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**FORM- FOCUSED INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF
VIETNAMESE TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Applied Linguistics
at
The University of Waikato
by
Le Van Canh



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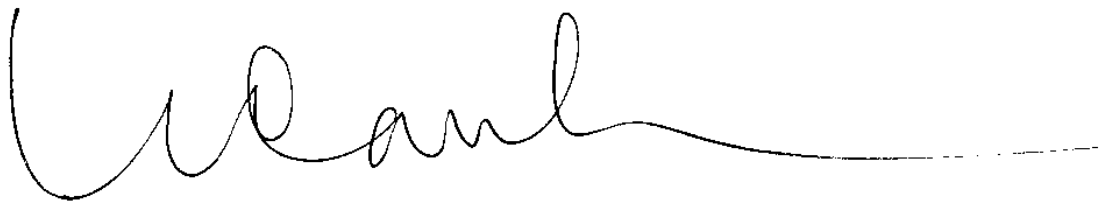
2011

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Paul', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Date: 31 March, 2011

ABSTRACT

Despite the reported powerful influence of teachers' beliefs on their pedagogical practices in the classroom, very few in-depth case studies of foreign language teachers' beliefs and the correspondence between their beliefs and instructional strategies have been internationally published – Woods (1996) being an important exception. Moreover, not a single in-depth study has ever been conducted in the context of Vietnamese state secondary schools, where teachers are non-native speakers, resources are minimal, and access to published scholarship and research is very limited.

The present qualitative case study seeks to occupy this research space because contextual factors such as limited access to expert knowledge, teachers' isolation, a prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and high-stake examinations need to be part of any analysis of teachers' beliefs and the correlation between beliefs and practices. It has explored the beliefs about form-focused instruction held by a group of eight teachers with teaching experience ranging from 24 to 2 years and the relationship between their beliefs and practices as well as factors shaping their beliefs. Eighteen interviews (ranging from 30 to 60 minutes long) and observations of 24 naturally occurring form-focused lessons in 12 groups of 10th, 11th, and 12th graders, i.e., all grades of the upper secondary school level, and 18 hours of stimulated recall interviews were conducted to collect the data. The audio- and video-recorded data were fully transcribed and translated from Vietnamese into English, and were subjected to a process of interpretative analysis through a constant comparison and contrast of the various data.

As it is revealed in the study that teachers showed a strong inclination to adopt a deductive approach to grammar with pupils memorising of grammatical rules and terminology, and doing the controlled grammar exercises in the textbook as the best way of learning grammar. Neither their beliefs nor practices were related to either current theories of language learning within the mainstream Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) research or to the methodology promoted in the prescribed curriculum.

Findings of the study also indicate that while teachers' beliefs were affected by multiple contextual factors, experiences which were accumulated through the process of socialisation in their professional community played the most influential role. Such beliefs constituted their personal theories for practice, which shaped what they did in the classroom and how they did it. Thus, these teachers shared a 'collectively normative pedagogy', which was underpinned by their common beliefs and justified by their common pattern of beliefs and practices.

Although this is a case study and as such it is not valid to make generalisations, it has some significant contributions to add to an understanding of teachers' beliefs in terms of research methodology and theoretical understanding with reference to teacher cognition and teacher professional development in the specific educational context where the teaching of English is undertaken by non-native-English-speaking teachers. These are discussed in the concluding chapter, Chapter VII.

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TRANSCRIPT CONVENTIONS

#1, #2	number of extract
01, 02	speaker turn
T	teacher
Thuy, Nguyen	pupil's pseudonym
P1, P2	unknown pupils
Ps	more than one pupil speaking
/, //, ///	pause (length of seconds)
{ }	activity associated with the speech
< >	interpretive comment
<i>italics</i>	translation of original speech in vernacular

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DoET	Department of Education and Training (Provincial level)
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FPI	Form-focused instruction
FoF	Focus on form
FoFs	Focus on forms
FL	Foreign language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
SL	Second language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TBLL	Task-based Language Learning
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Born, bred, and educated in Vietnam, where teachers were viewed as ‘wells of wisdom’, all my school life was dedicated to the memorisation of factual knowledge in order to return it in the examinations. 35 years ago, I entered the university to study English. It was my first experience with foreign language learning. Like other students, I was taught grammar deductively because Grammar-Translation was (and still is) the dominant approach to language teaching. The key classroom activities that we, the students, were expected to undertake were learning grammatical rules, doing grammatical exercises and translating literary texts from English into Vietnamese. The textbooks were written and imported from the former Soviet Union. Upon graduation from the university, I got a job as an English language teacher at the same university where I was taught English. Although I was unable to use my English for any communicative purposes, I managed to teach well simply because I, again, spent most of the class time explaining the grammatical rules to my students and got them to do the grammar exercises in the coursebook. The students worked very hard with those rules and exercises.

Then I had the opportunity to study for my Master’s Degree in TESOL in an American university in the heyday of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). There I was taught things like ‘communicative competence’, ‘communicative language teaching’, ‘inductive teaching of grammar’, ‘integrated approaches to language teaching’, etc. I was excited with the new ideas of language teaching, reflecting on my teaching and feeling happy to find an answer why my students were not able to use English communicatively. Also, during this time, I came across Kennedy’s outlines for research agenda for learning to teach, which read as follows:

Teachers, like other learners, interpret new content through their existing understandings and modify and reinterpret new ideas on the basis of what they already know or believe” (Kennedy, 1992, p. 2).

Although I noted down the above quote carefully, I was unable to make sense of it.

Returning to Vietnam, I became a teacher educator. Needless to say how enthusiastic I was in training student teachers how to use the communicative approach to their future career. I did not get any feedback from the student teachers, so I took it for granted that they would teach the way they were trained. In 1999, I conducted my first empirical study on English language teaching and I was disappointed to find that teachers overemphasised grammar instruction at the expense of communicative skills. Teachers told me that the communicative approach was not suitable to their students, who were eager to learn grammar for the examinations (Canh, 2000).

