' suggested solutions are shown in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13   Teacher-perceived difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions

Difficulties experienced by teachers	• a lack of experience in language use and contexts, leading to making mistakes in language use (6) • lack of pragmatic knowledge including cultural knowledge • difficult to explain to students how language is used (2)
Difficulties experienced by students	• wrong use of language becoming "fossilised" • translating and adapting what they speak in English from Vietnamese (3) • students unable to use suitable language in certain contexts, not able to use the language correctly (2) • lacking cultural knowledge leading to limited views when expressing critical thinking about a reading (2) • lack of language environment to use English outside the classroom • not really interested in pragmatic use, not aware of the importance of pragmatics • not eager to adopt new language and culture • no chance to talk to native speakers • not understanding what teachers explain to them about language use
Solutions	• equipping students with cultural knowledge by providing them with activities and materials relevant to the subjects of foreign cultures to avoid cross-cultural misunderstanding (5) • letting students watch or read authentic materials • giving examples of communication breakdowns to help students see the importance of pragmatics • encouraging them to investigate the culture barriers, to talk with and imitate native speakers, to think and write in English

Note. The number in the brackets indicates the number of teachers who mentioned the difficulties and solutions.

The data on Table 5.13 show that six teachers admitted that they did not know how to use language appropriately, and as a result, made mistakes in language use. Hue, a focus group member, acknowledged, "Because we actually don't have experience about real contexts of using language, sometimes we make some mistakes of using language in some situations" (24 May 2013). This is echoed by another member who said, "And the biggest problem for us teachers is we are not totally immerged in the language. Sometimes we use the wrong

language" (FG: 24 May 2013). Giang, who had studied in Canada and Australia, still found it difficult to use English appropriately. She talked about her difficulty teaching pragmatics and said, "Of course I cannot know everything (about pragmatic knowledge)" (15 April 2013).

Other teachers mentioned a lack of pragmatic knowledge and difficulty in explaining to students how to use language appropriately. Nga said:

> When teaching students pragmatic knowledge, I have some problems and
> challenges. You know, I'm just a young teacher and I haven't been abroad
> before yeah so it will be difficult for me to understand the real society and the
> real culture of that country, so all the information I get is just via the Internet or
> sometimes from YouTube or from articles or magazines, so I don't think that this
> information is enough for a society that changes everyday. (3 June 2013)

From what the teachers said, it was obvious that they had experienced difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge to students because they lacked experience in language use and pragmatic knowledge and did not know how to teach pragmatics. Both experienced teachers, who had overseas experience, and inexperienced teachers with no overseas experience had the same difficulties. This finding will be combined and discussed with the data from the questionnaires and classroom observations in the next chapter.

Five participants suggested solutions to the problems of teaching cultural knowledge by providing students with activities and materials relevant to subjects of foreign cultures to avoid cross-cultural misunderstanding. For example, Truc suggested, "My solution is providing them with a lot of materials and activities relevant to the subject of foreign cultures. I encourage them to investigate the cultural barrier themselves and encourage them to talk more with native speakers" (26 April 2013).

The data in Table 5.13 also show other solutions recommended by the teachers: using authentic materials, raising awareness of the importance of pragmatics and encouraging students to talk to and imitate native speakers. Nhan suggested:

> We have to tell them to watch films, to read more about that. Reading from
> books is sometimes not enough. You have to watch films and to contact as

many foreigners as possible to consciously know the way foreigners behave, for example, in a dinner, the way they talk, the way to refuse, the way to agree. Reading from books we can never notice that way of disagreeing. (20 May 2013)

Nhan highlighted the value of learning consciously the way foreigners use language, and this was also shared by Tien, who said, "Very often I tell them when they read, they have to realise how people use the language" (20 May 2013).

The teachers suggested solutions that were similar to the ways they taught pragmatics as presented in section 5.2.2.2. These solutions suggested by the teachers will be further considered in the discussion of issues related to language pedagogy and approaches to the teaching and learning of pragmatic knowledge in a Vietnamese university EFL classroom in Chapter 6.

5.3 Classroom observation data

Classroom observation was used in conjunction with the survey questionnaires, interviews and the focus group to answer the first two research questions. The main purposes of the observations were to see how the teachers applied their understanding of pragmatics to their teaching practice and to find out whether there was a match between what the teachers had claimed to teach and what they really taught in their classrooms. Classroom observation data can confirm and corroborate the data from the questionnaires, interviews and the focus group.

Three lecturers whose pseudonyms were Nga, Thanh and Truc were observed in two sessions. Each session was 150 minutes long. The observational foci were the kinds of pragmatic knowledge they were teaching, the tasks, activities and the materials they were using and how they were teaching pragmatic knowledge and correcting pragmatic mistakes made by students. The following are descriptions of their classroom observations.

5.3.1 Pragmatic knowledge

The pragmatic knowledge taught was predominantly in the form of metalanguage and was taught mainly by explanation both in English and Vietnamese. For example, Thanh explained how collocations were used by saying, "In English a verb is used with a number of nouns only. For example, the verb *lose* can go with nouns like *a job*, *a wallet* …" (Observation notes, 27 May 2013). This teacher also explained the differences between American and British English when she mentioned *check* and *cheque,* the use of have to and don't have to, the difference between *don't have to* and *mustn't*, the difference between *cook* and *cooker*. Thanh also used Vietnamese equivalents to explain vocabulary for employment such as *colleague, flexible hours,* and *job security*.

Another teacher, Nga, explained the use of *been* and *gone* when she taught the Past Simple and Present Perfect tenses. Truc taught the second conditional. She gave the students the equivalents in Vietnamese when teaching new words, but failed to provide contexts.

Cultural information was also explained to the students when Thanh talked about traditional foods in Japan (sushi), China (Beijing duck), and Korea (kimchi) (Observation notes, 3 June 2013). Truc also asked her students to discuss the differences between the target culture and Vietnamese culture.

General pragmatic information in the form of register was taught by Truc and Nga when they distinguished formal and informal structures. Nga also taught the students the differences between writing formal and informal letters. Politeness was mentioned to the students by Truc when she told them that they could use their intonation (flat vs. good) to show emotions and attitudes. Truc presented different ways to say "How are you?" in American English: she taught "What's up?", "How are things?" and "What's going on?" (Observation notes, 5 June 2013)

5.3.2 Tasks and activities

With respect to the tasks and activities used by the teachers, pair work was used by all the teachers in their lessons. Thanh provided some model language before asking her students

to practice in pairs. However, Truc asked her students to practise the structure "What would you do if …" with the situations provided in the textbook without giving the students the option to talk about their topic. Other activities and tasks included group work, role-play, discussion, drilling when teaching lexical items, answering questions from the teacher, and listening and choosing the correct answers.

5.3.3   Materials used to teach pragmatics

In terms of teaching materials, all three teachers relied mainly on textbooks to teach pragmatics with limited supplementary materials such as audio or visual. Thanh used a listening text to serve as a model for a speaking task to be completed at home. She also showed her students a video clip featuring a conversation between a customer and a waiter at a Japanese restaurant. Truc provided a sample email in the form of a hand-out. For these teachers, textbooks played an important role in teaching English. When asked why they did not use other teaching materials, the teachers replied that they had to teach according to the syllabus with an orientation toward an exam which tests mainly reading skills, vocabulary and grammar. This took away their freedom to choose their own teaching materials.

5.3.4   Teaching pragmatic knowledge and correcting mistakes

The teachers' ways of teaching pragmatic knowledge and English in general were also observed. The observed teachers taught pragmatic knowledge by providing explanations about language use, cultural knowledge, and sample language. To be specific, Nga explained the difference between *been* and *gone*. Thanh provided explanation on collocations, differences between American and British English, differences between *don't have to* and *mustn't*. Truc and Nga discussed the differences between *formal* and *informal language* while Thanh talked about traditional foods from a number of countries.

Nga encouraged students to compare the target culture to Vietnamese culture to see how looking at an issue from a different perspective can help students change their point of view. She also provided an equivalent to the saying "Travel broadens the mind" in Vietnamese ("Di

mot ngay dang, hoc mot sang khon") (Observation notes, 30 May 2013). In this case Nga capitalised on the first language and culture to teach the target language and culture.

Truc and Thanh taught how to use English by providing sample input. For example, Thanh played a video clip to provide language input for another task in which she reminded her students to use the structures learned from the video clip, while Truc provided a sample email followed by explanation of how to write a personal email.

The types of pragmatic and grammatical errors corrected by the teachers were also observed. Both grammatical and pragmatic errors were looked after by the observed teachers. To be specific, Nga corrected her students' grammatical mistakes when they mispronounced the past tense form of regular verbs. She also corrected a pragmatic error when a student in her class, in the role of an employer, said "Get out of here" to another student in the role of an employee who forgot an important meeting. Thanh corrected her students when they made mistakes in pronunciation and grammar; Truc corrected both grammatical and pragmatic errors. The pragmatic error she corrected was the use of wrong turn in conversation.

5.4   Document analysis data

This section reports the data in relation to Research question 3 "How is pragmatic knowledge presented in the textbooks and the English curriculum?" The data were collected from the documents issued by MOET, the documents drafted by the university, and mainly the textbooks used by the university lecturers.

5.4.1   Documents issued by MOET and documents drafted by the university

In order to obtain an overview of the nature of the materials used to teach English in general and pragmatics in particular, it was necessary to see the English language requirements for university graduates, which are regulated in the curriculum for training undergraduate students developed and circulated on 15th November 2007 by the university (the number of

the degree was intentionally not revealed for confidentiality reasons), which was based on Decree 2677/GD-DT by MOET (1993).

According to the university curriculum, non-English majors who choose English to study as their foreign language are required to complete English 1, English 2, and English 3 courses as part of their undergraduate studies. The total lecture time for English 1 is 37½ hours; English 2 and English 3 both are 25 hours long. For the English 1 course, students are expected to attend a two-hour-and-a-half lesson every week for 15 weeks of the semester. For English 2 and 3, each class is an hour 40 minutes long. According to the Framework for the Assessment of Foreign Language Competence (see 1.1) issued by MOET (2014), university students who do not major in a language are required to reach Level 3 in the framework, which is equal to B1 in CEFR (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division, 2001) before their graduation. A new English curriculum was designed by the university in 2015 to keep up with the framework issued by MOET (2014). Basically the content of the new curriculum remains the same as the one designed in 2007.

The course objectives of the English curriculum at the university include helping students understand various types of oral and written texts, developing skills of expression in English both in speaking and writing, providing students with sociocultural knowledge as well as linguistic knowledge so that students can develop knowledge of the people of the United Kingdom, United States of America as well as other European countries. These objectives suggest that the English courses only provide students with knowledge of the people, society and culture of Western countries. Apart from the documents issued by MOET and the university, textbook analysis was conducted for pragmatic content.

5.4.2   Textbook analysis data

The textbook selected for content analysis was *face2face Pre-Intermediate Student's Book* (Redston & Cunningham, 2005) (see 4.3.4 for more information about the choice of textbook and the coding of pragmatic content). The Teacher's Book (Redston, Clark, & Young, 2005) and Workbook (Tims, Redston, & Cunningham, 2005) were also scanned by the researcher. However, only information regarding teaching or consolidating pragmatic knowledge was

reported. The lines containing this type of information in the Teacher's Book and Workbook were not counted in the total number of lines reported.

The textbook was analysed on a line-by-line basis. A line can contain headings and sub-headings in the lessons and can be a single word, but does not contain the titles of the lessons or units. The total number of lines in the textbook was estimated using the average number of lines per page multiplied by the total pages of the book. To be specific, 14 pages (4 pages of Unit 1, 4 pages of Unit 12, 2 pages from the section of Pair and Group Work, 2 pages from Language Summary, and 2 pages from the Recording Scripts) contained 1,075 lines. The mean number of lines of each page is 76.78, and the book is 160 pages long. Therefore, the book was estimated to contain 12,286 lines. When coding the pragmatic information in the textbook, lists of vocabulary items were not counted. Reading texts and recording scripts were coded only when they contained cultural information.

The textbook content analysis showed that there were 2,369 lines containing pragmatic information, accounting for 19.28% of the total number of lines. The initial design included analysis of pragmatic tasks. However, the selected textbook contained limited pragmatic tasks. The number of pragmatic tasks found in the textbook was too small for analysis. Therefore, only pragmatic information was analysed. Pragmatic information consists of general pragmatic information, metalaguage style, speech acts, and cultural knowledge (see 4.3.4 for more details).

Table 5.14   Types of pragmatic information in the textbook

Pragmatic information	Number of lines	Percentage
General pragmatic information	18	0.76
Metalanguage style	1,423	60.07
Speech acts	175	7.39
Cultural knowledge	753	31.78
Total	2,369	100

Table 5.14 shows that metalanguage style accounts for more than 60% of pragmatic information in the textbook, nearly double that of cultural knowledge (31.78%). Speech acts information accounts for less than 8%, while general pragmatic information accounts for less than 1% of pragmatic information. Speech acts and general pragmatic information are

important in developing learners' pragmatic competence, but these make up only a small part of pragmatic information in the textbook. The next section will discuss the four types of pragmatic information in detail.

5.4.2.1 General pragmatic information

General pragmatic information was coded as politeness, appropriacy, formality, and register (see 4.3.4 for more detail). As seen in Table 5.11, only 0.76% of pragmatic information in the textbook was general pragmatic information. Half of this information (9 lines) was about politeness. For example, "We know if people are being polite by how much their voices go up and down. If their voices are flat, they are often rude or impatient" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 58). Another example of information is, "Remember to use *please* and *thank you*" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 83).

According to the textbook analysis, there were five lines about formality. An example is "When we tell people who we are on the phone, we say: *This is Jim* or *It's Jim*, not *I'm Jim*. The structure of *This is* is more formal than *It's*" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 131). More information about formality was given in the Workbook where students are taught the differences between formal and informal letters regarding starting and ending a letter (Tims et al., p. 73). However, these lines were only mentioned as a cross-reference and not included in the number of lines about pragmatic information. Four lines included information on appropriacy and none were about register. General pragmatic information is considered an essential type of pragmatic information. However, the textbook analysis found a lack of this information.

5.4.2.2 Metalanguage style

Metalanguage style was coded as Description, Instruction, Introduction, and Task-related (see 4.3.4 for more detail). Investigating metalanguage is important because this information can be a source of input and can provide learners with explicit metalinguistic information (Vellenga, 2004).

Table 5.15   Sub-categories of metalanguage style information

Metalanguage style information	Number of lines	Percentage
Description	14	0.98
Instruction	507	35.63
Introduction	357	25.09
Task-related	545	38.30
Total	1,423	100

As shown in Table 5.15, Task-related information is ranked the highest with more than 38%, followed by Instruction (nearly 36%) and Introduction (25%), respectively, while Description only accounts for less than 1%. The following is a detailed report of these sub-categories.

Metalinguistic information on Description was found in 14 lines, accounting for only 1%. An example of this type of information is about active and passive sentences:

> In English the main topic usually comes at the beginning of the sentence.
>
> Active: Ian Fleming used this typewriter.
>
> Passive: This typewriter was used by Ian Fleming.
>
> In the active sentence we are more interested in Ian Fleming, so we make him
>
> the subject. In the passive sentence we are more interested in the type writer,
>
> so we make it the subject. (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 140)

Information on Instruction was found to make up nearly 36% of metalanguage style. This information involves explaining the use of grammatical items such as tenses, verb patterns, pronunciation, echo questions, and lexical items, mostly found in the Language Summary section at the back of the book. There was a consistent use of *We (often) use/We don't use/We can (also) use* followed by examples of this sort of information. Examples included "We use the Past Simple to talk about the past. We know when these things happened" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p.121), "We don't usually use much or many in positive sentences" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 133), "We can also use *I want* and *I'd love* to to talk about future plans and ambitions" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p.129). There was information on a great deal of pronunciation features such as stress, "We stress the

important words in sentences and questions" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 9), linking, "We usually link words that end in a consonant sound with words that start with a vowel sound" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 24), or individual sounds, "In spoken English we sometimes don't hear /t/ at the end of a word" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 63).

Introduction information refers to any text that serves as a preparation for some activity by concentrating learners' attention on a certain topic (Vellenga, 2004). This information usually provides a context for the next activity or task and accounts for 25% of metalinguistic information and includes texts usually in imperative forms. For example:

> Read this advert for a speed dating company. Answer the questions.
>
> 1.   How long is each speed date?
> 2.   How many people do you meet?
> 3.   What do you do if you like a person?
> 4.   What happens if this person also ticks your name? (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 10).

Task-related information is about instructions of how to carry out an activity and is mainly given with the use of imperative sentences. This type of information was ranked at more than 38%, the highest in metalanguage style. For example:

> 10   Choose a married couple you know well (yourself and your wife/husband, your parents, other relatives or friends). Make notes about the couple.
> Use these ideas:
> •   when, where and how they met
> •   when they went on their first day
> •   how long they went out together before they got married
> •   when they got engaged
> •   when and where they got married
> •   any other interesting or funny information

11 a) Work in groups. Tell other students about the couple you chose. Ask

questions to find out more information.

b) Which story was the most romantic, the most unusual, or the funniest?

(Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 15)

Data on metalanguage style showed that only about 37% of the textbook's metalinguistic information (Description and Instruction) provided linguistic or usage information. The rest mainly contained directions for students to complete activities or tasks.

5.4.2.3   Speech acts

Information on speech acts accounted for just over 7% of pragmatic information in the textbook. However, a closer examination resulted in 20 different speech acts. They are *start conversations, end conversations, apologise, give reasons, promise, respond to apologies, agree, disagree, ask for opinions, offer, suggest, request*, *telephone*, *complain, advise, invite, make arrangements, accept invitations, refuse invitations, and shop*. All the speech acts were presented once in the textbook except for *agree, disagree*, and *request*, which appeared twice. The speech acts were listed first in the order of their appearance in the textbook. The speech acts were coded as to whether they were explicitly mentioned and whether there was a metapragmatic description of them. Metapragmatic description is information on when, where, and to whom it is considered suitable to perform a speech act as well as information about the (in)appropriateness of expressions uttered in a certain context of culture and context of situation (Nguyen, 2011c).

All the speech acts except *advise* were explicitly mentioned in the textbook but were not, most of the time, accompanied by metapragmatic information. The speech acts were presented both inductively and deductively. There was a consistent procedure to teach a speech act. For example, the speech acts *apologise, give reasons, promise, and respond to apologies* were taught in the following procedure. First, they were introduced with two activities.

1. Work in groups. Discuss these questions.

    1. Do you prefer working or studying in the morning or the evening? Why?

    2. When was the last time you worked/studied late? Why?

    3. Do you ever cancel things because you have to work/study?

2. a) Listen and put the pictures in order. (There are pictures A, B, and C about Wayne, Rita, and Paul respectively).

   b) Work in pairs. Who said these sentences?