Then I found the book “*Teacher Learning in Language Teaching*” edited by D. Freeman and J. C. Richards (1996). Reading the book through I realised that teachers taught the way they thought it was appropriate to their students rather than the way they were trained at the university. But I, as a product of the behaviourist approach to education, had quite vague ideas about the influence of teachers’ thinking on their teaching. While I was teaching a graduate course in 2004, my students were presenting their assignment on focus on form, and I found that they preferred teaching grammar deductively. Below are some extracts of their presentations:

It cannot be denied that grammar teaching helps learners discover the nature of language, i.e., that language consists of complicate patterns that combine through sound or writing to create meaning ... As a high school teacher, grammar teaching always plays an important part in my teaching. Although the curriculum is designed basing on the communicative approach and its aim is to enable students to communicate using the target language in daily life, our students’ goal is to pass the English test in the graduate[ion] examination which mostly includes exercises related to grammar. So my teaching mainly

centers on helping students to master grammar as much as possible (Thanh Hoa).

This method of teaching [focus on form] doesn't coincide with what most of teachers of English at high school[s] in Vietnam are doing. We teach grammar separately, not in the lessons of practicing skills [skills lessons] where grammar is not the main point of teaching. ... Students whose grammar background is good can quickly acquire the accuracy in using the language they are learning (Do Hoa).

Recalling what Kennedy said in 1992, I managed to get the point. Evidently, teachers are not resistant to change but they simply reinterpret the top-down change through the lens of their own knowledge and beliefs about the intended change, their students and their teaching. Hargreaves and Evans (1997) have noted that "legislation only sets a framework for improvement; it is teachers who must make that improvement happens" (p. 3). Hence, a reform agenda cannot be successful without teachers' beliefs being oriented toward the reform agenda (Battista, 1994).

According to Johnson (2006), the emergence of a substantial body of research now referred to as teacher cognition (Borg, 2003a; Burns, 1996; Freeman, 2002; Farrell, 1999; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Woods, 1996) is the most significant advancement in the field of second language teacher education. Studies of teacher cognition have "helped capture the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers" (Johnson, 2006, p. 236). As Breen (1991) comments:

By uncovering the kinds of knowledge and beliefs which teachers hold and how they express these through the meanings that they give to their work, we may come to know the most appropriate support we can provide in in-service development (p. 232).

In Burns' (1996) opinion, such an endeavour will contribute to the development of "informed theories of practice" (p. 175).

The literature on educational innovations explains that the gap between intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum is due to the complexity of teaching. Teaching involves a variety of complex psychological and sociological processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986), and it is shaped by what teachers know, believe, and think (Borg, 2003a, 2006; 2009; Burns, 2009; Farrell & Kun, 2007) as well as the attitudes, expectations and motivation of the students. This implies that theoretical insights, no matter how sound they are, alone cannot help solve a simple practical problem. Studies by Burns (1990), Kumaravadivelu (1993), and Nunan (2003) have suggested that despite teachers' self-reported commitment to communicative language teaching, that commitment is rarely enacted in the classroom. As a language teacher and a language teacher educator, I have always asked myself the following questions: Why is classroom teaching so largely unaffected by the development in theory and research? Why is it difficult to take in the full meaning of theory without experience? Why is it difficult to resolve at the level of practice the tensions between teaching in the best ways possible and teaching to cover the prescribed curriculum content? The following statement from the Report by the National Institute of Education in the United States of America (1975) was really thought-provoking to me:

It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think.... To the extent that observed or intended teaching behaviour is "thoughtless", it makes no use of the human teacher's most unique attributes. In so doing, it becomes mechanical and might well be done by a machine. If, however, teaching is done and, in all likelihood, will continue to be done by human teachers, the question of relationships between thought and action becomes crucial. (p. 1)

Burns (1992, 1996), Yim (1993), Borg (1998a, 1998b) and Farrell (1999) are among researchers within the field of second language teaching (L2) that have acknowledged

the gap in the research agenda for L2 teaching due to a lack of attention to the teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching. Despite a global surge of interest in the study of teachers' beliefs and of their relationship to teachers' classroom practices (Borg, 2006), the number of studies in pertinent research domains of non-native English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers remains much smaller compared to the amount of literature about native-speaker English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers' beliefs in western countries (Borg, 2003a, 2006; Zeng & Murphy, 2007). Given the fact that non-native EFL teachers "face different challenges than those teachers whose subject matter [English] is their own first language" (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001, p.111), non-native EFL teachers whose social and cultural backgrounds in which they teach the target language are different, their beliefs about language teaching may not be similar to those of native speaker ESL teachers. It is, therefore, critical that this research gap be filled.

Regarding form-focused instruction, there is considerable controversy in the field of second/foreign language teaching as to whether the grammar of the target language should be explicitly taught to students, and if so, how? Arguments in this area have tended to be derived from theoretical explanations of language and language learning. Despite the controversy among academics, grammar teaching "has continued to be one of the mainstays in English language training worldwide" (Hinkel, 2002, p. 10). Until recently, little is known about non-native speaker teachers' beliefs and their actual practice in the area of grammar teaching. In Vietnam, Canh and Barnard (2009b) are the first (and the only one up till now) to study teachers' beliefs about grammar. However, the study was merely a questionnaire survey with a small number of Vietnamese teachers (N=29) at the university level. The attempt to occupy this research space together with the interest in understanding Vietnamese secondary school teachers' beliefs about grammar and their work in grammar teaching were instrumental in driving me to conduct this case study. The Vietnamese educational system, which is quite similar to what Fotos (2002) describes, "is controlled by a central agency that determines the curriculum to be taught and the textbooks to be used. ... In secondary schools the teaching of EFL is usually test driven, preparing

learners for the university entrance examinations” (p. 142). It is useful to explore how such a highly centralised system in a collectivist culture influences teachers’ beliefs and practices, particularly with reference to grammar teaching. The present case study, thus, complements other studies conducted elsewhere and adds to the body knowledge of second/ foreign language teachers’ beliefs in general, but more specifically, beliefs about form-focused instruction held by Vietnamese EFL teachers which to date have remained unexplored. The participants in this study, like a majority of Vietnamese upper secondary school EFL teachers, were working under a difficult, under-resourced circumstance, where they were inadequately paid and did not have easy access to expert knowledge about second language acquisition and professional development opportunities.