    1. I'm sorry, I couldn't finish it yesterday.

    2. I'll do it now and email it to you.

    3. I have to take a client out to dinner.

    4. I'm really sorry, but I can't see you tonight.

    5. I had to help Katie.

    6. I'll see you on Friday, I promise.

    7. I'll call you at the weekend. (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 26)

Then, the speech acts were highlighted with the next activity.

3. a) Look at the sentences in 2b). Which are: apologies (A), reasons (R), promises (P)?

   b) Complete sentences 1-3 with a), b) or c).

    a) I'll …

    b) I have to/had to …

    c) I'm (really) sorry, (but) I can't/couldn't …

      1 For apologies we often use …

      2 For reasons we often use …

      3 For promise we often use …

   c) Look again at the the sentences in 2b). Which verb form comes after *'ll, can't, couldn't, have to and had to*?

d) Fill in the gaps in these responses to apologies.

time   happened   not   worry   right

1   Oh, don't …………….. Another ………….., maybe.

2   Oh, dear. What …………………?

3   Oh, ………………….. Why ……………?

e) Check in RW3.1 p 125. (This section gives more detailed information on the use of the speech acts. For example, for apologies we often use: *I'm (really) sorry, (but) I can't/couldn't + infinitive. I'm really sorry, but I can't see you tonight.*)

(Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 26)

Then students worked in pairs to read the transcript of the conversation in Activity 2 and underline all the apologies, reasons and promises. Afterwards, they were asked to listen and practise the sentences in 2b). In the next activity, they filled in the gaps with *'ll, can't, couldn't, have to or had to* and worked in pairs to compare answers. In the last activity, students worked on their own to prepare what to say in two situations in which they promised to do something with their partners but now they could not. They then worked in pairs to phone each other to apologise, give their reason, and promise to do the something another time.

It can be seen from the sample lesson that the speech acts were first introduced in a conversation in which they were performed by the speakers, which aimed to establish the context. After that they were presented explicitly with information on what to say to perform them, followed by pair work or group work tasks so that students could practice using the speech acts they had learned.

The linguistic presentation of the speech acts was also considered. It was found that there was a lack of choices in the language provided for students to perform the speech acts. For example, the following information was given for the speech act *apologise*.

For apologies we often use *I'm (really) sorry, but I can't/couldn't + infinitive*.

I'm really sorry, but I can't see you tonight.

I'm sorry, I couldn't finish it yesterday. (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 125).

Given that the textbook is designed for pre-intermediate students, there still should be more structures for apologies and reasons so that students can be more prepared to take part in real communication. Also students need to know which structure to use in which situation. The teacher's manual, unfortunately, did not provide this kind of information except to ask teachers to tell students to focus on the pictures then elicit the names of the people in the pictures and what they are doing.

All the other speech acts except *advise* were treated in a similar way. Therefore, what was found in the treatment of the speech acts of *apologise, give reasons, promise, and respond to apologies* can be applied to the other speech acts in terms of a similar or predictable pattern. All of the speech acts were consolidated by activities in the Reading and Writing Portfolios in the Workbook in the forms of filling in the gaps in conversations with given phrases, and making sentences with given words. The speech act *complain* was fostered by activities in which students read a sample letter of complaint, learnt useful phrases when organising a letter of complaint, made notes on what to complain about after reading an advertisement, and wrote a letter of complaint using the notes they had made (Tims et al, 2005, pp. 76-77).

On the whole, the speech acts were taught systematically. Nevertheless, there was a paucity of metapragmatic information on politeness or norms of appropriateness, which is fundamental for learners to work out "differential socio-cultural constraints on the use of speech acts in different cultures" (Nguyen, 2011b, p. 23). There was also a dearth of cultural knowledge on how to perform the speech acts in the context of Vietnam as well as comparison between the way people of different cultures perform their speech acts. There is, therefore, a paucity of cross-/intercultural knowledge.

5.4.2.4 Cultural knowledge

Cultural knowledge was coded as information on the cultures of speakers of ENL and cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. ENL refers to English used by its native speakers in English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These are the countries in the "Inner Circle"

(Kachru, 1992b, p. 356). ESL is English used by the people in the "Outer Circle" and EFL is English used by speakers in the "Expanding Circle" (Kachru, 1992b, p. 356). ELF refers to English that speakers of different first languages use to communicate with each other (Seidlhofer, 2005).

Table 5.16   Sub-categories of cultural knowledge

Cultural knowledge	Number of lines	Percentage
Speakers of ENL	497	66
Speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF	256	34
Total	753	100

Note. ESL = English as a native language, ESL = English as a Second Language, EFL = English as a Foreign Language, ELF = English as a lingua franca.

Table 5.16 shows that knowledge about cultures of speakers of ENL is nearly double that of cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. These types of cultural knowledge are detailed below.

Cultural information was found to be mainly about cultures of native speakers of English (British, American, Australian, and New Zealand) with a dominance of information on British culture. Information on British culture included the British rules of behaviour (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, pp. 64, 153), way of life (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 8), famous people: Jamie Oliver (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 4) and Ewan McGregor (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 29), companies: Christie's and Sotheby's (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 76), cities (Edinburgh) (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 66-67), speed dating (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 10), and shopping trends (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 78-79). Information on a famous British movie and British men's five styles of wearing clothes was provided in the Workbook (Tims et al., 2005, pp. 20, 53), respectively. Information on Scottish unique cultural features was given in the following:

> They know that men sometimes wear a kilt, which is like a skirt, but for men,
> and that we play a musical instrument called the bagpipes. And of course
> Scottish whisky is one of the most famous drinks in the world. (Redston &
> Cunningham, 2005, p. 153)

American culture is shown through information on the American rules of behaviour, their habit of watching TV (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 33), famous companies: KFC (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 12); McDonald's, (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 13); eBay (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 77), famous people: David Blaine, magician (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 96); Harry Houdini, magician (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 97), and famous tourist attractions: The Grand Canyon and Disney World (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 52). The Workbook also contained advice for students studying in the USA regarding living costs, time and temperature, people, and food (Tims et al., p. 78) and supplementary information on eBay and its founders (Tims et al., p. 50).

Information about cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF was presented in the textbook with respect to the things people should or should not do when they are in Russia, Thailand, Japan, China, India, other Asian countries, and the Arab world in terms of body language. For example, "And never blow your nose in public in Japan – people think that's disgusting" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 64). An example about eating out, "In restaurants in China you should always try to leave some food on your plate, but it's OK to start smoking before other people finish eating, which is very rude in England" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 64); and an example in the home, "And if you visit an Arab family's home, remember that it's polite to drink three cups of coffee" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 65).

More rules of behaviour in Turkey, China, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam were found in a listening. These are about things you should not give to people, accepting and refusing presents, giving flowers, and opening presents. For example:

> And even opening presents can be a problem. In most Western countries like
> England or the USA, people want you to open the present when they give it to
> you. But in places like Thailand and Vietnam it's very rude to open a present
> immediately. (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 153)

Information on cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, or ELF also includes Thai culture (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, pp. 6-7), Egyptian culture (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 16), French culture (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 61), Italian culture (Redston &

Cunningham, 2005, p. 80-81), Brazilian culture (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 56), and South African culture (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 52).

In general, the textbook attempted to provide the learners with cultural information. There was one whole unit dealing with cultural knowledge (Unit 8 Different cultures) (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, pp. 60-67), mainly about Western (European, Australian, New Zealand, and North American) and Asian cultures. However, the cultural information sometimes seemed to be biased or out of date. In the above example, the textbook states that in Vietnam it is very impolite to open a present immediately. However, in certain situations, Vietnamese people, especially young ones, want to see what the present is in front of the giver. It was also found that there was not much information on Vietnamese culture.

The analysis of cultural content of the textbook was conducted in the light of cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics and critical approach to language teaching. More in-depth discussion as well as implications will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7 with reference to these theoretical constructs.

5.5 Summary of findings

This chapter has presented the detailed major research findings obtained from multiple data sources. Table 5.17 shows the findings grouped in a methodological manner according to the three research questions, though admittedly, there was some overlapping between them.

Table 5.17   A summary of major findings

Research question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching?

- To the teachers, it is very important to teach pragmatic knowledge.
- It was believed that pragmatic errors are more serious than grammatical errors because they can cause misunderstandings and communication breakdowns.
- The teachers believed that linguistic knowledge is as important as pragmatic knowledge and that teaching English communicatively is as important as teaching grammatical points and lexical items.
- The lecturers were not congruous on whether pragmatic knowledge should be taught when students reach a certain level of proficiency and on the effect of raising awareness of pragmatics compared to teaching specific pragmatic knowledge.
- More than ¾ of the respondents indicated that they knew how to teach students pragmatic knowledge.
- The participants thought it was important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture, but they wanted their students to speak English like native speakers.
- Nearly 95% of the teachers expressed a preference for native speakers' English whilst none of them wanted their students to speak Vietnamese English. However, they did not agree on whether students should imitate native speakers' accents and language use.
- About 80% of the surveyed teachers thought that learners needed to understand other varieties of English apart from native speaker English. The focus group members and one interviewed teacher thought learners needed to understand other Englishes whereas five out of six interviewees disagreed, offering four different reasons.
- Most teachers have acquired pragmatic knowledge from their teachers, especially native teachers, and from real communication and experience.
- The lecturers indicated that their English learning was influenced by their L1.
- The participants viewed their teaching English in general and pragmatics in particular from different perspectives, which reflected both the variety and lack of unity in teaching approaches and methodologies.

Research question 2: How do teachers apply their pragmatic understanding to their teaching practice?

- General pragmatic information and cultural knowledge were the two types of pragmatic knowledge most often taught by the teachers.
- The knowledge and skills most frequently taught were communicative skills and pragmatic knowledge in the form of appropriateness of language use.
- The tasks most often used to teach pragmatic knowledge were pair work and group discussion and debate.
- The teachers generally made use of the textbooks to teach pragmatics, but they also used a variety of materials and tasks.
- Various approaches to teaching pragmatics were offered by the interviewees. Providing explanation was the most frequently used way to teach information on language use.
- The instructors mentioned different ways of correcting pragmatic mistakes.
- The difficulties experienced by the lecturers when teaching pragmatics were a lack of pragmatic knowledge and the varieties of English, a lack of methods of teaching pragmatic knowledge, and a paucity of materials about language use.
- Role-play and discussion and debates were perceived to be effective in developing student communicative competence.
- The most effective ways to develop pragmatic competence for students were making use of tasks and activities and interacting with native speakers and foreigners as well as creating opportunities for learners to interact with each other.
- The observed teachers relied only on the textbooks to teach, and the pragmatic knowledge they taught was principally metalanguage.
- There was a mismatch between what was observed and what the teachers responded to the questionnaires and in the interviews and the focus group.

160

From the data in Table 5. 17, the key findings of the study are as follows, (1) teachers' understanding of pragmatic knowledge and its teaching varied although all of them recognised the vital importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge to enhance EFL students' communicative competence, (2) teachers' method of teaching pragmatic knowledge was influenced by how they had learned pragmatics and their perceptions of pragmatics, (3) teachers relied mostly on textbooks to teach pragmatics but encountered difficulties in the teaching process because they lacked pragmatic knowledge and lacked methods of teaching pragmatics, and (4) there was a dearth of pragmatic knowledge presented in the analysed textbook.

5.6 Summary

The data collected from different instruments – the questionnaires, the interviews and the focus group, the classroom observations and document analysis – were reported in this chapter. The data were organised in broad themes or categories and presented in relation to the three research questions. This organisation of the main themes determines the directions to guide the discussion of the findings in the next chapter. Answers to the three research questions will be discussed by combining key findings from the different sources of data. These findings will be compared with what was found from previous research and interpreted in relation to the three theoretical constructs informing this research.

Chapter 6 Discussion of results

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the key findings presented in Chapter 5. These key research findings result from multiple sets of data gained by different instruments are discussed with reference to each of the research questions. Whenever possible, data from the various sources are combined by way of broad themes for the purpose of triangulation. The findings of the research are also discussed in relation to results gained from previous studies and interpreted in the light of symbolic interactionism, cross-/intercultural pragmatics and critical approach to language teaching.

6.1 Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching?

The categories under this research question are teachers' views on teaching pragmatic knowledge, teachers' perceptions of pragmatic and grammatical errors and correcting them, teachers' perceptions of imitation of native speakers' accent and language use, identity and culture in English teaching, need for learners to understand other Englishes and influence of the mother tongue.

6.1.1 Teaching pragmatic knowledge

All of the teachers interviewed thought it was very important to teach pragmatic knowledge because it enabled students to use language appropriately and to avoid misunderstanding. The teachers' recognition of the importance of pragmatic teaching is in harmony with what was reported in other related studies conducted in different contexts (Belz, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Kasper & Rose, 2001; O'Keeffe et al., 2011; Rose, 2005; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009). The effects of pragmatic instruction were also confirmed by the findings of studies reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Narita, 2012; Rezvani et el., 2014; Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001). Bouton (1988; 1992; 1994) and Kasper (2001) concluded that learners either do not often acquire or learn slowly the pragmatics of the target language if it is not deliberately

taught to them even though they are in contact with the target language inside and outside the classroom. In addition, this awareness of the importance of pragmatic teaching is consistent with the tenets of communicative competence models proposed by Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996; 2010), Canale and Swain (1980), and Canale (1983). These two models show that pragmatic competence is one of the essential components for successful communication.

The great majority of the lecturers (over 86%) believed that teaching pragmatic knowledge is as important as teaching linguistic knowledge. This is consistent with Ji's (2007) finding that more than 74% of the surveyed instructors thought pragmatic knowledge was as important as linguistic knowledge. This belief also supports an implication from previous studies that it is important to strike a balance between pragmatic and grammatical competence because even learners with advanced grammatical knowledge may fail to use the target language appropriately (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Rose, 2009; Xu, Case, & Wang, 2009, Yuan 2012).

The respondents also believed teaching English communicatively is as important as teaching grammatical points and lexical items. This belief is different from what was reported in the findings of previous studies that traditional grammar-translation methods of teaching are still pervasive in Vietnam (Le & Barnard, 2009; Nguyen, 2011a; Nguyen, 2011b; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004; Utsumi & Doan, 2009) and that the English curricula in Vietnam are examination-oriented with a focus on teaching grammatical knowledge, rather than developing communicative competence (Denham, 1992; Pham, 1999). This change in belief can be considered a positive change in the perceptions of teachers in the contexts of EFL teaching in Vietnam, where both teachers and students usually value teaching linguistic knowledge more due to the pressure of examinations in which questions regarding grammar and vocabulary are the main focus. This focus on linguistic features of English often results in generations of students who master the grammar and structures of the language but fail to use the language for communication purposes (Celcia-Murcia, 2001).

However, the teachers were divided on the question of when to teach pragmatic knowledge to learners. Approximately 65% of the lecturers thought that pragmatic knowledge should be

taught when learners had achieved a certain proficiency level while only one interviewed teacher suggested teaching beginners what personal information was appropriate to exchange when greeting others.

This finding indicated that the teachers were unaware of the importance of introducing pragmatics to learners in the early stages of learning English. This belief is not in line with previous results that have shown pragmatic instruction is also beneficial and can be taught to foreign language beginners (Felix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Taguchi, 2007; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, & Thananart, 1997; Wildner-Bassett, 1994). Furthermore, this finding fails to support the results from studies by Bardovi-Harlig (2001), Kasper (1997), and Ji (2007) that teachers need to teach pragmatic knowledge to learners regardless of their level of proficiency. These authors found that grammatically advanced learners may use language improperly and fail to meet the requirements of pragmatic norms in the target language.

It is important to teach grammatical and pragmatic knowledge in tandem. This is because acquiring grammatical competence does not necessarily entail pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998). Even fairly advanced language learners make pragmatic mistakes in conversations or show a failure to convey the intended meaning (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). The imbalance of grammatical and pragmatic competences is often shown in even L2 advanced learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; 1993). In fact, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003a) suggested incorporating pragmatics into the English teaching curriculum at the earliest level so that the imbalance between grammatical and pragmatic acquisition may be ameliorated.

More than 75% of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that they knew how to teach pragmatic knowledge. However, the data from the interviews and the focus group did not support this. When asked "How do you use pragmatic materials and tasks in your classroom teaching?", Nhu, a focus group member, replied, "I don't understand this question. I don't realise that I use the materials of pragmatics" (24 May 2013). Another participant in the focus group Thao remarked:

You even though don't have any purpose of teaching pragmatics, but by accident, accidentally, you use materials of pragmatics already. When I teach a reading text, for example, it has some activities and some tasks; sometimes you use it with no intention for pragmatics, but in fact you use it for pragmatics already. (24 May 2013)

This teacher's comment echoes the claim made by Kasper and Rose (2002) that learners may learn pragmatics through exposure to input and tasks and activities carried out in class even when pragmatic knowledge is not an intended learning target. However, according to Schmidt (1993), mere exposure to the target language may not be sufficient for acquisition of second language pragmatic knowledge as learners often do not notice pragmatic functions because these functions are usually not salient to them. Therefore, it would be necessary for teachers to focus on teaching pragmatic features instead of teaching them "accidentally". It may be implied that pragmatic knowledge was not intentionally taught and the teaching of pragmatics did not seem to be emphasised.

The teacher interviewees also mentioned difficulties they had encountered when they taught pragmatics because they themselves lacked pragmatic competence and knowledge and lacked methods of teaching pragmatics. For instance, Nga replied, "I'm just a young teacher and I haven't been abroad before. Yeah so it will be difficult for me to understand the real society and the real culture of that country" (3 June 2013). This was echoed by Nhan, who said, "The teachers themselves, they have low, they do not have enough pragmatics in terms of communication" (20 May 2013) and was shared by two others. Another interviewee also revealed that she found it a challenge to explain to students how language is used.

The disparity between the survey and interview data can be interpreted that teachers did not know how to teach pragmatics because they themselves lacked pragmatic competence. This supports the results from previous research by Ji (2007), who found that Chinese College English teachers had difficulties in teaching pragmatics because of their lack of pragmatic competence.

6.1.2   Pragmatic and grammatical errors and correcting them

The respondents generally believed that pragmatic errors were more serious than grammatical errors because the former could lead to misunderstanding and communication breakdown. This recognition of the seriousness of pragmatic mistakes is not in agreement with Ji's (2007) finding that teachers were much less sensitive to pragmatic mistakes than to grammatical mistakes. Furthermore, when compared to Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) study that found EFL teachers and their learners viewed grammatical mistakes as more serious than pragmatic mistakes, the teachers in the present study showed a shift in the way they looked at grammatical and pragmatic errors. The explanation may be that over time teachers have changed their perceptions: Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) study was conducted nearly 20 years ago and Ji's (2007) research on Chinese College English teachers' perceptions was nearly 10 years ago.

However, two interviewees believed that it depended on the purpose of learning and the student's level of English proficiency. It is a general perception among Vietnamese EFL teachers and learners that acquiring grammatical knowledge and vocabulary should come before the learning of pragmatic knowledge. It is worth noticing that Tien, an interviewee, showed a change in her thinking of correcting grammatical and pragmatic errors by saying:

> To tell the truth, when I started teaching English, I thought that grammatical
> errors were more important, and I tried to correct all the grammatical errors of
> my students, but then later on when I get used to the idea that a language must
> be used in a way [that] it is used by native speakers, I am aware that it is more
> important to correct pragmatic errors than to correct grammatical errors
> because pragmatic errors can lead to misunderstanding, but grammatical errors
> don't as long as they [the students] can express their thoughts, their feelings. (6
> May 2013)

What Tien expressed in the above quotation echoes the claim that pragmatic mistakes, unlike grammatical mistakes, are often judged on a social or personal level rather than an outcome of the process of language learning (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003a) and

seem to be much less tolerated by native speakers (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Cenoz & Valencia, 1996). The change Tien underwent is related to the change in the teachers' belief in terms of their understanding of the nature of language and pedagogical design discussed in section 6.1.1. It seems that the participants realised the importance of teaching students how to use English instead of teaching them about English.

With regard to correcting grammatical and pragmatic errors, the survey data showed that about 62% of the respondents often corrected students when they used inappropriate words though the sentences were grammatically correct (see Table 5.3 in Chapter 5). This corroborates the interview finding discussed previously that teachers thought pragmatic errors were more serious than grammatical ones. Classroom observation data, nevertheless, showed that teachers corrected more grammatical mistakes than pragmatic ones (see 5.3). The teachers thought that it was more important to correct pragmatic errors; however, in classroom practice they still tended to focus more on grammatical errors.

6.1.3 Imitation of native speakers' accents and language use and identity and culture in language teaching

The teachers did not agree on whether students should imitate native speakers' accents and language use. Approximately 62% of the questionnaire respondents wanted their students to speak English like native speakers. This is in harmony with a larger-scale study by Timmis (2002), who surveyed 180 teachers from 45 different countries, found that 55% of non-native speaker teachers expressed a preference for native-speaker grammar. However, when it came to pronunciation, the number of teachers preferring their students to speak with a native-like pronunciation was fewer than those wanting their students to speak with "accented intelligibility" (Timmis, 2002, p. 243).

The results of the present study also support the results of a study of 210 lecturers from four universities in China conducted by He and Zhang (2010). They found that 57% of the teachers preferred their students to speak like a native speaker of English. Nevertheless, this result is inconsistent with Chien's (2014) finding that only 24% of his participants, who were

pre-service elementary school teachers in Taiwan, claimed that they would strive to acquire native-like pronunciation.

While approximately 62% of the questionnaire respondents wanted their students to speak native-like English, the teachers interviewed were at variance with each other. For instance, two teachers thought students should imitate native speakers' accents whereas two did not think that way. Tien responded:

> I think they should [imitate native speaker accent]. Yes, because when you are learning a language that is not your native language, the best way is to imitate how people use it because you can use it correctly. Here we talk about language learning. It is more important that you are as much like a native speaker as possible. (6 May 2013)

It is notable that another interviewee Truc commented that "English with Vietnamese accent sounds very terrible" and Tien replied, "It is more important that you are as much like a native speaker as possible". These two participants seemed to hold a misconception that English belongs to its native speakers and speakers of English need to follow standard English (Quirk, 1985; 1988). From the perspective of ELF or World Englishes, native speakers need to realise that non-native speakers do not need to sound like native speakers in order to be effective English users (Smith, 1983). EFL teachers need to recognise that in the context of ELF or English as an international language, the majority of non-native speakers will be taught mostly by non-native speakers of English to communicate mainly with non-native speakers (Canagarajah, 2008; Strevens, 1992). In fact, according to Canagarajah (1999), 80% of English language teachers in the world are bilingual users of English. Vietnamese EFL teachers need to reconsider the model of English they should teach their students. The time has come for EFL teachers to recognise the multilingual dimension of English use and to put aside a native speaker model of teaching English (McKay, 2002; 2003; 2012).

A perspective informed by symbolic interactionism could be used as an alternative to respond to Truc's comment that "English with Vietnamese accent sounds very terrible". As previously discussed in section 3.1, EFL learners' first language always interacts and

168

influences their English. In other words, Vietnamese EFL learners will speak English with a Vietnamese accent unless they are taught by native speaker teachers of English from very early in their lives, which is rare in Vietnam. Therefore, it is necessary that these EFL teachers value and accept Vietnamese English and change their thinking about Vietnamese English.

In contrast to Tien's and Truc's comments, Nga stated, "Well, I think, that you know, they shouldn't because, you know, I think the goal of communication is that the other person will understand what you say when you talk to them" (3 June 2013). One teacher thought it would be ideal but impossible to achieve a native speaker accent.

Furthermore, when asked about the types of English they wanted their students to speak, nearly 95% of the teachers expressed a preference for American and British English, and none of them chose Vietnamese English (see 5.1.2.3). This reinforces Ton and Pham's (2010) finding that 55% of the teachers surveyed preferred teaching American and British English even though they believed that students communicated more with non-native speakers than with native speakers outside the classroom. This result is also in agreement with the interpretation by Suzuki (2011) that teachers have a deep-rooted belief that standard English, that is, American and/or British English is the only useful form of English for international communication.

This finding also lends support to Young and Walsh's (2010) broad study that found 96% of teachers coming from Europe, Africa, and Asia believed they were teaching and wanted to teach a native English model, that is, American or British English although 73% found English as an international language/ELF "conceptually attractive" (p.135). The teachers seemed to value native English and simultaneously did not accept Vietnamese English. This way of thinking is explicable in a country like Vietnam, where there has been sheer domination of textbooks and materials written by native-speaker writers and where people including both teachers and learners still hold misconceptions of teaching and learning English that the goal of learning and teaching English is to follow the native models of English, that is, British or American English (Quirk, 1985; 1988).

Teachers and users of English in Vietnam perceive that American or British English is desirable due to their prestige (Ton & Pham, 2010). For example, Do (2000) found that more than 81% of undergraduate students in 15 universities in six major cities and provinces across Vietnam preferred to speak British, American, or Australian English. Students in China hold the same perception: Yuan's (2012) study revealed that more than 82% of the surveyed university students would like to learn American or British English. Therefore, in Vietnam any model or conception that deviates from or is different from Standard English may not be well-received or even protested. Vietnamese EFL teachers tend to teach a variety of English spoken by native speakers because they feel more secure and that is the English students desire to learn. While in countries such as India, Ghana, Nigeria, or the Philippines, local Englishes are acceptable (Kachru, 1992a), it does not appear that Vietnamese English has been accepted by Vietnamese people. The same is true of Chinese English, which has not been widely recognised by its users (Wang, 2015). This may be due to the fact that English is only a foreign, not a second language, in Vietnam, and it would take time for Vietnamese English to be accepted by Vietnamese people as happened in countries reported by Kachru (1992a). In order for Vietnamese speakers of English to change their attitudes to Vietnamese English and ENL, Vietnamese EFL teachers should be the first to change their attitudes.

The finding that none of the teachers wanted their students to speak Vietnamese English and almost all of them wanted their students to speak American or British English showed that their perception was in conflict with the notion that learners of EFL should be encouraged to learn to speak a local variety of English (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Kachru, 1992a; Pennycook, 1994). Furthermore, this perception contradicts one of the arguments mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 that non-native speakers need to develop an identity with the local model of English without feeling that it is a "deficient" model (Kachru, 1992a, p. 68). The respondents in this study thought Vietnamese English was inferior to native English and therefore not desirable. Such a perception on the part of the Vietnamese university teachers appears to be problematic as it is a too ambitious goal for EFL learners to achieve native-like English, though it could be an ideal in the minds and the hearts of many Vietnamese students and teachers of English. Learners need to realise that the English they speak

differentiates themselves from other speakers and that their accent is part of their identity. This is an argument much in alignment with the theoretical orientations adopted by this thesis.

Also relevant to imitation of native speakers' accents and language use is the concept of learner identity and culture. About 58% of the surveyed lecturers thought it was important for learners to keep their identity and culture when learning English. Five out of the six interviewees shared the same thoughts. One focus group member said, "But you need to remember that you have your own culture, and if you communicate with other people from another country, you have to keep your own culture, to convey your language in the right meaning" (24 May 2013).

There seems to be a paradox: teachers thought keeping identity and culture was important, but they did not want their students to speak English with a local flavour. As mentioned in section 3.2.2 in Chapter 3, language, culture and identity are intimately interrelated (Phan, 2008). Vietnamese EFL teachers and learners need to develop a variety of English with an identity, and this English needs to reflect the culture and the characteristics of Vietnamese users of English. The issue of identity should not be ignored in considering critical approaches to TESOL (Nguyen, 2011c). It seems that this paradox exists because the teachers were not aware of the close relationship between language, culture and identity. Also, it may be that they did not want their students to speak Vietnamese English because they aimed to teach them a native-speaker model of English.

This is linked to the perspectives from which teachers viewed their teaching of English in general and pragmatics in particular. It was found that the teachers had various perspectives: a native-speaker English perspective, a combination of English and Vietnamese perspectives, and neither an English nor Vietnamese perspective. It can be seen that the participants held different perceptions of imitation of native speakers' accent and language use and identity and culture in language teaching and that their perspectives of teaching pragmatics were not congruent.

6.1.4 Need for learners to understand other Englishes

The data from both questionnaires and interviews were analysed to examine whether the teachers thought learners needed to understand other Englishes apart from native speaker English. There were differences between the questionnaire and interview data. About 80% of the participants completing the questionnaires believed that learners needed to understand other varieties of English. This belief was shared by the focus group members and one interviewed teacher.

This finding is in line with the arguments of ELF that learners of English need to develop an understanding of a variety of Englishes to interact effectively with both native speakers and other non-native speakers. Vietnam has become more and more cosmopolitan, especially in the big cities such as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Danang. It can be an advantage to a speaker if he is familiar with several varieties of English besides English spoken by native speakers. This finding agrees with Han's (2008) conclusion that both international teaching assistants and native American students at one of the Middle Atlantic universities in the United States needed to be aware of World Englishes in terms of the variety of Englishes, especially the existence of different accents among non-native speakers so that they were able to understand each other better.

However, the other five interviewee respondents did not agree with the necessity of knowing other Englishes. Giang responded:

> I don't think it is very important. I think that uh British English, or American English is very standard for students to learn, so if they know one type of English, they should focus on that type of English so that they can improve it very well. (15 April 2013)

Thinking along the same lines, Nhan, another interviewee, commented:

> It is not necessary to do that [to understand other varieties of English] because the chance of exposure to Singaporean English or Indian English is not very high. The problem is not that vast, not too difficult for Vietnamese. If they

understand English, let's say, British English well, Indian English or

Singaporean English is not too far from British English. (20 May 2013)

Giang and Nhan assumed that if a speaker understands British English well, he/she will have no problem understanding Indian or Singaporean English because there are not many differences between British and Indian or Singaporean English. This was also shared by another interviewee who responded, "I mean they [other varieties of English] are just a minority group. Sometimes they have some strange or different words, but it's not a problem" (Nga: 3 June 2012). This teacher also commented that there are so many varieties of English that it is not feasible to learn them all. These teachers held a misconception that if learners understand British or American English, they will have no problem understanding other types of English.

An earlier study (Smith, 1992) argued against this misconception. Smith (1992) aimed to test the effects of English proficiency and familiarity with speech variety on understanding, which was divided into intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability on three groups of English speakers (non-native, native and mixed) involving nine different national varieties of English. It was found that the speakers who were more familiar with different varieties of English outperformed those who lacked such familiarity on tests of interpretability and that native speakers from Britain and the United States were not the most easily understood. The native speakers were not found to be the best at understanding the different varieties of English either. Smith (1992) concluded that being fluent in English and familiar with several different types of English seems to be more important than being a native speaker. Although the sample size of this research was only 30 subjects, its findings can be an answer to the aforementioned teachers who thought that if a speaker understood a native speaker model of English, he would have no difficulty understanding other varieties of English.

This belief may stem from the traditional understanding that the key purpose of teaching English is to enable learners to successfully communicate with native speakers of English. As mentioned before, non-native speakers communicate far more with other non-native speakers than with native speakers. In the age of globalisation, non-native speakers use ELF and speak it in a way unique to their culture with a distinctive accent and language

features. It would not be easy to understand different varieties without developing a certain understanding of these varieties, as shown in Smith's (1992) study. Vietnamese EFL teachers need to change their perceptions of the models of English they should teach.

The belief in the importance of teaching British or American English coincides with Ton and Pham's (2010) findings that teachers wanted to teach American or British English even though nearly 93% acknowledged that their ultimate goal was to help their students communicate with both native and non-native speakers. The desire to teach standard English seems to be understandable in a context like Vietnam and it would be logical to teach standard English to students. However, if Vietnamese teachers have a desire to equip their students with an English that can be used to communicate effectively in a global context, they should not rely only on the model of ENL.

The importance of knowing different varieties of Englishes entails a need to reconceptualise the notion of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; 2010; Canale, 1983) mentioned in Chapter 3. There should be flexibility in defining and understanding the term communicative competence. According to McKay (2002), it is mistaken to perceive that a goal of EIL is to achieve native communicative competence. Le (2012) argues that there should be more than one communicative competence for EIL depending on the learners' purposes of learning English and that such communicative competence is context/culture-specific rather than internationally defined.

6.1.5 Influence of the mother tongue

The teachers were also asked to share their perceptions about the influence that their mother tongue had on their learning of the target language. The findings revealed that all of the lecturers in the interviews and focus group thought that their L2 learning was influenced by their L1. The impacts were both positive and negative and were at different levels. At the surface level was the influence in structures and pronunciation whereas at the deep level were thinking and behaviours. For example, Nga said, "Because, you see, in some situations, I do not know the way to behave in that situation, and I often base on the way we

often behave in our culture to apply to that situation" (3 June 2013). Along a similar line, Giang admitted:

> Uh, uh I … I think that because we are Vietnamese, right? So we still keep our
> Vietnamese, we are still affected by our mother tongue when we learn a
> language. For example, whenever we talk or discuss something with foreigners,
> it is easy for them to see that we are not native speakers. I think that if we are
> not native speakers, Vietnamese is always in our mind, and that's why
> whenever we discuss or talk about something, our thinking still sticks to
> Vietnamese. (15 April 2013)

What the teachers shared was in harmony with Bhela (1999) and Swan (1997) who found that learners used some L1 structures to write appropriate language in L2, but their L1 also interfered with their L2, resulting in inappropriate L2 responses. Transfer of cultural behaviours is also shown in the quotation above. In the light of symbolic interactionism, there is always interaction between L1 and L2 and the influences L1 has on L2 exist beyond the resistance of the learner. The finding regarding teachers' perceptions of L1 influence on L2 is in accordance with Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), who asserted that learners' L1 plays an essential role in their L2 or foreign language acquisition because their L1 influences their pronunciation, lexicon, and structures in the L2 or foreign language.

This finding also confirms the hypothesis proposed in Chapter 3 that the way Vietnamese EFL teachers learned pragmatics or English in general was influenced by their first language. It is, therefore, almost impossible for learners to acquire native-like accent and language use. A change in teachers' perceptions is necessary. To be more specific, instead of spending numerous hours trying to help students speak like native speakers, teachers should focus on teaching them how to communicate effectively with both native speakers and non-native speakers.

The perceptions the teachers held can be summarised as follows:

(a)   The teachers realised the importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge and thought that pragmatic errors were more serious than grammatical errors. Nevertheless, they were incongruous about when pragmatic knowledge should be introduced to students.

(b)   The teachers believed that linguistic knowledge was as important as pragmatic knowledge and that teaching English communicatively was as important as teaching grammatical points and lexical items.

(c)   The teachers, in general, thought students needed to imitate native speakers' accents and language use, and most of them preferred to teach American or British English.

(d)   The way the teachers learned English was found to be influenced by their mother tongue.

(e)   The participants showed different attitudes to the need for learners to know other varieties of English apart from native-speaker English. Most surveyed teachers thought students needed to understand other varieties of English whereas five out of six interviewees thought focusing on a native speaker model would be sufficient.

(f)   The instructors held a belief that it was important for learners to keep their identity and culture when learning English, but none of them wanted their students to speak Vietnamese English.

The findings above show that the respondents lacked a uniform theoretical foundation for teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general. This was shown in the differences in their perceptions regarding when to teach pragmatics to students, issues of identity and culture and imitation as well as the need to understand other Englishes. The teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching were influenced by the way they had learned pragmatics. This is in line with Mak's (2004) finding that teachers' past learning experiences and their cultural background had an impact on their perceptions of different teaching options and routines in adopting communicative language teaching. The respondents thought that it was important for learners to keep their identity and culture, but they desired to teach native speaker English and did not consider teaching Vietnamese English. Their willingness to

follow a native speaker model may be explained by the deeply ingrained beliefs or misconceptions of teaching English.

These misconceptions are common in the English teaching professionals worldwide, not only in Vietnam. Kachru (1992b) and McKay (2003) pointed out several of these misconceptions: (a) English language teaching pedagogy should follow native speaker models; (b) the main goals of teaching English is to help learners understand the culture of native speakers and communicate with native speakers; (c) the existence of varieties of English is seen as linguistic decay; and (d) it is the responsibility of native professionals and ESL programmes to limit this decay.

The respondents still held these beliefs. Therefore, they still wanted their students to speak native-like English and adhere to native speaker norms. In the international context, the nature of communication between speakers of different backgrounds has changed and English does not solely belong to native speakers of English any more (McKay, 2003). Hence, the supremacy of native speakers and their culture has been considerably questioned (Kachru, 1992b; McKay, 2003; 2009; 2012). Therefore, this thesis argues that it is time teachers change their misconceptions of teaching English and adopt new perspectives to teach an English that is appropriate in the international context.

6.2 Research question 2: How do teachers apply their pragmatic understanding to their teaching practice?

The previous section analysed teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching, this section examines how they applied their understanding to their classroom teaching. The main categories presented under this research question are materials and tasks used in class, approaches to teaching pragmatics and correcting pragmatic errors, kinds of pragmatic knowledge taught in class, difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge and possible solutions.

6.2.1　Materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics

Results from both the questionnaires and interviews showed that the teachers used the textbooks and additional materials to teach pragmatic knowledge in the form of cultural knowledge and language use. To be specific, more than 86% of the surveyed teachers indicated that they used knowledge in the textbooks and supplementary materials to teach pragmatic knowledge. One of the focus group members replied, "We have to base on the textbooks to teach the students what the textbooks offer (24 May 2013). Another said, "I think our textbooks provide enough pragmatic knowledge" (FG: 24 May 2013).