The overall aim of this study is to explore the beliefs about form-focused instruction held by a group of Vietnamese upper secondary school teachers (N=8) working in a specialised (elite) school, and the connection between their beliefs and practices. In particular, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- 1. What are the beliefs of secondary school teachers about form-focused instruction?*
- 2. What are the primary sources for these beliefs?*
- 3. To what extent are these beliefs reflected in their classroom teaching of grammar?*
- 4. What factors affect teachers’ transfer of their beliefs into classroom grammar teaching?*
- 5. What is the theoretical relationship between experience, knowledge, beliefs and practice?*

As this case study explores teachers’ beliefs and the connection between beliefs and practices, it is both exploratory and descriptive (Yin, 2003). The theoretical model that is adopted for the discussion of the data in this study are Burns’ (1996) interconnectivity of teacher beliefs involving the institutional focus, the classroom

focus, and the instructional focus. Although no generalisation of the findings of the present study was intended, transferability of the findings to other similar contexts is possible.

The thesis is organised as follows. After this introduction, which provides an overview of the research and its purpose, Chapter Two provides the information about the context of the study. It outlines the educational history of Vietnam and the current challenges embedded in its educational system. In particular, the chapter outlines English language teaching and English language teacher education in Vietnam. Chapter Three reviews the literature relevant to the focus of the study. It focuses on the literature on teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction and the connection between beliefs and practices, leading to the identification of a research gap which this thesis seeks to occupy. Chapter Four deals with the methodological choices for the study, specifying design, methods of data collection, data collection procedures, approaches to data coding, analysis and interpretation. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Six discusses the findings with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter Three. Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, summarises the study as a whole, and discusses the implications of the study both from a practical and theoretical lens. Limitations of the study are acknowledged, and suggestions for further research are made in this chapter, too.

Reflecting on the process of undertaking this investigation, I realise that I have learned some useful lessons about researching teachers in Vietnamese contexts, about how individual teachers are shaped by the institutions with which they have contact through their socialisation within their professional community (Levine, 1990), and about how to change teachers. In Vietnam, each school is a separate 'territory', which may not be fully accessible to those who are not 'owners of that territory'. Working in a culture which is characterised as "high power distance" (Hofstede, 1986), Vietnamese secondary school teachers do not like the idea of having their teaching scrutinised for fear of being negatively evaluated. However, once trust has been established they are really open in talking about their work. Limited access to

resources for professional development, which is added by their commitment to both professional work and family work, these teachers' beliefs about teaching are clearly shaped by their experiential knowledge and the shared practical discourse within their professional community. In order to change these teachers, teacher educators should take advantage of the collectivist, centralised institutional culture to help teachers first make their beliefs explicit in talk and action, then challenge them in the light of theory and research through critical reflection (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Richards & Farrell, 2005) so as to develop "a set of socially constructed facts" (Freeman, 1993, p. 495). This can be implemented through the teacher study group to be established in each school.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

“The social, institutional, instructional and physical settings in which teachers work have a major impact on their cognitions and practices” (Borg, 2006, p. 275). The present study is a case study conducted with a group of eight English language teachers working in the context of a Vietnamese upper secondary school. Thus, this chapter sets the study within its historical and educational context. The chapter first provides brief information about Vietnam and the historically significant changes in the country’s educational system without which an understanding of the present educational environment would be difficult. Then, it describes Vietnam’s current educational system as well as the educational challenges inherent in that system. This is followed by a historical account of English language education and related current issues, and a consideration of teacher education and English language teacher education in Vietnam. Finally, the chapter deals with a review of research on teachers and teaching, particularly in the area of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnamese secondary schools.

2.1. Vietnam: Country, People, and Culture

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country whose history dates back to BC 2879, when the first Vietnamese kingdom of Van Lang was established (Huong & Fry, 2004). The country was first colonized by the Chinese for almost one thousand years, from BC 111 to 939 AD, when Ngo Quyen defeated the Tong invaders and declared the country’s independence and set up the capital at Co Loa. However, during the following centuries, Vietnam was continually dominated by the Chinese until the mid-nineteenth century, when it was occupied by the French from 1858 to 1945. A few years later, the southern part of the country came under control of the United States of America until 1975. In such a historical and cultural context, it is undeniable that foreign cultures, especially Chinese culture, have had indelible

ideological, cultural and educational bearings on generations of Vietnamese learners and their learning styles.