Supplementary materials used by the teachers consisted of written and spoken texts, authentic materials such as video clips and recordings from the VOA or BBC, newspapers, the Internet, movies, and visual aids such as posters or pictures. Nga commented, "Usually I also use video or audio files, and sometimes some pictures or some learning tips from the internet or some other sources" (3 June 2013). Giang stressed the importance of making use of audio-visual aids:

> Audio-visual aids are very important and necessary in classroom teaching. Just one short film we can show to the students, and they can copy and learn it very fast. After they watch it, they can copy a lot of things from the native speakers, especially the way they deliver the language. (15 April 2013)

What Giang said above was actually consolidated by her classroom teaching shown in the observation. After she showed the students a video clip of a conversation between a customer and a waiter at a Japanese restaurant, they were eager to imitate both the verbal and non-verbal language used by the participants in the conversation.

Seventy percent of the surveyed participants reported that they used dialogues, radio and TV programmes, and videos to teach information on language use. However, it was learnt from the observation that only one out of the three observed instructors was using supplementary materials. The others relied solely on the textbook to teach pragmatic knowledge.

Ninety-three percent of the surveyed teachers employed group discussions and debates and 83% used role-play and pair work to teach pragmatic knowledge. The tasks mentioned by the participants in the interviews and focus group were pair work, group work, role-play and simulation, discussions and debates, problem-solving tasks, oral presentations, and TV shows. For example, Nga said, "And about the tasks in the classroom, it can be a role-play, pair work, group discussion or debate, and let's see sometimes I organise some special TV shows" (3 June 2013).

The data from the classroom observations appeared to support the survey and interview data, showing that pair work, group work, and role-play were used twice each while discussion occurred only once.

A mismatch between what the instructors said and what really took place in the classroom was found after comparing the data from the questionnaire survey, interviews and the focus group, and the classroom observations. As previously discussed, a majority of the survey respondents and interviewees said they made use of the textbooks and supplementary materials to teach pragmatics; however, the classroom observation data showed that only one teacher used additional materials besides the textbooks. When asked why they did not use other teaching materials, the teachers replied that they had to teach according to the syllabus with an orientation towards the examination which tests mainly reading skills, vocabulary and grammar. This removed their freedom to choose what materials they used to teach.

The limited number and the limited time during which the teachers were observed may have affected the findings. Furthermore, their answers did not seem convincing. It failed to explain why one teacher still attempted to use extra materials in her class. The lack of use of additional materials may be related to their perceptions of teaching pragmatics.

6.2.2   Approaches to teaching pragmatics and correcting pragmatic errors

It is noticeable that the approaches used to teach pragmatics were predominantly teacher-centred, that is, teachers explained pragmatic explicitly to students. To be specific, the survey data showed that 90% of the respondents mentioned teaching pragmatic knowledge by explanation. The data obtained from the interviewees and the focus group fully support this finding. For example, three interviewed teachers mentioned explaining pragmatic knowledge in the form of culture and language use to their students. Nhan said, "I would tell them "This is what they say in that country. When we learn English, we should follow them to make, you know, the hearer understand what we are talking about"" (20 May 2013). This finding was affirmed by the classroom observation data: Thanh provided information on culture while Truc and Nga distinguished formal and informal structures.

This teacher-centred approach was also adopted by three other interviewees and two focus group members who said they used their personal stories, real experiences or mistakes made by themselves to teach pragmatic knowledge. This strategy seemed to be effective as they provided learners with real information and effects that can be long-lasting as personal stories and experiences are usually interesting. For instance, Giang commented:

> Whenever I tell them a story for them to learn, not for fun, and they say "Oh it is
> very easy for me to remember", and they always give me some sincere thanks
> for my stories because they can learn something, not just for fun. This is
> something personal and not from the books. And sometimes I pretend, too. I
> read something from the book, but I tell them "Oh I have been in this situation"
> and when I say so, it seems that they are more interested in listening to me. So
> sometimes we have to tell a lie to make them involved and give them more
> motivation to learn. (15 May 2013)

What this teacher said echoes Schmidt (1993) who argues:

> Explicit teacher-provided information about the pragmatics of the second
> language can also play a role in learning, provided that it is accurate and not

based solely on fallible native speaker intuitions. Explicit teaching is often more efficient than attention to input for identifying the pragmalinguistic forms of the target language. (p. 36)

This finding is in agreement with Ji's (2007) results that Chinese College English teachers often used direct instruction to teach pragmatics. However, this explicit-explanation approach should not be confused with the explicit/deductive approach mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis. According to Norris and Ortega (2000), explicit instruction includes description, explanation, and discussion of pragmatic features followed by role-play and other simulation activities. The majority of teachers taught pragmatics by explicit explanation, and this sole explicit explanation of pragmatic knowledge is often not sufficient for the development of pragmatic competence (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Schmidt, 1993; 1995).

The surveyed teachers also listed conducting role-play activities (79%), organising discussion (79%), and using awareness-raising activities (59%) as ways to teach pragmatics. The survey data also revealed that 58% of the respondents agreed with the statement "I think raising students' awareness of getting information on culture and appropriate language use is more useful than teaching specific knowledge". Awareness-raising can help students realise that pragmatics is important, and this awareness can continually remind them of how to use language. Raising awareness of pragmatics to language learners can help them gain information about pragmatic features of language (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Niezgoda & Rover, 2001). Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003a) pointed out that raising learners' pragmatic awareness is one of the chief goals of teaching pragmatics.

One interviewed teacher thought exposing students to other varieties of Englishes can be useful. She said:

> At least in my listening class, sometimes I have my students listen to an Indian man speaking English and someone from Hong Kong or China speaking English, and they should know how they speak English and should know how to understand them. (Thanh: 2 April 2013)

Thanh was the only teacher who valued exposing learners to other varieties of English. She had been in Taiwan for her course of masters of applied linguistics and had just returned to Vietnam when she participated in the research. It could be that her overseas experience together with the knowledge she acquired in Taiwan gave her a sensitivity to other varieties of English. Her understanding is actually in line with one of the six arguments proposed by Kachru (1992b) that students need exposure to major varieties of English including native and non-native English. Students who are exposed to different varieties of English may not be able to develop understanding of them, but at least, the exposure would help them become aware of the differences between native speaker English and other varieties of English. Being exposed to several varieties of English can help learners realise that successful communication with other English speakers does not necessarily depend on the forms of English they speak, and this awareness would help them to concentrate more on their own communication skills (Matsuda, 2003).

Other strategies included inviting native speakers to the classroom for authentic language, raising awareness of pragmatic importance, providing sample language in the form of written and spoken texts as well as video clips. Some instructors followed a specific procedure such as using a picture as context, asking students to have a discussion of the required behaviour in that situation, then providing explanation if necessary or providing linguistic features, showing students how to use them, giving them practice and thereby greater exposure to language use (see 5.2.2.2). Thanh shared her method of teaching pragmatics:

> Before they can use that, they should know how people use that, right? If I
> provide some vocabulary, and they will read it from the reading, and then
> through the reading text, they can understand how people use that word or
> expression in writing, for example. And then once they know that, later when
> they want to use them by themselves, they will try to apply those or for the
> listening and speaking. If they want to speak well, they should listen to see how
> people use those expressions in the context, and I will explain to them later on
> when I ask them to role-play or discussion. I ask them to use those specific
> structures. I think that is just an example to teach them how to use language
> properly. (2 April 2013)

182

The steps involved to teach pragmatics mentioned by the respondents in this research are relatively similar to the steps proposed by Brock and Nagasaka (2005) and Felix-Brasdefer and Bardovi-Harlig (2010). Brock and Nagasaka (2005) introduced the four SURE steps in teaching EFL pragmatics. SURE is the acronym of See, Use, Review, and Experience (Brock and Nagasaka, 2005, pp. 20-24). That is, See: "Teachers can help their students see the language in context, raise consciousness of the role of pragmatics, and explain the function pragmatics plays in specific communicative events"; Use: "Teachers can develop activities through which students use English in context (simulated and real) where they choose how they interact based on their understanding of the situation suggested by the activity"; Review: "Teachers should review, reinforce, and recycle the areas of pragmatic competence previously taught"; Experience: "Teachers can arrange for their students to experience and observe the role of pragmatics in communication".

Felix-Brasdefer and Bardovi-Harlig (2010, pp. 168-170) introduced a four-step model to teach the speech act of refusal, which can also be used to teach other speech acts. In step 1, students are made aware that there are many ways to refuse requests, suggestions, or invitations and they are exposed to the structure of refusals and the reasons speakers use them. In step 2, students are taught to recognise refusal strategies by analysing rejection sequences. In step 3, students identify softeners before listening to a role-play. During step 4, students produce refusals in up to five role-plays. These models (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Felix-Brasdefer & Bardovi-Harlig, 2010) will be mentioned again when a model for teaching pragmatics is proposed in Chapter 7.

The data revealed that there was a clear relationship between the way teachers had learned pragmatic knowledge and how they imparted that knowledge to their students. In other words, the participants taught pragmatic knowledge the same way they had learned it. The teachers had acquired pragmatic knowledge from their teachers' explanation and stories, from real communication and experiences, from textbooks, books, newspapers, magazines, TV programs, music, films and video clips, and the Internet. All of these were mentioned as ways the teachers used to teach pragmatic knowledge. This finding confirms a hypothesis

proposed in section 3.1 that Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching pragmatics were influenced by how they learnt it.

The respondents reported various ways of correcting pragmatic errors. These included explicit explanation and providing correct language and examples of language use to the students. A focus group member remarked:

> I will tell them that in this case native speakers don't say this but say that. If the mistake is just maybe made one time, maybe I'll ignore that, but for the second time, this can be a kind of fossilised mistake, so I'll try to correct them and I'll say that native speakers don't say that. They say this. (24 May 2013)

A number of teachers followed specific procedures to correct pragmatic mistakes. For example, a focus group member said:

> I note down some pragmatic errors, inappropriate language use from students, and after the presentations, I point out some of the mistakes during the time they speak out. And I correct directly by using the wrong word, or inappropriate language, and then give the correct language. (24 May 2013)

Other ways of correcting pragmatic errors included relating to the first language for naturalness and raising awareness of the differences between the two languages (see 5.2.2.3).

Similarly, one of the focus group members said, "For example, when we say 'noi da ga' in Vietnamese, but in some Western culture, they say 'goose bumps'. Sometimes we have similar forms of language, but sometimes [we make mistakes] because of using different words" (FG: 24 May 2013). These teachers asked students to compare and contrast between the two languages so that they were aware of the differences. In the quotation above, it can be seen that awareness of the differences between Vietnamese language and culture and the target language and culture can help learners correct their pragmatic mistakes and at the same time use the target language appropriately. This is where contrastive pragmatics, a subcategory of CCP, can be used to teach L2 pragmatics. A

knowledge of CCP will help teachers encourage students to make positive transfers and identify areas where students may make mistakes when a negative transfer is made.

6.2.3   Types of pragmatic knowledge taught in class

Data from the questionnaires and the interviews and the focus group revealed that cultural knowledge and general pragmatic information were the two types of pragmatic knowledge most often taught by the teachers, followed by speech acts and metalanguage. To be specific, cultural knowledge was chosen by more than 86% of the surveyed teachers and mentioned by five interviewees and two focus group members. Truc said, "I teach cultural knowledge. I use the word sociocultural knowledge" (26 April 2013).

The respondents seemed to recognise the importance of teaching cultural knowledge. This is in agreement with Ji's (2007) findings that Chinese College English teachers integrated culture into their language teaching because they realised its importance and had been influenced by communicative language teaching. This finding, however, is not in accordance with a finding reported in a recent study by Nguyen (2014). This researcher, using data from interviews with and classroom observation of 15 teachers from a university in the north of Vietnam, found that culture was taught to a very limited extent because these teachers undermined the role of culture in the teaching and learning of language.

As discussed in Chapter 3, culture and language are closely related and interwoven and influence each other (Kramsch, 1998; Sharifian & Palmer, 2007; Trosborg, 2010). Teaching culture plays a crucial role in developing learners' intercultural competence, and acquiring intercultural competence can help them successfully communicate with other people from different cultures by understanding not only the language but also the cultural phenomena displayed in the interaction in which they are involved (Byram, 1995).

General pragmatic information was chosen by 69% of the questionnaire respondents, but was ranked the most frequently taught by 52% and was addressed by five interviewees. Nhan replied, "I think we should provide our students with the information such as politeness, implicature, and Cooperative Principles" (20 May 2013).

Almost 60% of the respondents to the questionnaire and three interviewees taught speech acts. Thirty-five percent of teachers and one interviewee ranked metalanguage the lowest of the types of pragmatic knowledge used.

The classroom observation data, however, did not fully support the above-mentioned findings. Cultural information was provided by one teacher once, and general pragmatic information (in the form of register) was explained to students by two lecturers once. Speech acts were not taught by any of the teachers who were observed. The type of pragmatic knowledge predominantly taught was metalanguage: all three teachers taught this a number of times during the classroom observations. The discrepancies between the data from the questionnaire and the interview and classroom observation can be explained in the following ways.

First, the three teachers who were observed in the classroom mainly used the textbooks in their teaching. Two teachers used additional materials, but to a limited extent. The textbook analysis pointed out that metalanguage accounted for more than 60% of pragmatic information (see 5.4.2). That seems to explain why metalanguage was predominantly taught by the teachers. Second, each teacher was only observed for two sessions of 150 minutes. It could have been that during the time when they were being observed they were teaching the content in the textbooks which included little information on culture, speech acts or general pragmatic information.

6.2.4 Difficulties in teaching pragmatic knowledge and possible solutions

Teaching pragmatics is not easy because pragmatic rules for language use are usually hidden and even native speakers do not often realise pragmatic rules until they are violated (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003a). The difficulties the teachers encountered when teaching pragmatics were identified from the data from both the questionnaires, the interviews and the focus group (see Table 5.10 and section 5.2.2.5). The questionnaire data showed that the teachers experienced difficulty in teaching pragmatics due to a lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts, a lack of pragmatic

186

knowledge, a lack of knowledge of varieties of English, not knowing how to teach pragmatic knowledge, and a lack of materials on language use. It is interesting to note that nine of the teachers (31%) responding to the questionnaires reported a lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts as one of their difficulties in teaching pragmatics.

The data from the interviews and the focus group showed that six teachers (60%) admitted that they lacked experience in language use and contexts, and as a result, made mistakes in language use. Hue, a focus group member, acknowledged, "Because we actually don't have experience about real contexts of using language, sometimes we make some mistakes of using language in some situations" (24 May 2013). Giang, who had studied in Canada and Australia, still found it difficult to use English appropriately. She said, "Of course I cannot know everything (about pragmatic knowledge)" (15 April 2013) when she talked about her difficulty teaching pragmatics. Other teachers mentioned a lack of pragmatic knowledge and difficulty in explaining to students how to use language appropriately.

The combined data from both sources showed that the biggest difficulty the teachers faced when teaching pragmatics was a lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and context, which resulted in mistakes in language use. This was the difficulty reported by the highest percentage of the participants both in the questionnaires (31%) and in the interviews and the focus group (60%). This could be explained by the fact that only 62% of the teachers reported that they had overseas experience. However, their overseas experience varied, and if their sojourn was not long enough, they still felt a lack of experience in language use and contexts. The second biggest challenges were a lack of methods to teach pragmatics and a lack of pragmatic knowledge.

The data revealed that the teachers encountered difficulties in teaching pragmatics because they lacked pragmatic competence and did not know how to teach pragmatics effectively. These findings provided empirical evidence for the observation made by the researcher in section 3.2.4.5 that Vietnamese students' inability to use English appropriately may be due to the neglect of teaching L2 pragmatics. It is essential for language teaching professionals to possess a solid knowledge of pragmatics in order to develop successful second and

foreign language speakers and writers (LoCastro, 2003). In an EFL context like Vietnam, where the main input is from classroom instruction, students cannot develop pragmatic competence if pragmatic knowledge is not taught to them.

The teachers' teaching of pragmatics can be summarised as follows:

(a)   The teachers encountered difficulties in teaching students pragmatics because they lacked pragmatic competence and lacked methods to teach pragmatics.

(b)   The approaches the instructors used to teach pragmatics were influenced by how they they had learned pragmatic knowledge and their own pragmatic competence.

(c)   The teachers relied mainly on textbooks to teach English and the type of pragmatic knowledge they mainly taught was metalanguage style.

6.3 Research question 3: How is pragmatic knowledge presented in the textbooks and the English curriculum?

To find the answer to this question, document analysis was carried out. In this section, the main findings of the document analysis are presented, compared with findings from previous studies, and when possible, are discussed from the perspectives of the three theoretical constructs of the study.

Textbooks, in an EFL context like Vietnam, provide the main and perhaps the only source of language input that is available to learners and form the foundation for language practice both inside and outside the classroom (Richards, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the content of the textbooks used by teachers to teach EFL. Pragmatic information was divided into general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, speech acts and cultural knowledge.

The data from the textbook analysis showed that pragmatic information was found in 19.28% of the textbook. This percentage is similar to Vellenga's (2004) finding that pragmatic information in the four integrated textbooks analysed was 20.4%. However, compared to Ji's (2007) study, which found 15.3% of pragmatic information in the textbooks, the textbook in

the present study provides more pragmatic information. Explanation for these differences may be that the textbooks Vellenga (2004) worked on were published by Oxford, Cambridge, and Longman while Ji (2007) analysed College English textbooks written by Chinese authors. The pragmatic content of the textbook will be discussed in detail in the next section. Only metalanguage style, speech acts, and cultural knowledge will be considered because the textbooks contained only a very small amount of general pragmatic information.

6.3.1   Metalanguage style

Metalanguage style accounted for 60% of pragmatic information in the textbook. This is much higher than Ji's (2007) 24% of metalanguage information found in her textbook study. Metalanguage style in this study was coded as Description, Instruction, Introduction, and Task-related (see 5.4.2.1). The data showed that Task-related information is ranked the highest with more than 38%, followed by Instruction (36%) and Introduction (25%) while Description only accounted for only 1%. Instruction involves information about usage while Task-related comprises directions for students to carry out activities in the textbook (see section 5.5.2.2).

The high percentage of metalanguage information found in the textbook helped explain why the observed teachers in the classroom spent more time teaching this type of pragmatic knowledge than a combination of other types of pragmatic information (general pragmatic information, speech acts, and cultural knowledge). The latter requires a repertoire of highly specialised knowledge and linguistic competence (authentic language materials and tasks), which are often extremely difficult for non-native speakers to acquire, particularly in an EFL context like Vietnam.

6.3.2   Speech acts

As mentioned in Chapter 5, there were 20 speech acts presented and distributed in nine out of the 12 units of the textbook. This can be considered a good coverage of different speech acts in a 160-page textbook. This number of speech acts is much higher than what Vellenga (2004), Ji (2007), and Nguyen (2011c) found in their studies. Vellenga (2004) found an

average of 5.5 speech acts in the four integrated EFL textbooks; Ji (2007) counted 21 speech acts in the four College English Listening and Speaking books; and Nguyen (2011c) identified 27 in her three high school textbooks used for Vietnamese students.

All the speech acts except *advise* were mentioned explicitly and systematically presented (see 5.4.2.3 for more details). First, there were activities to prepare and introduce the students to the speech acts, usually in the forms of a dialogue. These activities comprised word matching and filling in gaps. More detailed information on the speech acts was given in the Language Summaries. Finally, the speech acts were highlighted and practised in activities such as students reading the transcripts of the dialogue and underlining all the examples of the use of speech acts and role-playing or working in groups. The speech acts were taught in context and consolidated with activities in the Workbook. This is not in line with findings from Nguyen's (2011c) study which found that the majority of speech acts in high school English textbooks for Vietnamese students were taught and practised out of context. The difference may stem from the fact that the high school textbooks analysed by Nguyen (2011c) were written by Vietnamese authors.

However, there was often a lack of metapragmatic information accompanying the speech acts, such as politeness or appropriacy, which is considered to be crucial for learners to learn and perform speech acts. This finding echoes results from previous research (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Gholami, 2015; Ji, 2007; Nguyen, 2011c; Vellenga, 2004). In other words, textbook writers have assumed wrongly that learners know when and how to perform speech acts in an appropriate way, and that learners only need the linguistic input to do so (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004).

Furthermore, it was found that the expressions given to perform the targeted pragmatic functions lacked variety and authenticity (see section 5.5.2.3 for examples). This finding lends support to arguments and criticisms made by researchers that there is inadequate authentic language in textbook language samples (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, & Reynolds, 1991; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Gholami, 2015; Gilmore, 2004; Nguyen, 2011c; Pearson, 1986; Vellenga, 2004; Wong 2002). Morrow

(1977) defined an authentic text as "a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (p. 13).

There have been arguments against the use of authentic texts in English language teaching. For example, Widdowson (1983; 1996; 1998; 2003) has argued that it is impossible for learners to use authentic language because the classroom cannot provide the contextual conditions for them to authenticate real language. However, other researchers and ELT professionals have advocated using natural language. According to Bardovi-Harlig (1996), there is a need to use authentic language as the basis for the development of preliminary materials that are served as input to learners and these materials ought to be developed based on distribution and frequency of the language features that are taught. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003a) have maintained that both teachers and students benefit from the use of real language. They also introduced various ways to collect real language samples from tape recordings, messages on answering machines, English language talk shows, educational films, the Internet and letters and correspondence.

The lack of authenticity in the textbook analysed in the present study, as argued in Chapter 2, can make it difficult for learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations because natural language is much more complicated than the textbook language. Also Vietnamese EFL learners do not usually have exposure to English outside the classroom, and without this, learners may feel shocked in real communication events.

Another point is that when there were several choices provided to learners to construct a speech act, there was scarcely information regarding the differences between the expressions as well as information on sociocultural variables which regulates the given linguistic choices. This is in agreement with findings from studies conducted by Cohen (2008) and McConachy (2009). For example, the only piece of information given when the speech acts *agree*, *disagree*, and *ask for opinions* were taught was, "We often use *I'm not sure about that* as a polite way of disagreeing" (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 127). According to Vellenga (2004), learners can perform a speech act with different linguistic forms that generate varied illocutionary force but the lack of information on politeness and appropriacy puts them at a disadvantage in terms of developing pragmatic competence. As a

result, it might be problematic for students to determine by themselves which expressions to use in which situations unless their teacher has given them tacit explanation.

6.3.3 Cultural knowledge

Culture plays an essential role in language teaching for two reasons: (1) the foundation for the content and topics that are used in language materials and classroom discussions is usually provided by cultural information; and (2) pragmatic norms are often derived from particular cultural models (McKay, 2003). Teaching culture in EFL contexts usually relies on cultural knowledge from textbooks. Cultural knowledge is an important type of pragmatic information that was analysed in the textbook used in this study.

Cultural knowledge accounts for nearly 32% of pragmatic information. This appears much higher than that in the College English integrated textbooks analysed by Ji (2007). Ji (2007) found that cultural knowledge accounted for nearly 20% of pragmatic information. Cultural knowledge in the present study was divided into cultures of speakers of ENL and cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ENL (see 5.4.2.4 for more details). It was found that the amount of information on cultures of speakers of ENL was nearly double that of cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF, and 53% of information on cultures of speakers of ENL was about British culture. This finding is in line with Ji's (2007) and Bobda's (2008) findings that most cultural knowledge was about the culture of the target language.

The high percentage of information on culture of speakers of ENL may be logical given the fact that the textbook was written by native English speakers and circulated by Cambridge University Press. A traditional perspective on language teaching was adopted in the compiling of the texts. This traditional perspective is that "The cultural content for ELT should be derived from the cultures of native English speakers" (McKay, 2003, p. 3). In other words, this traditional approach posits that the principal aim of teaching a language is to equip learners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to successfully communicate with native speakers of that language. In this era of globalisation, when more and more English is used in a multilingual context, this view of language pedagogy appears to be limited as understanding only cultures of speakers of ENL may not be sufficient for today's English

learners. In a world in which more and more IC takes place (Canagarajah, 2006; Jenkins, 2006), there is surely a need for understanding cultures of other non-native speakers.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, intercultural competence is important for effective communication. To be interculturally competent means not only having competence in the target language and the target culture but also having competence to deal with other non-native speakers who use a common target language (Fantini, 1995). Intercultural competence requires an understanding of the intercultural differences between one's own system of beliefs and values and that of other people in the process of communication and the ability to negotiate these differences (Nguyen, 2011c). To help learners acquire this competence, instruction needs to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and take into account learners' personality and cultural norms (Nguyen, 2011c).

It was found that the textbook did attempt to provide knowledge on cultures of non-native speakers of English. However, as mentioned in 5.5.2.4, this information was not sufficient and sometimes was biased or obsolete. Information on Vietnamese culture was given in just two lines in one of the recording scripts. This lack of Vietnamese cultural knowledge in the textbook is fully understandable because this textbook was written for international users and thus, is unable to accommodate much about Vietnamese culture. Vietnamese university students, therefore, need to be provided with a set of textbooks with more intercultural information, especially with information on cultures of the country's neighbouring nations such as China, Korea, Japan and those in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Activities like Activity 9 on page 65 of the textbook (Redston & Cunningham, 2005, p. 65), which require students to relate to their own culture when learning the target language culture, are useful in teaching culture. Unfortunately, there were just a few activities of this type found in the textbook.

In order to broaden the range and variety of cultural information in the curriculum, English textbooks for Vietnamese learners can be developed by incorporating Vietnamese culture, the target culture and the cultures of other non-native speakers. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) differentiated three kinds of cultural information that can be integrated into language textbooks: (1) "source culture" refers to learners' own culture; (2) "target culture" refers to the

culture of a country where English is used as a first language; and (3) "international target cultures" refers to a variety of cultures in English- or non-English-speaking countries around the world (pp. 204-205).

With textbooks that are based on the source culture, learners have an opportunity to become aware of their own culture and learn the language that is needed to explain the features of their culture in English. This advantage was actually highlighted by one of the interviewees in the present study who said, "Whenever we talk to a foreigner, they always ask us something special about Vietnamese culture, so we should know our culture very clearly so that we can tell them. We play a role of ambassadors" (Giang: 15 April 2013). Perhaps most importantly, using source culture materials does not put non-native teachers in a difficult situation of attempting to teach a culture that they themselves are not familiar with (McKay, 2003).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) also mentioned a number of advantages of using international target cultures in language textbooks. Textbooks based on international target cultures can show how English is being used by bilingual speakers of English to interact with others in international contexts. They can also demonstrate how bilingual speakers of English use CCP to draw on their own rules of appropriateness. These textbooks also help learners to acquire a fuller understanding of how speakers can use English for a great variety of purposes in different international contexts.

In the light of critical approach to language teaching, Vietnamese EFL textbook writers need to develop textbooks that reflect and strike a balance between the source culture, target culture and international target cultures.

The textbook analysis has yielded these findings:

(a)   The textbook analysed contained only 20% of pragmatic information which is insufficient.

(b)   Information on metalanguage style accounted for 60% of pragmatic information in the textbook.

(c)   Speech acts were explicitly mentioned and systematically presented in the textbook. However, there was a paucity of metapragmatic information to accompany them and the linguistic expressions provided to teach speech acts were limited and not natural.

(d)   The amount of information on cultures of speakers of ENL was nearly double that of the cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. There was little information on Vietnamese culture.

This chapter has discussed the current findings in relation to findings from previous research and the chosen theoretical constructs. The following is a summary of the results of this chapter:

(a)   The teachers were self-contradictory. They thought it was important for learners to keep their identity and culture, but did not want to teach Vietnamese English.

(b)   The participants held diverse perceptions of teaching pragmatic knowledge, which may reflect a lack of unity in how pragmatics should be taught to Vietnamese students.

(c)   All of the teachers thought it was of prime importance to teach pragmatics; however, they encountered difficulties in teaching pragmatics to students because they themselves lacked pragmatic competence and lacked methods to teach pragmatics.

(d)   The approaches the instructors used to teach pragmatics were influenced by how they had learned pragmatic knowledge and their own pragmatic competence.

(e)   The data from the interviews and focus group indicated that the teachers relied mainly on textbooks to teach English, but the textbooks did not contain sufficient pragmatic knowledge. This finding implies that it is unlikely for students to acquire pragmatic knowledge from classroom teaching.

(f)   On the whole, the participants' perceptions of pragmatics and teaching pragmatics were informed by their deeply ingrained conception that the main purpose of teaching was to help learners speak a native-like English and to help them communicate successfully with native speakers. However, there were some participants who had shown that they were undergoing a change in their perceptions.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the results of this study in relation to the three research questions. The findings of the research have been strengthened by previous research findings and extended with the use of the three theoretical constructs employed in the study. It was found the teachers realised the importance of pragmatic teaching but they did not know how to teach pragmatics and did not follow a systematic approach to teaching it. It was also found that there was no focus on teaching of pragmatics, even at the tertiary level. This was reflected in the content of the textbook and curriculum as well as the way English was taught.

It is argued that the teachers need to change their perceptions of pragmatics and teaching pragmatics. In order to change their perceptions, Vietnamese EFL teachers need to take a critical approach to language teaching. Specifically, instead of adhering to the model of ENL, Vietnamese EFL teachers need to follow a model of ELF or English as an international language to help students communicate effectively with both native speakers and non-native speakers of English. This model needs to suit the culture, needs and contexts of the learners and needs to develop an identity in the English spoken by Vietnamese speakers. A tentative framework for teaching pragmatics together with implications will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

This chapter brings together the major findings and arguments of the thesis by way of a synthesis and draws a number of conclusions derived from a detailed analysis of the empirical evidence. This is followed by outlining a framework for teaching pragmatics together with implications and recommendations regarding strategies for teaching pragmatics in particular and teaching EFL in general in a Vietnamese university or a similar context, designing materials and tasks, and teacher training and development. After considering the limitations of the study, the chapter concludes with a set of suggestions for further research. This includes methodological designs such as a longtitudinal approach with a large sample to investigate both the teaching and learning process or a cross-sectional case study involving universities of different tiers to capture a fuller picture of teaching and learning pragmatics, as well as teaching and learning EFL in Vietnam in general.

7.1   Key findings of the study

Employing a combination of three theoretical constructs of symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics and critical approach to language teaching, this thesis has investigated teachers' perceptions of pragmatics, their pragmatic teaching, and the pragmatic content presented in the textbook and the curriculum in a university in Vietnam. The major findings of the study relating to these three research aspects are presented in accordance with the three research questions.

Research question 1:   *What are teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and pragmatic teaching?*

(a)   The teachers recognised the pivotal role of teaching pragmatic knowledge and believed that pragmatic errors were more serious than grammatical ones. Nevertheless, they were incongruous on when pragmatic knowledge should be introduced to students in their development of the English language.

(b)   The teachers were fully aware that linguistic knowledge was as important as

pragmatic knowledge and that teaching English communicatively was as important as

teaching grammatical points and lexical items.

(c)   The teachers, in general, thought students needed to imitate native speakers' accents

and language use, and the majority of the teachers would prefer to teach American or

British English.

(d)   The way the teachers learned English was influenced by their mother tongue.

(e)   The teachers showed different attitudes to the need for learners to know other

varieties of English apart from native-speaker English.

(f)   The teachers believed that it was important for learners to keep their identity and

culture when learning English, but none of them wanted their students to speak

Vietnamese English.

Research question 2:   *How do teachers apply their pragmatic knowledge and*

understanding to their teaching practice?

(a)   The teachers mentioned various strategies to teach pragmatics, but 90% mentioned

teaching pragmatics by giving explicit explanation to students.

(b)   The teachers encountered difficulties in teaching pragmatics to students because they

themselves lacked pragmatic competence and lacked methods to teach pragmatics.

(c)   The approaches the teachers used to teach pragmatics were influenced by how they

they had learned pragmatic knowledge and their own pragmatic competence.

(d)   The teachers relied mainly on the textbooks to teach English. Metalanguage style was

the type of pragmatic knowledge they mainly taught, although they mentioned that

they mostly taught general pragmatic information and cultural knowledge.

Research question 3:   *How is pragmatic knowledge presented in the textbooks and*

the English curriculum?

(a)   The textbook analysed contained only 20% of pragmatic information which is

insufficient.

(b)   Information on metalanguage style accounted for 60% of pragmatic information in the textbook.

(c)   Speech acts were explicitly mentioned and systematically presented in the textbook. However, there was a paucity of metapragmatic information to accompany them and the linguistic expressions provided to teach speech acts were limited and not natural.

(d)   The amount of information on cultures of speakers of ENL was nearly double that of the cultures of speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. There was little information on Vietnamese culture.

The findings are presented with reference to the three theoretical constructs employed in the study. To be specific, finding 1c about teachers' perceptions of imitation of native speaker accents and language use and is related to the constructs of cross-/intercultural pragmatics and critical approach to language teaching. Finding 1d about the influence of the mother tongue on learning English is linked to the theory of symbolic interactionism whereas finding 1f about the importance of keeping learners' identity and culture is connected to the theory of cross-/intercultural pragmatics.

Other instances of the connection between the framework and the research findings include finding 2c regarding the influence of how teachers learned pragmatics on their teaching of pragmatics related to symbolic interactionism and finding 3d on the amount of cultural information in the textbook connected to cross-/intercultural pragmatics.

These findings are significant and helped achieve the main aims intended for this study. The study has gathered first-hand empirical evidence to address the three research questions set out in Chapter 1. The detailed examination of the issues, backed by data collected by a range of instruments, has succeeded in filling the niche identified in the literature review (see Chapter 2). While contributing to the literature with a distinctive set of data from the Vietnamese university EFL context, the study has been able to provide more insights into Vietnamese EFL university teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching as well as

their teaching of pragmatics in the classroom and pragmatic content in the textbooks and English teaching curriculum. In addition, the study has provided an empirical base to support the hypotheses about the teaching and learning of EFL in a Vietnamese university in general, and pragmatics in particular. Integration of the various elements at the curriculum design and classroom instruction level has led to the development of a framework, which can be used for informing teaching and learning of pragmatics in a Vietnamese university or similar educational contexts.

7.2 A framework for teaching pragmatics in a Vietnamese university EFL context
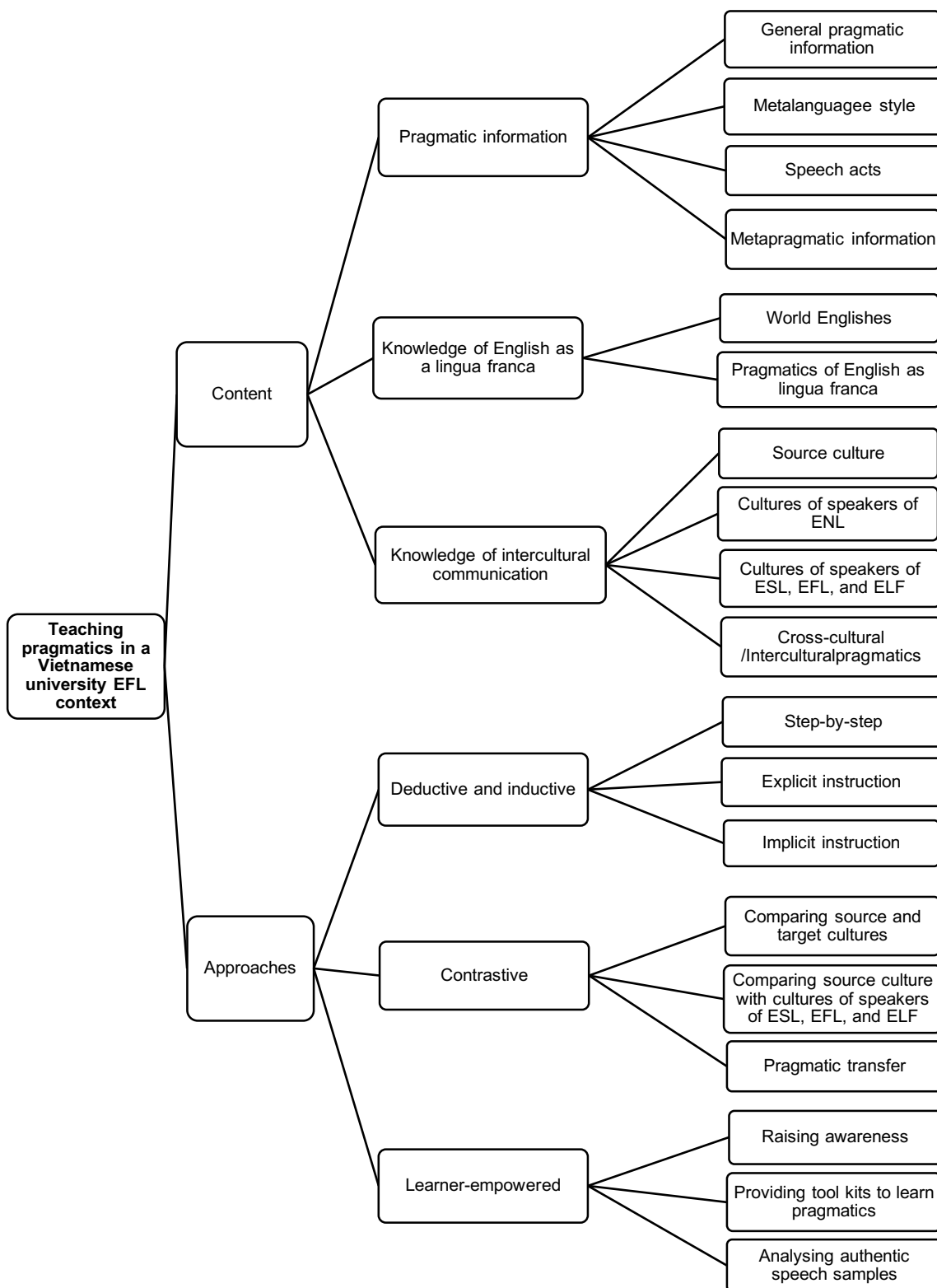

Figure 7.1   **Framework for teaching pragmatics**

Figure 7.1 shows a tentative framework for teaching pragmatics to tertiary students in Vietnam, which was produced by incorporating different theories (symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, and critical approach to language teaching), frameworks proposed and results gained by previous studies, and the findings of this study (Bachman, 1989; 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Byram, 1997; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Kachru, 1992a; 1992b; Kirkpatrick, 2006; 2007; 2010; 2011b; Murray, 2012; Pennycook, 1999; Vellenga, 2004; Yuan, 2012). The two key components in this model for teaching pragmatics are content and approaches.