Historically, intellectual activities in Vietnam reflected a blending of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (Huyen, 2002). Throughout the many-thousand-year-long history of Vietnam, these three doctrines were intertwined, simplified, and assimilated into Vietnamese animistic beliefs. The majority of the Vietnamese claim themselves as Buddhists, but they adopt the hierarchical principle of Confucianism as the moral and social code of conduct. Then, their view of the natural world is resting on Taoism whose basic principle is the avoidance of interference with nature. The governing Taoist doctrine is resignation and inaction, and therefore it promotes passivity, disinterest in scientific studies and a sense of fatalism. Such a moral and philosophical attitude greatly contributed to the spread of Buddhism and Confucianism in terms of their similar virtues of compassion, non-involvement, benevolence, charity, and love for one's fellow human beings. As Buddhism allied itself with Vietnamese indigenous animism, it quickly became popular with the peasantry after being brought into Vietnam by Indian Buddhist missionary monks, while Confucianism remained the ideology of the ruling class (Goodman, 2005). Vietnamese feudalist dynasties governed the country with two instruments of political legitimacy: indigenous ways of life and a heavily Sinicized system of politics and administration.

The first Vietnamese Confucian scholars were the Buddhist monks (Huyen, 2002), who, from 1010 to 1225, used the Buddhist pagodas to spread not only Buddhist teachings to prospective Buddhist monks but also Confucian philosophy to would-be civil servants of the administration. As a result, the Vietnamese view of the world, architecture, arts, moral code, aesthetic values, and educational philosophies and practices all bore a heavy resemblance to Confucian doctrines. Goodman (2005) has remarked that "The Vietnamese view of the world and how it worked, of family and society and the roles of its members, and of concepts of duty and virtue, all bore a heavy resemblance to Confucian interpretation of life" (p. 31).

Vietnam first encountered western cultures during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British and French traders and Christian missionaries. One of the most significant outcomes of such contacts was the Romanized Vietnamese script, which was developed by a French missionary, Alexandre de Rhodes, in the seventeenth century. This innovation enabled ordinary Vietnamese people to access written texts, thereby exerting a profound influence on education (Huong & Fry, 2004). The conquest by the French in 1858 marked the end of Confucianism as the State ideology in Vietnam though it was still used as a code of moral conduct by the Vietnamese. The French colonization, which lasted almost one century (1858-1954) with a short period of Japanese occupation (1940-1945), was ended with the American intervention, which resulted in the division of the country into two states, i.e., North Vietnam and South Vietnam, and a 20-year long war. The fall of the American-backed Southern Vietnam in 1975 brought about the reunification of the country, but the economy was heavily devastated. This, plus the Soviet-style economic management, made the country's economy completely stagnant. The economic renovation known as *doi moi*, or the adoption of a market economy, which started in 1986, breathed a new life into the economy (Canh, 2007). Recently, GDP growth increased 8.5 percent in 2006, 8.2 percent in 2007, and 8.5 percent in 2008, though Vietnam remains one of the most impoverished nations in the world. The key historical landmarks for Vietnam are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1.

Key Historical Landmarks of Vietnam

<i>Date</i>	<i>Key historical landmarks</i>
BC 2879	First Vietnamese kingdom of Van Lang established
111 BC – 938 AD	First period of Chinese colonisation
939 AD	Became independent from Chinese colonisation
1858-1945	French colonisation
1945	Gained independence from the French

1945-1954	Second independence war with the French
1954	Geneva Agreement signed; Vietnam divided into two states
1954-1975	Vietnam war with the United States of America
1975	Vietnam war ended; the country became reunified
1975-1979	Border wars with Cambodia in the south-west and China in the north
1986	Market economy adopted
1986-until now	Continued growth of GDP, but Vietnam remains impoverished

In brief, for historical reasons, Chinese and western influences on Vietnam's traditional culture and language, as reflected in the schooling system, literature and social mores, are considerable (Canh, 2007). Yet, "beneath the veneer of Chinese and Western thoughts, the indigenous culture has survived. Whereas foreign influence is unavoidable, nationhood, independence, unification and language preservation have always been uncompromising allegiances of the Vietnamese people" (Tuong, 2002, p 2).

2.2. Education in Vietnam

In any cultures and societies, there are attitudes to knowledge that emphasise its conservation or extension (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991). These attitudes form a continuum and vary within cultures and even within individuals in a specific culture. Yet, there are marked tendencies between cultures in their attitudes to, and beliefs about, knowledge, authority, and teaching-learning styles. At the conserving end of the attitude to knowledge continuum is the dominance of respect for written information and authoritative texts. Teachers play the role of transmitters of knowledge and models of morality and wisdom while students are expected to obey their teachers and to work as hard as possible to achieve correctness in their work rather than challenging or criticising their teachers. In contrast, at the extending end, students are encouraged to be critical of the existing knowledge and to get involved into the self-enquiry process so as to extend the existing knowledge and/or to

generate new knowledge. Teachers therefore play the role of advisers or facilitators. Located in the South East Asia, Vietnam shares with other South East Asian societies a highly collective culture characterised by high power distance (Hofstede, 1986). This culture shapes Vietnamese students' typical attitude to knowledge and authority and their beliefs about teaching and learning styles (Huong, 2000), which are characterised as teacher-centredness and low student participation. As a result, Vietnamese attitudes to knowledge seem to fall somewhere closer to the conserving end of the attitude to knowledge continuum (Huong, 2010).

As discussed in 2.1, Vietnamese educational philosophy and practice, for historical reasons, were largely rested on the Chinese Confucian ideology, which was reflected in the way Vietnamese parents, even the poorest, dreamed of their children passing the royal examinations. The examination-oriented, book-based, and teacher-centred education which emphasised rote-memorisation promoted a passive learning strategy on the part of the learners. Huyen (2002) describes the Vietnamese teaching and learning strategies in the old days as follows:

Very little attention was given to developing the critical spirit which was of no avail in a system based on the absolute respect of books. ...[As a result,] the philosopher, the scholar, are not men who are deep thinkers and with vast observation, but those who have read many books and retained many things. This exaggerated respect of books inevitably made old teachers transform their students into veritable receptacles. Committing to memory was an absolute priority...Written exercises were only aimed at consolidating the memorising of the formulas of the book. The students, due to being constantly in this passive role, became incapable of reflection and personal judgment. (p. 293)

The French colonisation at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century led to the establishment of the colonial education system which focused on practical training and on the acquisition of the French language to respond

to the extensive needs of the colonial government for low-paid civil servants. During most of the colonial period, traditional Confucian instruction continued to exist, as did Buddhist education provided for future monks, although the final official Confucian examinations were held in 1918. Like the Confucian educational system, the new French-style educational system remained elitist since it was accessible to only a small number of children of indigenous French *colons* who were trained to become functionaries in the colonial administration. Consequently, under the French colonialist education system, 95 percent of the Vietnamese people were illiterate (Ministry of Education and Training, 1995).