The content of teaching pragmatics consists of pragmatic information, knowledge of ELF, and knowledge of IC while the approaches include deductive and inductive, contrastive, and learner-empowered. The following is a more detailed description of these elements of the model.

7.2.1   Content

7.2.1.1   Pragmatic information

Pragmatic information is crucial in developing pragmatic competence, which is an essential component of communicative competence in different frameworks (Bachman, 1989; 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Canale, 1983). Pragmatic information includes general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, speech acts, and metapragmatic information. These are the types of pragmatic information that are needed to acquire pragmatic competence. However, the findings of this research have indicated that the textbooks used by the teachers only provided sufficient information on metalanguage style. Providing ample pragmatic information in the teaching process and the textbooks can help students boost their pragmatic understanding and improve their pragmatic competence. These types of pragmatic information need to be embedded in the textbooks as well as being provided by teachers through complementary authentic materials and tasks. This study found that the teachers generally did not make use of supplementary tasks and materials in the classroom.

7.2.1.2   Understanding of English as a lingua franca

As articulated previously in the thesis, the concepts of World Englishes and ELF need to be introduced to learners. In this era of globalisation, the number of non-native English speakers is significantly higher than that of native speakers, with a ratio of approximately four to one (House, 2003; 2010). In the context of Vietnam, where there are increasing trade relations with the neighbouring countries, it is believed that Vietnamese speakers will communicate with non-native speakers far more than with native speakers. English is accepted by ASEAN to be their "de factor lingua franca" (Krasnick, 1995, p. 81). An understanding of ELF could provide learners with a deep understanding of other non-native varieties of English and thus enable them to perform effectively in communicating in ELF. A knowledge of world Englishes may help to foster international understanding: without an understanding of different varieties of English, students may be shocked when communicating with speakers of these Englishes and view them as deficient (Matsuda, 2002). Friedrich (2002, p. 444) pointed out that:

> By bringing awareness to the different varieties of English that the students will
> encounter and by teaching them to view these varieties as legitimate
> expressions of a language in constant change and spread, a world Englishes
> approach can greatly facilitate learning.

Kirkpatrick's (2007) book *World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching,* which contains real speech samples (transcripts and CD-ROM) of different varieties of English spoken by both native speakers and non-native speakers, is a good source for familiarising students with these varieties of English. These include American English, Australian English, British English, Englishes spoken in South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), Englishes spoken in Africa (South Africa and Nigeria), Englishes in Hong Kong and China, and Englishes in South-East Asian countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, The Philippines, and Vietnam).

7.2.1.3   Knowledge of intercultural communication

Cultural knowledge is important in language learning as culture and language have a close relationship with each other (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Gumperz, 1982). Cultural differences do not always cause intercultural misunderstandings, but they do have an influence on language and communicative situations (Charlebois, 2009). Therefore, a sound knowledge of IC assists learners to develop intercultural competence, and learners need this competence for successful communication with people from different cultures than their own (Guilherme, 2000).

In order to equip learners with intercultural knowledge, it is necessary to teach them the target culture in relation to the source culture as well as cultures of other speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF based on intercultural pragmatics. For example, when teaching different speech acts such as apologising, complimenting, and thanking, teachers can ask the learners to compare and contrast how these speech acts are formed and used in the target culture and the learners' culture (Le, 2012). Authentic materials can also be used to show different features of the learners' culture, the target culture, and international culture (Le, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 3, intercultural competence is an important component of intercultural communicative competence. Baker (2009; 2011; 2012; 2015) has developed the concept of intercultural awareness that includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for IC. This model consists of three levels that are described and presented in Figure 7.2.

> **Level 1: Basic cultural awareness**
>
> An awareness of:
>
> 1. culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
> 2. the role that culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
> 3. our own culturally based behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
> 4. others' culturally based behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behaviour, values, and beliefs.
>
> **Level 2: Advanced cultural awareness**
>
> An awareness of:
>
> 5. the relative nature of cultural norms;
> 6. cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
> 7. multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
> 8. individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
> 9. common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.
>
> **Level 3: Intercultural awareness**
>
> An awareness of:
>
> 10. a culturally based frame of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
> 11. initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through;
> 12. a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different communicative practices and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

Source: Baker (2015, p. 164)

Figure 7.2   The twelve components of intercultural awareness

7.2.2   Approaches to teaching pragmatics

7.2.2.1   Deductive and inductive

These two approaches involve giving explicit and implicit instruction to learners on a step-by-step basis. *Deductive* instruction or explicit instruction is provided when teachers give learners explicit information about pragmatics before examples are introduced to learners

while in *inductive* or implicit teaching, pragmatic data are analysed so that learners can discover L2 pragmatic norms that regulate different language uses (Ishihara, 2010d). The main difference between the two approaches is that deductive instruction provides learners with metapragmatic information regarding the target features whereas inductive instruction does not. According to House (1996), metapragmatic information can help learners counteract negative pragmatic transfer, make use of more discourse strategies and speech act realisations, thus improve their pragmatic fluency. As discussed in Chapter 2, both deductive and inductive instruction are beneficial to learners, but it cannot be concluded which approach is more effective. These two approaches can be used in tandem and can complement each other (Murray, 2012).

There are two important principles that need to be considered when teaching pragmatics: (1) authentic language samples need to be used as examples or models; and (2) interpretation or production by learners needs to come after input provision (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003a). The use of authentic materials has been well-recognised in a number of studies mentioned in the literature review (see 2.6.2) and in Chapter 6 of this thesis (see 6.3.2).

If the teaching of pragmatic knowledge and skills is only done by giving direct instruction, students do not often develop their pragmatic competence (House, 1996; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Rehbein, 1987). Section 6.2.2 in Chapter 6 discussed different models to teach pragmatics on a step-by-step basis (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Felix-Brasdefer & Bardovi-Harlig, 2010). Felix-Brasdefer and Bardovi-Harlig (2010, pp. 168-170) introduced a four-step model to teach the speech act of refusal, which can also be used to teach other speech acts. These steps, for example, include raising awareness of refusals and the reasons speakers use them, providing language samples, identifying softeners, and producing refusals in up to five different role-plays (see 6.2.2 for more details).

7.2.2.2   Contrastive

This approach is based on the premise that there is constant interaction between students' mother tongue and their target language (see symbolic interactionism in section 3.1). This

approach operates by comparing and contrasting the learners' culture with the target culture. It can be done by organising discussions or tasks on cultural differences or tasks that require learners to reflect on the norms in their own cultures when learning knowledge about the target culture. For example, learners can be encouraged to become their own ethnographers and see how speech acts are realised and performed in the target language in specific contexts of use and to compare this with the source language (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Murray, 2012). This way, learners can develop an awareness of their own culture and cultural differences and thus boost their motivation to pursue learning about other cultures.

Specifically, Cohen and Ishihara (2010) have introduced activities using *conversation analysis* to teach L2 pragmatics. For example, this set of activities can be used to compare and contrast how L2 learners and native speakers of the target language respond to the question, "Did you have a good weekend?" in French. This set of activities is based on Beal's (1992) study.

(a)   Discussion of stereotypes of L1 and L2 cultures and how those stereotypes stem from differences in cultural norms in communication.

(b)   Comparison of typical L1 and L2 answers to the question, "Did you have a good weekend?" and reading about cross-cultural frustrations experienced by French and Australian English speakers.

(c)   Discussion of the different features of conversation that the question elicits in French and Australian English using transcribed authentic dialogues.

(d)   Reconstruction of unscripted videotaped conversation in the L2.

(e)   Role-plays to practice L2 spoken grammar, vocabulary, and gestures.

(f)   Peer assessments as to the appropriateness of each other's role-play performance and concluding discussion. (Cohen & Ishihara, 2010, pp. 171-172)

Similarly, McConachy and Hata (2013) have suggested the use of role plays to elaborate the notion of politeness or formality in communication. The strategy involves having students conduct short role plays in their mother tongue, first making use of formal language and then informal language. After that, students are requested to reflect on and explain, in a think-

aloud process, the contextual variables which may influence their decisions about linguistic choices in their mother tongue. The same process can be repeated in the target language. Finally, students are asked to reflect on what they have done in a discussion in which their performances in their L1 and L2 are compared and contrasted in terms of what was said, how it was said, and why it was said that way. By drawing comparisons between L1 and L2 culture, students can realise the risk of miscommunication in intercultural interactions (Limberg, 2015).

Kondo (2008) maintains that an awareness-raising strategy based on research data can lead to learners' sensitivity to cultural differences and variables involved in language use because solely presenting formulaic expressions to learners or compelling them to observe a "target norm" is not likely to develop pragmatic competence (p. 173). This observation was in fact echoed by one of the interviewees in the study who commented:

> That (the fact that a teacher mentioned that her students questioned her when
> she asked them to use an expression) is the result of forcing students to behave
> in what we think is OK. We should tell them that this is what people usually
> behave and when we communicate with that culture, we should do this in order
> to be considered proper. (Nhan: 20 May 2013)

It is important to develop awareness of other cultures apart from the target culture because intercultural knowledge is important if learners are to progress in their language studies. Baker (2015) outlines five strategies to develop intercultural awareness for successful ELF communication in the classroom:

> (1) exploring the complexity of local cultures, (2) exploring cultural
> representations in language learning materials, (3) exploring cultural
> representations in the media and arts both online and in more 'traditional'
> medium, (4) making use of cultural informants, and (5) engaging in intercultural
> communication both face to face and electronically. (p. 201)

A contrastive approach is also based on CCP. This approach can involve using research results to identify pragmatic transfers between L1 and L2. Learners need to be encouraged

to make positive pragmatic transfers and need to be taught how to avoid negative transfers. Bardovi-Harlig (1996) suggested introducing a speech act and encouraging learners to think about how to perform it by asking them to examine that function in their own language and culture. Learners can be asked to translate speech acts from their mother tongue into English and discuss differences in pragmatic rules of different speech communities (Murray, 2010).

7.2.2.3 Learner-empowered

The basis of this approach is that teachers need to raise awareness of the importance of pragmatics and give learners initial guidance and inspiration to learn pragmatics. Afterwards, they are responsible for their own pragmatic learning because it is impossible for teachers to teach students all of the pragmatic rules (Cohen, 2008). Examples include providing learners with tool kits to learn pragmatics (Murray, 2012) and giving them a framework to analyse their own speech samples, which has proven to be not only effective but also enjoyable to learners (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004). Students can record their conversations with a native or non-native speaker from another country and start transcribing and analysing them. Kondo's (2008) findings showed that learners have an ability to make metapragmatic analyses and can become researchers and discover themselves by analysing, thinking and reflecting on their own language performance. Learners can also collect authentic speech from recorded sources such as radio, television, video tapes and movies, as well as books and plays (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996) and the Internet.

Students can be guided to participate in projects such as one that used video clips to learn language and culture (Kitai & Chan, 2015). In this project that lasted for two semesters, the students at a university in Singapore presented their favourite video clips (less than three minutes) in class and shared what they learned about Japanese language and culture from the clips. What the students had to do included preparation of handouts, transcription of videos, and consultation with teachers. It was found that the students acquired new vocabulary, improved their listening skills, developed new listening comprehension strategies, and increased their cultural knowledge. This type of long-term project is useful for

students: it shows that students only need initial guidance from the teacher to complete a significant project mostly on their own.

Apart from carrying out projects, learners can be introduced to websites where they can choose to learn different aspects of pragmatics within their own interests (Cohen, 2008). For example, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) has a website for learning L2 pragmatics. Learners are provided with detailed information about six speech acts (requests, refusals, apologies, complaints, compliments, and thanking) in different languages (see http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts). Besides, teachers can assist learners to form learning partnerships with native speakers through other technological means such as working with a learning peer from another country via telephone, email or other media (Cohen, 2008). If learners are actively engaged in their own learning of pragmatics, it is likely that they can significantly improve and develop their pragmatic competence, as they need to learn pragmatics themselves on a life-long basis. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) maintain that it usually takes 10 years or more for learners to be pragmatically competent.

7.3 Implications and recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, implications and recommendations regarding teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching, teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general, teacher training and development, and designing curriculum, materials and tasks have been proposed.

7.3.1 Teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching

It is necessary for teachers to change their belief of the main purpose of teaching English. Traditionally, teaching EFL means providing learners with knowledge and competence to communicate with native speakers, who speak standard English (American or British English). The teachers in this study still held this traditional view of teaching English. In the changing context and process of globalisation, there is a need for Vietnamese EFL teachers to be aware of the broad purpose of teaching English, which is to prepare learners to

communicate with both native speakers and non-native speakers who speak ELF. Vietnamese EFL teachers need to fully understand the importance of the inclusion of different varieties in their future teaching as mere awareness-raising is not enough. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce the concept of diversity into the curriculum of teacher preparation programs (Suzuki, 2011).

EFL teachers in Vietnamese universities may need to adopt a more principled approach informed by research and best classroom practices. Currently, the teachers in this study, as the interview data showed, had diverse thoughts on the type of English they desired to teach. Teachers need to expose students to a variety of English that can help them communicate effectively with other speakers of diverse cultures while still maintaining their identity. The research data showed that 58% of the teachers thought students needed to keep their culture and identity when learning English, but they also wanted them to learn to speak English like a native speaker. In other words, the teachers did not believe that speaking Vietnamese English was a way to create an identity for Vietnamese speakers of English. In reality, Vietnamese English has not been accepted by Vietnamese people for different reasons. A more theory-based and research-led approach will help Vietnamese university EFL teachers to go beyond the paradoxical trap.

The research data also showed that the teachers acknowledged that their English learning was influenced by their L1, which actually contributed to the making of identity of their English. It is the teachers who need to be the pioneers in contesting this unintentional 'prejudice' against Vietnamese English and advocating Vietnamese English by showing students and other people in Vietnam that Vietnamese English helps create an identity for Vietnamese speakers of English. In order to achieve this, teachers themselves need to believe in Vietnamese English and make their students proud of it. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, non-native speakers need to develop an identity with the local model of English without feeling that it is a "deficient" model (Kachru, 1992a, p. 68). Also, the issue of identity should not be ignored in considering critical approaches to TESOL (Nguyen, 2011c). Since language gives shape to identity (Pagliai, 2003), identity negotiation is a process that

perhaps most language learners experience as they become more proficient in the target language.

In the context of Vietnam, teachers should bear in mind that one of the goals of English teaching is to teach students to become bilingual. They need to be aware that they are in a better position in terms of learning experience, knowledge of context and language pedagogy to teach English than native speaker teachers. Due to their experience in learning another language, they often have an understanding of useful strategies, mistakes to avoid, difficulties in language learning, and students' needs (Richard-Amato, 2003). In addition, Vietnamese EFL teachers can serve as models of successful language learners. Therefore, they need to be confident in their strengths and not to feel inferior to their native English speaker counterparts.

There is one question that remains to be addressed: "Which model/variety of English should be taught to Vietnamese students?" The literature now can identify three principal models of English teaching: native speaker/Standard English, nativised/World Englishes, and ELF/English as an international language (Kachru, 1992a; Kirkpatrick, 2006; 2007). A native speaker model refers to English used by speakers who speak English as the mother tongue and who are in the Inner Circle, that is, British English, American English, or Australian English (Kachru, 1992a). A nativised model is a local model spoken and socially accepted by speakers in the Outer-Circle countries such as Singaporean English, Indian English, and Nigerian English (Kachru, 1992a; Kirkpatrick, 2006; 2007). The ELF model, mentioned earlier in this thesis, is based on the premise that English is the mutual language that speakers of different languages use to communicate with each other. While a native speaker model could be chosen as a benchmark in setting an idealised curriculum design, a more realistic pragmatic approach should never be dogmatic. EFL learners should adopt a code-referenced, not a code-bound, approach that accepts or even encourages Vietnamese EFL learners to learn to speak English with a localised accent as theorised in Chapters 3 and 6 of this thesis.

In the case of Vietnam, it is necessary to adopt the ELF model. The choice of which model to teach should be based on the purposes of the learner, the nature of the communication

taking place, and the contexts of learning within which the learner culture is embedded. This is similar to Kirkpatrick's (2007) argument that English teachers should establish goals and adopt models that suit the norms and the needs of the learners because English can develop new varieties that mirror the cultural norms and satisfy the communication needs of its users. Therefore, in Vietnam's context, where speakers use English to communicate more with non-native speakers from the countries in the ASEAN, China, Korea, and Japan than with native speakers, an ELF model needs to be emphasised, and instructional materials should touch upon the varieties of English from these countries.

Kirkpatrick (2007) proposed three requirements for adopting a lingua franca approach: (1) students would need to be made aware of which linguistic features can potentially create problems of mutual intelligibility; (2) the curriculum would need to focus on cultural differences and what they mean in cross-cultural communication; and (3) students would need to be taught the communicative strategies that help create effective cross-cultural communication.

Adopting this model, however, would entail a number of issues that need to be considered. For example, teachers may find it hard to access materials written to teach ELF, as most English materials have been written by native writers and from a native-speaker perspective (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006).

Yet the process of adoption of this model is empowering as it can boost both teacher and student confidence. Teachers will no longer be worried about a native-speaker model that they themselves do not speak and which may not be appropriate in local contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Only when users of English in Vietnam change their views and attitudes to English learning can they be confident in the English language they speak and as a result, become more effective in communication.

Another advantage is that the cultural content can be remarkably widened and not limited to native-speaker cultures (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Teachers can include lessons on the cultures of the people with whom they are most likely to use English. Vietnamese learners can learn

more about cultures of countries that have trading relationships with Vietnam such as China, South Korea, Japan, and the ASEAN countries.