During the period of two Vietnams (1954-1975), North Vietnam followed the Soviet model of education which emphasised narrow specialization while South Vietnam adopted the American model of education which stressed the greater access and a broader and more practical curriculum. In the North, the school system was composed of nine (later ten) years of schooling in total (4 year primary, 3 year lower secondary, and 2 year upper secondary, and later 4-3-3). Education was organized by five- and one-year state plans and served the national demand for qualified labour. Various vocational secondary schools and training centres developed that provided personnel for lower-level careers in the state sector. Higher education was provided by highly specialised, small-enrolment universities, polytechnic universities, and colleges. Postgraduate education was mainly conducted in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. After graduation, students were directly transferred to diverse positions in the state sector. Meanwhile, in the South, a twelve-year system was promoted by the government. Vocational secondary schools, vocational training centres, and on-the-job training opportunities were established to serve the labour market. Universities, as well as colleges, developed on the American model.

Since 1975, when the country became reunified, the Vietnamese educational system has structurally been composed of five levels: pre-school, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and tertiary. Primary education, grades 1-5, starts at age 6. After finishing grade 5, students go directly to lower secondary school, grades 6-9, without

the need to pass any formal examination. However, those who have completed the lower secondary school have to pass a selection examination in order to enter the upper secondary level, grades 10-12. Then they must pass a formal national examination at the end of grade 12 to earn an upper secondary diploma. It is important to note that English is a compulsory examination subject at this level for all students.

At the upper secondary level, there are specialised schools especially for competitively selected gifted pupils as a Soviet legacy. At present, Vietnam has 76 specialised upper secondary schools with the total number of students being about 50,000 or 1.74 per cent of the entire student body enrolling at the upper secondary school level nationwide (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005). Almost every province of the country has one specialised upper secondary school which is considered to be the provincial centre of educational excellence. In these schools, students are placed on different subject-streams according to their choice, e.g. English stream, history stream, maths stream, etc. In these streams, students are given more instructional hours for their specialising subject, and teachers are entitled to use supplementary materials external to the mandated textbook. Because both students and teachers have to pass a highly competitive screening test to be admitted in these schools, both groups are more motivated and more academically competent than those in other ordinary schools. So, English language stream students are assumed to be better at English than students in other streams. Despite the better teacher quality and better student quality, educational approaches employed in these specialised schools are not significantly different from those prevailing in other ordinary schools regarding the transmission of factual information and examination-orientation. One of the pressures on these specialised schools is how to maintain the highest rate of examination pass and prizes in both national and international merit competitions. The present study is based on one such school.

Tertiary education is accessible to those who have successfully completed upper secondary education and passed a national entrance examination, which is organized

in four Groups A, B, C, and D with different examinations depending on what academic field the students choose to study (see Table 2. 2.) This means that although English is a compulsory examination for school graduation, it is more important to only those who are going to take Group D examinations. However, since this category of university comprises approximately one third of all universities, the washback effect on schools – especially the specialised schools – is intense.

Table 2.2.

National University Entrance Examinations Categories

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Examinations to be taken</i>
A (Maths, Sciences, Technologies, Economics Teacher Education, etc.)	Maths, Physics, Chemistry
B (Maths, Medical Education, Pharmacy, Biological Studies, Economics, Teacher Education, etc.)	Maths, Chemistry, Biology
C (Teacher education, Journalism, Social Sciences and Humanities, Literature, etc.)	Vietnamese Literature, History, Geography
D (Teacher education, Economics, Laws, Social Sciences and Humanities, etc.)	Maths, Vietnamese Literature, Foreign Language (English, French, Chinese, Russian, or Japanese)

In the contemporary Vietnamese society, education remains to be a ‘ticket to ride’, or a mechanism for upward social mobility. The psychology of many, perhaps most,

Vietnamese parents that their children should study as much and reach high a level as possible in the formal education system, preferably graduating from university. There is, therefore, a great focus on swotting to achieve high grades in competitive examinations. The emphasis on one-off exams that function as gatekeeper to higher educational opportunities strongly influences the attitudes of student knowledge and learning styles. They try as hard as they can to memorise as much as possible the factual knowledge in order to 'return' that knowledge at the examinations. For many of them, university entrance exams are really intimidating because their futures greatly rely on the exam results. The fact that only 10 percent of the age group population are annually admitted into colleges or universities (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005), despite the considerable increase in the number of both state-owned and private universities and colleges in recent years, imposes stressful pressure not only on the students but also on the teachers whose performance is assessed in terms of the students' examination pass rate (Canh, 2000).

Such an examination-oriented educational practice negatively affects the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, the common public discourse about education in Vietnam is that educational quality is low, "both in terms of knowledge and [teaching] methodology, especially regarding the practical ability and application [on the part of the students]" (Kieu & Chau, 2000, p. 236). The curriculum emphasises so greatly the provision of theoretical information that there is very little space for practical experience. It is said that the Vietnamese school curriculum is extremely voluminous (Duggan, 2001; Ministry of Education and Training, 2001; Ng & Van, 2006). As in the past, learners emphasise repetition, recitation, memorisation of factual information from the textbook while they are uncritical of the information they receive from their teachers or from the textbook. As Chuong (1994) has observed, in Vietnamese schools "classroom instruction is not a dialogue, but the imparting of knowledge by the teacher. The student's job is to internalize what has been taught, regardless of its usefulness" (p. 14). Tuong (2002) remarks that Vietnamese learners (including those from specialised schools):

are very traditional in their learning styles: they are quiet and attentive, good at memorizing and following directions, reluctant to participate (though knowing the answers), shy away from oral skills and from group interaction; they are meticulous in note-taking; they go 'by the book' and rely on pointed information, and regard the teacher as the complete source of knowledge. (p.4)

In a similar vein, Oanh (2006) has observed that:

The most common type of Vietnamese classroom is one in which the students sit in a fixed row in class, try to understand what the teacher and textbook say, and then repeat this information as correctly as possible in an examination. Teachers provide information for the students to learn by heart for examinations. The teacher or the book gives out knowledge to the students, like pouring water from a so-called full pitcher (the teacher full of knowledge) into a so-called empty glass (the student's mind). In such a context, the prevailing model of teaching and learning is 'teachers teach and students learn.' In class, students are expected to listen rather than participate actively. Therefore, the knowledge learned is limited, and the students are not motivated to learn beyond the exam. (p. 35).

Thus, the discourse of classroom participation is teacher-centred rote learning. Born in this learning culture:

from the beginning, Vietnamese students are taught to view their teachers as the embodiment of knowledge, and the authority and control that teachers exercise can deter students from freely expressing their opinions. In this firmly established teacher-centred system, it is often offensive for students to contradict the teacher's point of view. (Cam Le, 2005, p. 2)

This classroom discourse, which is characterised as “teacher volubility and student taciturnity” (Chick, 1996, p. 27), may be rooted in the Vietnamese collectivist culture where the distribution of social power and knowledge between teachers and students is asymmetrical. Perhaps, that classroom discourse can be evident in many other societies throughout the world (Chick, 1996, p. 27), but it is predominant in Vietnamese classrooms.

In Vietnam, the textbooks for primary and secondary schools are commissioned and mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), which therefore prescribes what is taught, what is to be learned, what is assessed, and how much time teachers should spend on the delivery of instruction. Put simply, the textbook becomes the curriculum, and it is understandable that instruction is largely, if not completely, textbook-driven. In fact, teachers experience tremendous pressure to finish the entire syllabus within the prescribed classroom time. A common phrase used by Vietnamese teachers of all subjects is ‘fear of the lesson plan burnt,’ or *cháy giáo án*, meaning leaving the syllabus unfinished when the bell goes. Such pressure prevents teachers from being flexible in adapting the textbook to the classroom situation (Duggan, 2001), thereby making them “considerably reluctant to reorganise the curriculum and prefer[ing] to systematically follow the textbooks in order to avoid any criticism by colleagues and authorities” (Saito, Tsukui, & Tanaka, 2008, p.98). This is largely attributed to the Vietnamese tradition of strong centralisation from which teachers have learned “to follow rules established by the ministry and organise their behaviour accordingly” (Saito et al., 2008, p. 98).

2.3. English Language Education

“Vietnam’s linguistic history reflects its political history” (Denham, 1992, p. 61). Although it was taught in Vietnamese schools as early as the late nineteenth century during the French colonialism, English was not popular in the country until the late 1980s when the economic reform started. The new economic reform paved the way for the influx of foreign investments in Vietnam. This, in turn, resulted in the so-

called ‘English language fever.’ “For the first time in the country’s many-thousand-year-long history, English emerged as the most important foreign language, which was chosen by most students” (Canh, 2007, p. 172). As Shapiro (1995) has observed, “More English language books became available in the country and a greater desire for specialised study of English became apparent as more Vietnamese desired these language skills for specific work environments” (p. 8). According to Anh (1997):

The recognition of English as ... the most important foreign language is reflected in the removal in the early 1990s of a restraint previously imposed on secondary and tertiary education institutions to teach a more or less balanced number of students in each of the four officially recognised foreign languages – English, French, Russian, and German. Students are now free to choose any of the foreign languages offered in the curriculum. The ... result of this removal of the ‘foreign language quota’ is that there has been an overwhelming rise in the number of students choosing to learn English to complete the compulsory foreign language component in the curriculum. (p. 11)

The rapidly increasing demand for English language learning caused a serious problem of a severe shortage of teachers of English. Although more foreign language colleges were set up to provide pre-service teacher training, and hundreds of pre-service teachers of English graduated from these colleges every year, demand exceeded supply because many graduates preferred seeking more lucrative employment in the joint-venture or foreign-owned corporate sectors. To address this problem, off-campus *tai chuc* (extension) English language courses were offered in provinces by foreign language colleges to those who failed to qualify in the national university entrance examinations. Many of these courses were not properly delivered, and quality control was not implemented. After completing the training program with a Bachelor’s Degree, these extension students found jobs as English language teachers in their local secondary schools. The teacher quality was therefore low in terms of both language proficiency and pedagogical skills (Canh, 2007; Hiep, 2000a).

English language education in Vietnam may, therefore, be characterized as an unsystematized patchwork with a lack of an effective secondary-through-university pipeline. As a result, Vietnamese people's English ability remains limited after several years' study of English both in the secondary school and in the university (Canh, 2007; Huong, 2010). The ineffectiveness of English language education in Vietnam is largely attributed to two major factors: (i) lack of a pool of well-trained teaching staff; and (ii) lack of support in terms of adequate intensity of instruction and school-based supplementary resources (Canh, 2007). The common public view is that the majority of secondary school teachers need to improve both their linguistic competence and their teaching skills to develop the ability of their students to communicate effectively in English .