Temporarily, it can be useful to teach a native-speaker model with adjustments to suit the learners' needs, individuality, and cultural norms. However, in the long term, it is necessary to follow an ELF model.

7.3.2   Teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general

The results from this study and other previous studies carried out in Vietnam showed that traditional teaching methods such as Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual with a focus on linguistic knowledge have been in place in the Vietnamese mainstream classroom, even at the tertiary level for a long time. The current examination-oriented teaching practices obviously do not provide students with chances to use the language because the teaching of pragmatic knowledge has to give way to linguistic knowledge. This results in a great number of learners who master grammatical structures of the language but are unable to cope with everyday communication (Pham, 1999). This study shows the need for teaching pragmatics to Vietnamese university students.

Teaching pragmatics has been reported to be beneficial to learners. Vietnamese EFL teachers need to adopt a critical approach to teaching pragmatics. The three approaches proposed in section 7.2 can be followed to teach pragmatics; however, learning a language is a life-long process. Thus, it is important for teachers to build learner awareness of the importance of pragmatics. Learners learn best if they realise the importance of using language appropriately and find ways of achieving this. Of course they will need initial guidance and encouragement from teachers to be able to develop pragmatic ability so that they can communicate effectively and appropriately.

The main responsibility of teachers is not only restricted to specifically teaching students how to perform a speech act, but more significantly it is to make them "become observers and more aware that pragmatic functions exist in language, specifically in discourse, in order that they may be more aware of these functions as learners" (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, p. 31). In other words, teachers need to give learners information on the strategies to learn pragmatics

214

and then direct them to websites where they can choose the pragmatic materials and learn according to their own interests (Cohen, 2008). This was also discussed in section 7.2.2.3 on the learner-empowered approach.

Taking a critical approach to language teaching also involves teachers reflecting on their own teaching and creating strategies to offer learners opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills for IC given that the dominance of English as a language for IC continues to rise (McConachy, 2013). An intercultural approach to language teaching focuses not only on teaching information about other cultures but also on making learners sensitive to the role of context and culture in IC, and finally, on acquiring understanding of oneself as culturally situated (McConachy, 2013).

7.3.3 Teacher training and development

The demographic information collected from the teachers showed that 86% of them had received pragmatic knowledge when pursuing their tertiary education and that 62% had graduated from an overseas university or had overseas English learning experience. However, the data from the questionnaires, interviews and the focus group, and classroom observations revealed that teachers' understanding of pragmatics and its teaching varied. The data showed that they had difficulties in teaching pragmatics due to their lack of pragmatic knowledge and competence although they all recognised the vital importance of pragmatics in language teaching and learning. It is necessary to include pragmatic components into English teacher training programs, and teachers themselves need to develop their pragmatic competence. Realising the importance of pragmatics in teaching and learning English, Tran (2004; 2007) strongly recommended integrating pragmatics and discourse into the English teaching curricula in Vietnam.

In order to teach pragmatics effectively, besides the knowledge required for teaching L2 in general, such as subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical-content knowledge, and knowledge of the learners and local, curricular, and educational contexts, teaching L2 pragmatics, requires the teacher to have:

knowledge of pragmatic variation, knowledge of a range of pragmatic norms in

the target language, knowledge of meta-pragmatic information (e.g., how to

discuss pragmatics), knowledge of how to teach L2 pragmatics, knowledge of

how to assess L2 pragmatic ability, knowledge of learners' identities, cultures,

proficiency, and other characteristics, knowledge of the pragmatics-focused

curriculum, and knowledge of the role of L2 pragmatics in the educational

contexts. (Ishihara, 2010c, pp. 23-24)

In Chapter 6, it was argued that there was a need to familiarise students with a range of varieties of English in order to help them communicate effectively with other non-native speakers who use ELF. The introduction of different varieties of English into the classroom requires preparation from teachers as they need a thorough understanding of the diversity of English (Matsuda, 2009; Suzuki, 2011). If teachers themselves do not understand different varieties of English, it would be hard to develop students' abilities to communicate with speakers of ELF or Englsih as an international language.

Furthermore, teachers need to be involved in and aware of research on the effects of different types of pragmatic instruction on L2 learner awareness, understanding, and production because this knowledge is of particular relevance for language teachers (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010b). Except for those involved in studying this field, this kind of research knowledge is not extensively available to language teachers, and thus, they do not usually have access to connections between the research and pedagogical practice (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010b).

Temporarily, it is important that the Faculty organise workshops where teachers can share their understanding of pragmatics and their expertise of teaching it. Through these workshops the teachers' level of awareness of the necessity of teaching pragmatics will generally increase. In the long term, pragmatics needs to be embedded in English teacher training programmes. This is in agreement with Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh's (2008) implication that "teacher education methodology textbooks should have a pragmatic component of language as one important area to be included in the content of the language teacher education program" (p. 194). The respondents in the present research encountered

216

difficulties in teaching pragmatics because they lacked pragmatic competence and methods to teach pragmatics. Teachers need to develop their pragmatic competence and acquire knowledge of how to teach L2 pragmatics.

Teaching pragmatics is a complex and challenging task for teachers, as pragmatic behaviour varies greatly and depends on social and cultural contexts (Kondo, 2008). Teachers are required to develop an understanding of pragmatics in order to teach it effectively. Ishihara (2010b) listed different reasons why pragmatic language use is difficult to learn: "differing cultural norms of appropriateness; regional, generational, ethnic, and individual variation; grammatical and lexical complexity; and subtleties of nuances and non-verbal behaviour" (p. 201). Limberg (2015) has suggested different websites for teachers to gain expertise to teach different speech acts and access language samples. They are:

BBC Learning English: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/ specials/1331_howto_feedback/

United States Department of State: American English, Teaching Pragmatics (with different lessons and activities for ESL and EFL classrooms): http://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/ teaching-pragmatics

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota (with descriptions of speech acts, examples, and bibliographies): http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/

Language samples sorted by varieties of English can also be found in: http://www.corpora4learning.net/ (p. 280)

For those who do not know how to teach pragmatics effectively, books on how to teach it with practical activities and tasks can be useful. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor's (2003a) *Teaching pragmatics* and Tatsuki and Houck's (2010b) *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts* are full of practical and useful activities and tasks to teach pragmatics. These books are user-friendly with detailed instructions of how to carry out the teaching and are suitable for

learners of different levels of proficiency. Novice teachers can follow the guidelines offered in these books and develop their own materials to teach pragmatics in their own settings.

7.3.4   Designing curricula, materials and tasks

In order for the teaching of pragmatics to be effective, the English curriculum should be developed with pragmatics as the organising principle (Ishihara, 2010b). In this curriculum, the central focus for curriculum designers, teachers, and learners is appropriateness in the given context. Ishihara (2010b) has suggested two ways to incorporate pragmatic materials into the L2 curriculum: "as an add-on to an existing curriculum or as the organizing principle of a newly developed curriculum" (p. 202). In the first way, additional pragmatics-focused exercises and insights would be supplemented and incorporated into existing activities, and pragmatic instruction could be in the form of written or spoken discourse and could be part of an integrated skills curriculum. In the second way, the organisation of the curriculum can be determined by pragmatic content. Ishihara (2010b) proposed the inclusion of one or more of the following in a lesson: "a speech act, some conversational implicature, use of epistemic stance markers, attention to discourse markers and fillers, and some discourse structure of interest or relevance" (p. 203).

A pragmatics-focused curriculum needs pragmatic materials. Textbooks play an important role in providing English language knowledge. The classroom observation data indicated that the teachers in this study mainly relied on the specified textbooks to teach English. Therefore, it is important and urgent to design well-written and appropriate textbooks to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

At the time this thesis was being written, there were no textbooks designed by local writers for university students who did not major in English. These books need to be designed to suit the learners' needs and culture and the contexts of learning and teaching in Vietnam. Textbooks written by native speakers of English, as we have seen in this study, do not meet these needs.

Thus, textbooks and materials need to be developed in the light of ELF. However, there is a lack of choices in selecting teaching materials, as the majority of these are based on British

and/or American English (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). In the near future, when teaching standard English, awareness of other varieties of English should be raised and students need to be familiar with other Englishes by having exposure to them. Textbooks to teach English to university students in Vietnam need to be rewritten with an awareness of other varieties of English and need to attend to features of Vietnamese English and culture.

Textbooks need to be written based on empirical research so that pragmatic knowledge is presented logically and appropriately (Cohen, 2008). In other words, textbook writers should be informed by findings from the body of research on cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics (Nguyen, 2011c). For example, metapragmatic information is considered to be crucial in helping learners acquire pragmatic knowledge, but this information was almost absent from the analysed textbook. Textbooks need to contain pragmatic information accompanied with sufficient metapragmatic information, and pragmatic input should be logically presented and recycled. It will be necessary for Vietnamese textbook writers to learn from the limitations of the present set of English textbooks for high school students, as discussed earlier in this thesis, so that the prospective textbooks for tertiary students can achieve a balance between linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. In order to do this, it is of prime importance to apply a pragmatic approach when designing textbooks, which has been done by materials developers in many contexts of second and foreign language teaching (Kasper & Rose, 2001).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, culture and language are closely related. Therefore, teaching culture needs to be a priority in the curriculum. Textbook writers also need to take an intercultural approach to teaching English, that is, students should be provided with information about cultures of both speakers of ENL and speakers of ESL, EFL, and ELF. The curriculum should consist of the cultures of the people who use English for cross-cultural communication rather than only the native speakers' cultures (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Furthermore, it is necessary for textbooks to include activities and tasks in which students can relate to their own culture and develop an awareness of it as well as other cultures. As McKay (2003) remarks, teaching materials should be based on source culture content because this can encourage learners to deepen their understanding of their own language

and culture and enable them to share this understanding when communicating with speakers of different cultures. Cultural knowledge was chosen to be the most often taught type of pragmatic information by most of the surveyed and interviewed teachers (see 6.2.1 for more details). This showed that the teachers were aware of the importance of teaching cultural knowledge in their lessons. In order for the teaching of culture to be successful, culture needs to be embedded into the teaching goals of the curriculum and introduced at the very beginning of English learning (Ho, 2011).

Another point to take into account is the issue of authenticity in instructional materials. As shown in this thesis and other sources, the language in the textbook is often far from the language used in real-life exchanges (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Crystal & Davy, 1975; Nguyen, 2011c; Wong, 2002). If one of the teaching goals is to enable learners to successfully communicate independently in the real world, they, at some point, need exposure to authentic language (Gilmore, 2004).

There have been arguments against the use of authentic materials in second or foreign language curricula. For example, according to Widdowson (1978, 1998, 2003) learners are unable to benefit from natural language because the classroom cannot give the contextual conditions for them to authenticate it. However, other researchers believe that learners at all levels of proficiency can deal with real materials provided that the texts and tasks are chosen with care (Gilmore, 2007). Real texts can be difficult for learners to digest but can prepare them for the complexity of natural language and therefore can help them better cope with the demand of real conversations.

The findings of this study and previous studies indicate that textbooks are not authentic enough and lack pragmatic information. Therefore, it is necessary that teachers provide supplementary materials and tasks. Ishihara (2010a) suggested using data revealed through research when adapting textbooks. This can also be done by gathering supplementary language samples from language corpora or using pragmatic tasks produced for teaching ESL or EFL in general (Limberg, 2015).

220

Other strategies of using authentic activities and materials have been offered by English teaching professionals. Rose (1997) suggested the use of films for consciousness-raising in the classroom as well as for teaching pragmatics deductively and inductively. An example of the effects of using films to provide a context for L2 pragmatic teaching was provided by Abrams (2014), who showed segments of *The Edukators* for 10-15 minutes and asked students to analyse these segments for 10-15 minutes every week for seven weeks. Abrams (2014) found that the participants in the treatment group outperformed the control group in varying their responses to show relationships between characters or the purpose of the exchange and that they were better able to use the social context in the film and explicit pragmatic instruction. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) proved that learners not only enjoyed analysing transcripts of authentic speech but also benefited from doing it. The analysis of real speech is a good way of developing awareness of social considerations influencing speech act use.

7.4 Limitations and directions for further research

This research attempted to gather empirical evidence that provided insights into how pragmatics was taught at a university by employing multiple instruments for data collection to improve the validity and reliability of the findings. There were still some limitations that need to be recognised.

First, the sample size was relatively small. However, if the total number of lecturers at the faculty is taken into account, this sample was considered ample for this case study: 29 out of 31 lecturers of English at the university took part in the questionnaire survey; 10 participated in individual interviews and a focus group; and three were observed in class. For the purpose of generalisation of the findings, more teachers from representative universities (including both public and private institutions) in Vietnam should be recruited. In order to have an overview of how pragmatics has been taught and learned, it would be useful to have students participate in the data collection process so that differences between teachers' and students' perceptions can be compared.

Second, due to the time constraint and the fact that the researcher was based in Sydney, only three instructors were observed when teaching in the classroom. Each was observed twice and each time was 150 minutes long. The observation data, therefore, might not be able to capture a full picture of how the teachers usually run their classes. A more accurate set of data would involve observing more teachers more frequently throughout a whole semester.

Third, I found it an issue to find relevant studies in discussing the results because this study so far has been the first one to investigate teachers' perceptions of pragmatics and its teaching in a Vietnamese university. Therefore, when possible, I attempted to use findings from research done in a similar context, e.g. universities in China, for discussing the results of this study.

Fourth, the proposed framework for teaching pragmatics, though developed by combining different theories and findings from this study and others, needs to be tested and applied to teaching practices. Employing this model to teach pragmatics and reporting its strengths and weaknesses could be another research direction.

In conclusion, this study has shown how EFL teachers in a university in Vietnam perceived pragmatics and how they actually taught it in the EFL classroom. The line-by-line content analysis of pragmatic knowledge in the prescribed textbook also revealed that the teaching of pragmatics remained disparate, largely determined by the individual teacher of varied linguistic and instructional experience. The disparity could be either attributed to EFL teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge of the target language and culture or their over-dependence upon the set English textbook as the main source for pragmatic knowledge. The fact that the textbook had been compiled for commercial purposes without a genuine understanding of or taking into account the local EFL curriculum has compound the difficulty. A sporatic method of selecting pragmatic-knowledge-related materials and tasks has rendered it impossible for Vietnamese EFL teachers to focus their teaching on this important aspect of English. This has raised issues, at the perceptual level, relating to the broad understanding of language and culture, L1, and L2 in English education and teacher cognition. At the pedagogical level, processes and strategies for teacher development may

222

need to be further explored, taking into account the local constraints associated with the existing education systems. Such a conceptual re-orientation needs to be informed by current research, as argued in this thesis, and reflected pragmatically in curricular innovations, down to materials and task design for classroom interaction. The framework derived from a systematic study could be utilised as an alternative, yet, broad generalisations can only be made with data gathered from large studies using different methods to investigate both teaching and learning pragmatics in different contexts.

Appendix A   Questionnaire

Instructions: As part of a research project on pragmatic teaching (teaching how to use English appropriately) and teachers' perceptions, we would like to know your view on this issue. Please take your time to complete this questionnaire about your understanding of pragmatics and your classroom teaching of pragmatics. Please be informed that this is not a test and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. You do not need to write your name on it. We are interested in your personal opinion. Your sincere answers will be of great value to us as they can ensure the accuracy of the data. The information provided by you will be confidentially secured and used only for the purposes of the intended research. Thank you very much for your co-operation and assistance.

Part 1: Demographic information (Please tick your choice.)

1. What is your gender?

    ☐   Male.   ☐ Female.

2. How long have you been teaching English?

    ☐ Less than 5 years. ☐ 5-10 years.   ☐ More than 10-15 years. ☐ More than 15 years.

3. What is the highest degree you have?

    ☐ Bachelor.   ☐ Master.   ☐ Ph.D..

4. Did you study for your degree(s) overseas or have you had any overseas English learning experience?

    ☐ Yes. Which country / countries? …………………………………… ☐ No.

5. Did you receive pragmatic knowledge when you studied for your degree(s)?

    ☐ Yes.   ☐ No.

Part 2: Your view on English pragmatic teaching and learning
Section A: Please make only one choice out of the five options.

1 = Strongly disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Neutral   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly agree

6	I believe learning English means learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I think that linguistic knowledge (e.g. pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary) is as important as the knowledge of how to use the language.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I often correct the mistakes my students make when they use inappropriate words although the sentences are grammatically correct.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I don't think I know how to provide students with cultural knowledge and appropriate language use.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I think raising students' awareness of getting information on culture and appropriate language use is more useful than teaching specific pragmatic knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I want my students to speak English like native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I think teaching English communicatively is not as important as teaching grammatical points and vocabulary items.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I believe teachers should teach pragmatic knowledge when students reach a certain level of language proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I think it is important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I think learners of English as a second language need to understand other Englishes apart from native English (e.g. American, British).	1	2	3	4	5
16	I think native speakers of English need to understand the culture of speakers of English as a second language.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I think my way of learning and teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general is influenced by my mother tongue and by other people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I think the textbooks used at the Faculty contain adequate pragmatic information.	1	2	3	4	5

Section B: Please answer the following multiple-choice questions. You can choose more than one option. If you do so, please rank the choices you've made. 1 = the most often taught/used.

19. What type(s) of pragmatic knowledge do you teach students in your class?

☐ General pragmatic information (information related to politeness, appropriacy, formality, and register).

☐ Speech acts.

☐ Metalanguage: the use of different sentence types (declarative, imperative, interrogative) when introducing topical units, particular linguistic forms, usage information, or student instructions.

☐ Cultural knowledge.

☐ Other. Please specify ....

20. What type(s) of knowledge and skills do you teach students in your class?

☐ Linguistic knowledge (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation).

☐ Semantic usage and collocation.

☐ Appropriateness of language use.

☐ Communicative skills.

☐ Other. Please specify ....

21. How do you teach cultural knowledge and appropriate language use?

☐ Using knowledge in textbooks.

☐ Using supplementary materials (e.g. newspapers, magazines).

☐ Implementing tasks and activities.

☐ Giving explicit instructions on cultural knowledge and appropriate language use.

☐ Other. Please specify …………………………………………………………………...

22. What type(s) of tasks do you use in class?

☐ Role-play.

☐ Pair-work.

☐ Group discussion and debate.

☐ Other. Please specify …………………………………………………………………...

23. Which of the following way(s) do you use to give students information on English use?

☐ Giving explanation.

☐ Using information sheets.

☐ Conducting role-play activities.

☐ Using dialogues, radio and TV programs, and videos.

☐ Organising discussion.

☐ Using awareness-raising activities.

24. What type of English do you most want your students to speak?

☐ Vietnamese English.

☐ American English.

☐ British English.

☐ Other. Please specify …………………………………………………………………….. .

Section C: Please answer the following questions.