Several years ago, three articles were published for an international readership (G. Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Lewis & McCook, 2002) which expressed reservations about the readiness of school teachers in Vietnam to adopt a communicative approach and the voices of Vietnamese teachers have remained largely unreported, other than in a few unpublished theses (e.g. G. Ellis, 1994; McCook, 1998), and in concerns raised in the local English-language teacher's magazine, *Teachers Edition*, now sadly defunct. It seems that although Vietnamese teachers of English hold strong beliefs about the value of communicative language teaching (CLT) they have difficulty translating those beliefs into their classroom practice because of contextual variables such as student motivation, large classes, and teachers' lack of confidence in using and teaching communicative English (Canh, 2000; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Hiep, 2007).

As noted in Section 2.2 above, it has been commonly observed that the pedagogy in the English language classrooms in Vietnam models the hierarchy of first listening to the teacher, then repetition, then copying linguistic models provided by the teacher on the chalkboard (Kennett & Knight, 1999; Canh, 2000; Hiep, 2000a). Such an analytical learning and teaching style informs both the teacher and learners that it is

safe to learn and memorise rules, and limits other types of practice activities. Other factors militating against the development of communicative development are the large class sizes (between 40 and 105) of mixed-level students, the lack of conducive facilities, such as flexible seating and consistent power supply, and the difficulties of testing communicative competence though there has not been any empirical research into these issues. Bock (2000) concludes that Vietnam “should produce its own research on the usefulness of CLT in attaining its educational goals” (p.28) before embarking on widespread adoption. A similar point is made by another author after considering the importance to curricular innovation of context, learners’ motivation, and learning styles: “modern teaching methods should be applied with a close and careful consideration of the cultural values of Vietnam” (Hiep, 2000b, p. 23). The need for cultural sensitivity was also emphasised by a Vietnamese teacher trainer (Le, 2004). It has been reported that, despite the strong promotion of CLT, the lack of appropriate in-service professional development meant that “teachers are generally incapable of teaching English communicatively in their real-world classrooms. Instead, they spend most of their lesson time explaining abstract grammar rules and guiding their students in choral readings” (Canh, 2002, p. 33). That many teachers do not wish to change their methods has been reported in a survey by Tomlinson and Dat (2004, p. 217), more than half of whose respondents did not wish to participate in intervention for change, and some refused to believe in the learners’ willingness to participate and their potential to express themselves fluently in English. Such findings have been supported in the study of 100 Vietnamese university students (Trang & Baldauf, 2009), more than 90 percent of whom had studied English for at least eight years before completing a survey relating to causes of demotivation for learning English. “The largest source of demotives was related to teachers. ... And within the four demotive categories related to teachers, teaching methods provided the largest source of demotives” (Trang & Baldauf, 2009, p.100). A case study conducted very recently by Canh and Barnard (2009a) in the context of the new communication-oriented English curriculum shows that teachers emphasised reproduction of knowledge instead of creating opportunities for pupils to use the target language for genuine communication. They focused on explaining the rules of grammar in

Vietnamese and placed their emphasis on the extraction of explicit information provided in the textbook.

Such observation further justifies what previous researchers have found. For example, Bock (2000) reports after a study of the implementation of CLT by expatriate teachers in Vietnamese universities and language centres that students were not interested in achieving communicative competence or working in groups, being more motivated to pass examinations – sometimes referred to as ‘required’ motivation (Warden & Lin 2000). Tomlinson and Dat (2004) in a survey of 300 intermediate-level EFL adult learners in Vietnam, find that Vietnamese students seemed to be quiet and reluctant to express themselves. They preferred choral answering of display questions rather than referential questions. Also, they viewed grammar as an indispensable component of their English language course, feeling that “the teaching of grammar can be linked to both intellectual and affective needs” (p. 217). However, Tomlinson and Dat (2004) also found that students had a negative attitude towards lengthy grammar presentation and mechanical practice of grammar. Oanh and Hien (2006) studied the Vietnamese EFL university undergraduates and found that memorisation was viewed by both the teachers and the students as a learning strategy that helps students to gain accuracy, fluency and self-confidence. Students’ emphasis on memorisation of grammatical rules, grammatical accuracy, mechanical drills, and repetition has been justified further by many researchers (e.g., Bernat, 2004; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004; Oanh & Hien, 2006; Hiep, 2007).

In an attempt to raise the present quality of teaching and learning English, a few years ago, the Ministry of Education and Training officially institutionalised a new English curriculum, which states that “communicative skills are the goal of the teaching of English at the secondary school while formal knowledge of the language serves as the means to the end” (2006, p. 6). The 35-week curriculum is prescribed for all grades and school types nation-wide from Grade 6 through Grade 12, with a weekly class time of 135 minutes, split into three lessons of 45 minutes each. In order to operationalise the new curriculum, a set of textbooks was locally written and

effectively constitutes the national English curriculum. Although the new textbook was introduced in 2002 starting from Grade 6, the new curriculum was not officially approved until 2006.

A significant characteristic of the new curriculum is the promotion of “learner-centred, communicative task-based” pedagogy (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, p. 14). which encourages students to engage in thinking, high in-class participation, and problem-solving. However, the new curriculum provides neither explanation of what these technical terms mean nor the guidance on how to implement this pedagogy in the classroom. The new curriculum is operationalised in a set of new textbooks (students’ book and teacher’s book) for each grade. The textbook is structured following a uniform format. Each unit is divided into five lessons (with each lesson being prescribed to be delivered in one 45-minute class period), i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, and the language focus. The last lesson emphasises pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Simply put, the new curriculum seeks to integrate a grammar component into a CLT curriculum with the underlying assumption that teachers will focus on developing students’ communicative competence in English with CLT methods while teaching grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary separately (see Appendix H for a sample textbook unit).