25. What difficulties do you have when teaching pragmatic knowledge?

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26. In your opinion, what types of tasks can help students develop communicative
competence?

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27. What are the most effective ways to develop student pragmatic competence?

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(Adapted from Ji, 2007; Kachru, 1992a)

Thank you for your information!

Appendix B   Questions for interviews

1. Do you think it is important to teach students pragmatic knowledge (knowledge about how to use English appropriately)? If yes, how important is it? Can you give me an example?

2. Which errors do you think are more serious? Grammatical or pragmatic errors? If your students make a pragmatic error, how would you correct it? Please give justification for your answer.

3. Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language should try to imitate native speakers' accents and their way of using language? Why? / Why not?

4. Do you think it is important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture? Please explain for your answer.

5. Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language need to develop understanding of other Englishes other than native English (American, Australian, British English)? Why? / Why not?

6. Do you think native speakers of English need to understand the Englishes and cultures of speakers of English as a second or first language? Why? / Why not?

7. How do you use pragmatic materials and tasks in your classroom teaching?

8. What type of pragmatic information needs to be included in your classroom teaching?

9. Do you have any difficulties or challenges when teaching students pragmatic knowledge? If yes, what are they? How do you deal with them?

10. How have you learned pragmatic knowledge?

11. Is your way of learning pragmatics in particular and English in general influenced by your mother tongue and by other people around you? If yes, how is it influenced?

12. Is your approach to teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general affected by the way you look at yourself and other people and the way others look at you? If yes, please clarify your answer.

Teacher			Class		Subject		Room			Date

Time	Activities & episodes		Pragmatic activities & tasks			Pragmatic materials			Pragmatic information				Approach to teaching pragmatics	
			Pairwork & group work	Role-play	Discussion & debates	Written text	Audio	Audio + visual	General pragmatic information	Metalanguage style	Speech acts	Cultural knowledge	Inductive	Deductive

Notes

Adapted from Spada & Frohlich (1995)

Appendix D   Sample interview

Interviewer (I): Thank you for taking part in my research project. I think now I'd like to interview you. Shall we start now?

Participant (P): Yes, I think so.

I: Now the first question. Do you think it is important to teach students pragmatic knowledge?

P: Well, I think it is very important to teach student pragmatic knowledge so that when they communicate with other people Australians, Americans, etc…. They will know how to use English you know properly. Knowing a language doesn't mean you just know the vocabulary, the meanings, and the structures. You have to know how to use it appropriately. So I think it's very important.

I: Can you give me a specific example about the importance of knowing pragmatic knowledge?

P: One very typical example is that in Vietnam, once you have a guest to come to your home, it is … you offer him a glass of some liquid. It is considered to be polite to offer him a certain kind of drink. That does not necessarily mean the guest needs to have it. So you wouldn't ask "Would you like something to drink?" If you ask him that way, that is considered to be impolite, but it is different in the US for example when you come to a host, a host would ask you "What would you like to drink?", it is considered important and polite. It is not polite to offer him something that he doesn't want. So there's a really really apparent difference over here. Once students know that, they will behave properly in communication.

I: That relates to cultural issues.

P: Cultural issues. That's pragmatics.

I: Which errors do you think are more serious? Grammatical or pragmatic errors?

P: Well, as a teacher of English, I consider both are important. But you know when we teach English, we have some goals of the teaching. Some people learn English because of academic requirements, so grammatical or pure linguistic mistakes are important. Some people want to learn English to go to the US, so pragmatic issues are considered to be important over here. When I teach English, I usually ask my students to pay attention to both grammatical issues and pragmatic issues.

I: Yeah, but my question is which ones are more serious? Grammatical or pragmatic errors?

P: So according to the context, if I teach English to my students who wants to go to Australia or US to study, I pay attention to grammatical knowledge, and after that, after the students have acquired, you know, grammatical points, I will move to pragmatics if I have time.

I: What about students who will not go abroad?

P: Just for academic requirements and communication with foreigners when they come to Vietnam? I will pay attention to both of them yeah equally.

I: So you will stress on pragmatic knowledge for students who are going overseas and other students you will treat them equally, the errors.

P: Yes, I think so.

I: So if your students make pragmatic errors, how would you correct those errors?

P: Well, this is a very subtle issue. I mean er … pragmatic usage should not be considered to be wrong or right, but should be considered to be proper or improper in certain issues. So in my classroom I would say to my ss "If you are in America or Australia if people say this, so you should behave like this and this is what you should say". So I teach the pragmatic improperness very politely to my students. I would tell them this is what they say in that country, when we learn English, we should follow them to make, you know, the hearer understand what we are talking about because the listener the speaker may have their own identity, he might say "OK this is my identity, my way of communication".

I: Why do you think that's a good way?

P: When I hear somewhat I say improper English usage, I would tell my students to change that because it is based on my knowledge, on what I have read, and on from what I know in English, people say this in this case and say that in that case.

I: Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language should try to imitate native speakers' accent and their way of using language?

P: We should try or …. well, in my opinion, it is impossible for so to acquire native-like pronunciation, so I would as my students to speak as clearly as possible, try to be intelligible. If some students try to have American accent, it will be OK for me, I'll focus on intelligibility, I don't focus on native-like pronunciation.

I: What about the way of using language?

P: So I don't know much about the way of using English, I would ask my students to pay attention to some of the issues in pragmatics for example implicature, politeness, and some of clichés for example, in America people say "How are you? and "I am fine, thank you" even though they are not feeling very well, for example. So that's a kind of clichés.

I: Do you think it is important for learners of English to keep their identity and culture? Please explain for your answer.

P: Uh, to me my students may keep their identity and culture or may change as long as they feel happy. So I will not try to force them to stay away from their identity when they speak English or I will ask them to keep their identity, I would give them the right to make decision, the freedom. I don't think it's important to keep their identity.

I: Why do you think so?

P: Because personally I think every one is born differently in terms of races, so we can't be American if we imitate to be American even though we dress similarly, and the way we behave is different from culture to culture. Every culture is respectable, every culture is valued, so in my opinion, we should try to behave well, to treat each other you know nicely, I think it doesn't matter whether to keep identity or not. It is their choice, up to them, you know. If they want to keep identity, that's fine. I would not ask them to change.

I: Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language need to develop understanding of other Englishes apart from native English (American, Australian, British English)?

P: Yes, I think when they learn English, in Vietnam people usually learn British English, because it is a kind of English taught in the school nowadays. However, I think, if they have a chance they should know other English like American.

I: The question is "Do they need to understand other Englishes besides native-speaker English?

P: Well, if people study English and they work in Vietnam, it is not necessary to do that because the chance of exposure to Singaporean English or Indian English is not very high,

so they just learn English as they are taught, so when they have high proficiency of English they will naturally acquire the way of Singaporean English, for example, but if they go to India to work, you know they have to learn the way Indian people speak in order to understand them.

I: But still there's that possibility. So when they meet so who speak Singaporean English, you think it is still OK?

P: Well, I think if some experts come to Vietnam to work, they are equipped with some Vietnamese culture. They have to adapt the way people in Vietnam speak, so that we have them understand. The problem is not that vast, not too difficult for Vietnamese, if they understand English, let's say British English well, Indian Engliah or Singaporean English is not too far from British English so….

I: From what you just said, it depends on the context and the purpose. Do you think it is still important to understand that?

P: Yes, but it depends on the context, exactly.

I: So that makes sense. Let's talk about culture.

P: Yeah, I think this is not only English, but also communication, so in terms of language, in order to understand each other, we need to have something in common. We accept the oddities, but we should have something in common. If a native speaker would like to speak to a Vietnamese person, to some certain extent, he or she should know something about Vietnamese culture or Vietnamese pragmatics in terms of language. So the more he knows about the way people in Vietnam behave, the easier and the faster he knows what a Vietnamese wants to say.

I: How do you use pragmatic materials and tasks in your classroom teaching?

P: I am the one who prefers contexts, authentic language so in my class, I usually show clips to my students, a story if I don't have clips, stories of myself, give examples, or I cut a story in a newspaper, so I lead my students into what is going on in that context. So I will tell my student "What is this?" and "Why is that?", "What does that man tell that woman?", "Why does that woman react like that?", for example. So after that, they will have a discussion, then I will try to explain what is going on, and that will help my students understand more about how to use language in that context. So I prefer authentic materials for example video clips, or stories, real stories, or a very short joke, for example the word *blonde*, in Vietnam we don't know a lot about the word *blonde*, so I give them some example of that.

I: So usually you use the context, and you ask students questions, ask them to discuss, and they you give explanation later if necessary?

P: Yeah.

I: What kind of pragmatic information needs to be included in your classroom teaching?

P: I think we should provide our students with the information such as politeness, implicature, co-operative principles. And I think those are very important kinds of pragmatic information.

I: What about cultural information?

P: Yes, yes, of course. Because you ask me to be specific. Apart from those very general information, we should try to talk to students about them, show examples about them.

I: Do you have any problems or challenges when teaching students pragmatic knowledge? If yes, what are they? How do you deal with them?

P: Uh huh. Yes, a lot of problems when we teach students pragmatics because we don't have a context. All the clips I show to my students are taken from the library and from websites. It is more interesting to provide our students with a chance to talk to a foreigner. You see we have only two foreign teachers, and I try to ask those teachers to talk to our students as much as possible. The most important thing is they don't have a chance to talk to native speakers directly to apply what they have learn and to understand real situations in which pragmatic information is used.

I: The problems are you don't have a context.

P: Another problem is that the teachers themselves, er you know sometimes we sometimes we don't know what to do in that, what to behave in that situation. Even though some of the teachers have been abroad, that doesn't necessarily mean they know everything. The teachers themselves, they have low, they do not have enough pragmatics in terms of communication. Their way of using language is linked to their way of using Vietnamese. They tend to be American or British sometimes.

I: You mean sometimes they don't use English properly?

P: Right, teachers ourselves. We have that problem.

I: Well, that is interesting, (laughing)

P: That's true. (laughing)

I: So you are talking about bringing foreign teachers to class, right?

P: Right.

I: What other solutions you have?

P: Other solutions. I ask my students to try to go to a café in which they may try to find a foreigner. I told them when I was a student, I went to a café and said "Excuse me, I am a student, I learn English, I have a problem with English. After 10 persons you ask for help, three or four will be willing to help. Seven or six of them to say no". So in that case they will have more opportunities to contact foreigners and many of them have been successful.

I: Anything to deal with the problem teachers have?

P: We have to tell them to watch films, to read more about that, reading from books is sometimes not enough, you have to watch films and to contact as many foreigners as possible to consciously know the way foreigners behave, for example in a dinner, the way they talk, the way to refuse, the way to agree. One example, we had one expert coming. She expressed her disagreement in a very subtle way, polite way. So when we deal with the people in real situations, we learn that consciously. Reading from books we can never notice that way of agreeing.

I: I think so, too. Pragmatics is something very subtle. (laughing)

P: Very subtle. (laughing)

I: Next question, let's talk about your process of learning pragmatics.

P: Yeah if you pay attention to what I told my students to do, you will know how I learned it because I learned from films, video clips, real situations, and of course from books. But in my opinion, from books, from reading er we can't have enough, so we have to have real situations and learning from books is sometimes boring and it is we we can't remember for long. So I try to contact as many foreigners as possible. When I was a student, I tried to to wander round the city to meet foreigners, and then I had a chance to talk to them, to learn many things from them.

I: You you were lucky to find foreigners around the city. What about in case you don't have foreigners?

P: But you asked my how I have learnt pragmatics. That's how I have learnt.

I: What about when you uh, were overseas, were abroad? Have you ….

P: Yeah, when I was in Canada, I home stayed with a Canadian family and I learnt many things about it from them even with a little kid er… 11 years old. When I was in Australia, I stayed in Melbourne and I stayed with an Australian family. The landlady's name was Michelle and she was a very sociable person and I had a lot of chances to meet her friends, to play tennis with them. I learn the way she introduced me to a friend who plays tennis in a very gentle and smooth way. (…) She gave him a chance to keep the face for her friend. George understands Michelle's implicature.

I: Not many people have that kind of contact.

P: Right, right. That's why we have to contact as may people as possible to know how to deal with that situation.

I: The next question is "Is your way of learning pragmatics in particular and English in general influenced by your mother tongue and by other people around you?"

P: This is a very hard question because I cannot consciously notice that, you know. I can notice from my learners but for me it is very hard to notice the influence by my mother tongue or not by my mother tongue, maybe people know it from me when they talk to me, communicate with me.

I: But you yourself don't realise that?

P: I can't, not really, but I haven't noticed that so far.

I: Are you influenced by other people around you?

P: Yeah yeah. I have told you I learnt how to introduce something from my landlady. Yeah, people around me, especially foreigners, native speakers because when I talk to them, I consciously learn from them.

I: What about when you were young, when you were small, when you went to high school?

P: When I was in high school, I didn't learn English very hard because my teachers and I were living in a remote area and English was not one of the focuses, we just studied something else. And when I came to this uni, I started to learn English. At that time I had a chance to work with some foreigners and I began to listen to the radio, to watch TV, for example. And I think not a particular person has had influence on me, but I don't know exactly who.

I: So what kind of influence?

P: For example, pronunciation. I think I tend to have an American accent, but I'm not sure because I listened to the VOA special English You know when I was studying at uni so I think I like to pronounce words like that, but I'm not sure.

I: The last question. Is your approach of teaching pragmatics in particular and English in general affected by the way you look at yourself and other people and the way others look at you?

P: For the fact that the way I look at myself and the way other people look at me, I don't know about that so I just do what I think is OK, you know, for example, if I know it's proper to

behave in that situation I will tell my students to behave like that or to say something like that.

I: So you don't think …

P: The way I look at myself, I don't know what it is. I think the only people who can make those influences are my bosses, but not in terms of personal things, but in terms of work, so let's say we are discussing something about work.

I: In teaching pragmatics?

P: So nothing, no one influences my way of teaching, and I don't think I influence someone in teaching, I just …

I: Like others teachers looking at you, do they influence your way of teaching pragmatics?

P: No.

I: Why? You don't think they have any role in that?

P: No, I don't know. I don't get what you mean. Why do other teachers influence me in my way of teaching? Not really, I don't imitate my former teachers.

I: Do you want to make any points, or have any questions?

P: I think pragmatic knowledge is necessary for students, and the more teachers are equipped with this, the more successful they will be in their teaching, but they should be gentle, subtle, working hard and they should not force students to be like this because students may keep their identity. Some students can say "No, I don't want to say that. This is my way of speaking".

I: You know when I interviewed one of the teachers, she told me that when she tells students "You should speak like this, not like that", and they do not think she is right. They question her.

P: That is the result of forcing students to behave in what we think is OK. We should tell them that this is what people usually behave and when we communicate with that culture, we should do this in order to be considered proper.

I: Thank you very much for your time. Thank you.

P: Thank you.

I: Thanks for your time and in-depth feedback. I've learned a lot from you. Thank you very much.

P: You're welcome.

Appendix E   Samples of coding of interview and focus group data

Codes and categories	Examples
Teachers' perceptions of pragmatic teaching: what teachers think about pragmatic teaching, what informs their teaching pragmatics	
Importance and justification of teaching pragmatics	Thanh said, "It's very important to teach students pragmatic knowledge because if they know how to use English appropriately, they can use it in an effectively, and you can see that our students now study in not a very real English speaking environment so that is very important to recognize what is appropriate and what is not appropriate."
Grammatical and pragmatic errors: Which are more serious?	Thanh: "But if I have to choose either grammatical or pragmatic, I'll say pragmatic."
Imitation of native speakers' (NS)	
+ Accent	Nhan said, "I focus on intelligibility, not on native-like pronunciation."
+ Language use	Focus group (FG) said, "I usually ask my students to IMITATE NOT the accent, but the ways of using language."
Need for learners to keep identity and culture	FG said, "When I teach my students, I usually think of the political and cultural aspects, and I always want them to keep their identity and culture."
Need for learners to understand other Englishes	Giang said, "I don't think it is very important. I think that uh British English or American English are very standard for students to learn, so if they know one type of English, they should focus on that type of English so that they can improve it very well." Thanh said, "That's why they should know that they should be prepared to understand those kinds of English, not just like because he does not speak standard English, I don't understand him."
How teachers learned pragmatics	Tien said, "One of the best way is imitation."

Codes and categories	Examples
Need for native speakers to understand cultures of speakers of English as a second language or a foreign language (ESL or EFL)	FG said, "Yeah I think people who come to Vietnam, usually they have a certain understanding of Vietnamese culture in order to avoid misunderstanding and also to integrate into the culture."
Influence of the mother tongue	Giang said, "So we still keep our Vietnamese, we are still affected by our mother tongue when we learn a language".
	FC said, "For example, at first when I didn't know how to use that, a word or a situation for a context, I usually translate from Vietnamese into English, but I'm not sure whether the word I use is right or not.""
Perspective from which teachers view their English teaching	FG said, "In my opinion, I'm trying to adopt English perspective in my teaching. I try to focus on language, structures used in real contexts."
Teaching pragmatic knowledge: how teachers teach pragmatics, the tasks used to teach pragmatics, kinds of pragmatic information taught, ways of correcting pragmatic errors, difficulties in teaching pragmatics and possible solutions	
Exposure to native speakers/English speaking environment	Giang said, "I hope that if I am allowed to invite some native speakers to my class and I can help my students to have very direct contact with native speakers, so that they can learn a lot from them."
Materials and tasks used to teach pragmatics	FG said, "We have to base on the textbooks to teach the students what the textbooks offer."
	Giang said, "Just one short video clip or just one short film we show to the students and they can copy and learn it very fast."
Teaching pragmatics unintentionally	FG said, "No, actually we focus on the use of language, but I don't think I realise that [they] are pragmatic."

Codes and categories	Examples
Approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge	Thanh said, "We just have to give them examples of some kinds of conversation breakdown due to the lack of pragmatic knowledge."
Types of pragmatic information taught	Tien said, "I think yes it is important to include speech acts and cultural knowledge in my class so that the students see the connection between language and culture." Nga said, " Yeah, well … the most important thing I need to include in my classroom teaching is metalanguage, the second one may be some general pragmatic information, and after that it may be some cultural knowledge."
Ways of correcting pragmatic errors	Truc said, "I give students feedback by pointing out their mistakes, presenting correct models, and directing them to self-correct."
Difficulties in teaching pragmatics + Experienced by teachers	FG said, "Because we actually we don't have experience about real contexts of using language, so sometimes we make some mistakes of using language in some situation."
+ Experienced by students	Nhan said, "The most important thing is they don't have a chance to talk to native speakers directly to apply what they have learnt and to understand real situations in which pragmatic info is used."
Solutions	Truc said, "My solution is providing them with a lot of materials and activities relevant to the subject of the foreign culture." Tien said, "Very often I tell them when they read, they have to realize how people use the language."

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