After a few years of institutionalisation of the new curriculum, a formative evaluation undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Training shows that the implementation of the new curriculum has proved to be difficult as many administrators, educators and teachers remain resistant to change. The Report further specifies that a majority of teachers remain overdependent on the textbook and the teacher’s guide, without any attempt to adapt the teaching content to local contexts and to the students’ cognitive ability (*Giao duc & Thoi dai Newspaper*, September 22, 2009). It is, therefore, both critical and urgent to explore the beliefs that underpin teachers’ teaching behaviours in order to understand teachers’ resistance to change, thereby devising a more appropriate approach to teacher professional development in regard to curriculum reform. This requires an in-depth study using multiple methods

of data collection because teachers' beliefs often remain at the tacit level and are "often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (Kagan, 1992, p. 65).

2.4. Teacher Education and Teacher Development

In Vietnam, teachers are trained at either teacher training colleges (3-4 years) or universities (4 years). Most of the pre-service teachers enrolling in teacher training colleges or universities are female, and therefore, more than 80 percent of the practising teachers are female (Hamano, 2008). This female proportion is even higher among English language teachers. During the training period, student teachers have to complete three different strands of knowledge to earn enough credits for qualification: i) foundation knowledge; ii) subject-matter knowledge (English linguistics, i.e. phonology, grammar, semantics, and discourse analysis, and the four macro-skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing); and iii) professional knowledge (teaching methodology and a six-week practicum in the final semester before graduation). The whole teacher training programme offered by teacher training universities consists of 210 credits (one credit for 15 hours of instruction), of which 33-36 credits (16-18%) go to professional knowledge and 80 credits (38%) go to foundation knowledge such as educational psychology, Ho-Chiminhism, Marxism, etc. In the practicum, student teachers are mandated to teach a very small number of hours under the supervision and mentorship of practicing school teachers who play the roles of supervisors, evaluators and assessors of the student teachers' teaching practice. These experienced teachers, however, receive no training in mentoring skills, and as a result they assess the practicum idiosyncratically (Ngoc, 2010). After graduation, these student teachers are qualified to teach in secondary schools. Currently, Vietnam has a cadre of 62,000 English language teachers teaching at all levels of education from primary to tertiary.

Basically, teacher education in Vietnam remains strongly influenced by the positivist paradigm, which is described by Johnson (2006):

L2 teacher education has long been structured around the assumption that teachers could learn about the content they were expected to teach (language) and teaching practices (how best to teach it) in their teacher education program, observe and practice in the teaching practicum, and develop pedagogical expertise during the induction years of teaching. (p. 238)

As described earlier, a major feature of Vietnamese society is the emphasis on formal qualifications and there is a very strong tradition of academic scholarship. This means that courses for teachers include a considerable amount of theoretical study and are taught and assessed in a fairly traditional manner with little attention being paid to teaching methods (Hamano, 2008, p. 402).

In spite of the recognised inadequacy and irrelevance of preservice training (Kennett & Knight, 1999), after graduation, Vietnamese teachers do not have easy access to professional development (Canh, 2002; Hiep, 2007) on account of both cultural and technical factors. Culturally, they are not accustomed to dialogue, and hence, they “are unaware of how to exchange their ideas in a democratic and dialogical manner with their colleagues” (Saito et al., 2008, p.100) in professional teacher meetings. Technically, access to academic and professional resources which help them to broaden their knowledge is quite limited while they have to suffer the burden of paperwork, which is really stressful to them. In Vietnam, secondary school teachers are, according to the regulations by the Ministry of Education and Training, mandated to observe other teachers in the school regularly for 18 lessons every academic year. Although there may be no post-observation dialogues, teachers are likely to acquire others’ teaching methods unconsciously. In addition, throughout the school year, any teacher can be observed and evaluated by the ‘inspectors,’ who are also experienced teachers assigned by the Provincial Department of Education and Training. These inspectors assess teachers’ classroom processes against fixed criteria or norms developed by the Ministry of Education and Training. However, these evaluation criteria fail to acknowledge that knowledge, understanding and practices are

interdependent and that individual competencies interact. Instead, it is based on the behaviourist assumption that learning occurs with a quantitative increase in student's knowledge, and that teaching is about presenting information or transmitting structured knowledge, often specified in the course content, from the teacher to the students. From this paradigm, teachers are assessed as being effective if they are able to demonstrate their content knowledge of the subject and to utilise different teaching strategies to deliver their knowledge to the students (Nga & Williamson, 2009). In addition, while peer-observation is mandated, teachers' attitude towards classroom observation by 'external observers' or 'important people' is not quite positive. This is because observation by these people tends to be subjective, judgmental, and impressionistic. It is the observers who have the final say on whether the teaching is right or wrong. This makes external observers unwelcome.

In the context where teachers have very limited access to expert theories of practice, or published scholarship and research, and have to rely largely on their own and others' experiential knowledge like Vietnam, this evaluation system may encourage "a culture of sameness in which practitioners are thought to share the common task of teaching according to a common standard" (Phelan, Sawa, Barlow, Hurlock, Irvine, Rogers & Myrick, 2006, p. 176). That evaluation system is historically embedded in the local context (Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Li, 1998; Probyn, 2001; Simon-Maeda, 2004), and may, therefore, exert influence on not only how teachers teach but also what they think about language teaching, including form-focused instruction.

For the English language teachers, this challenge is exacerbated by the lack of opportunities to use English outside the school, resulting in the lack of confidence in using English for communication (Hiep, 2007). It is not uncommon in Vietnamese secondary schools that the more experienced teachers grow in their career, the more disadvantaged they become in terms of English-language competence. Once they find themselves unable to use English successfully for communicative purposes, they tend to find security in textbook-based and rule-based approaches to teaching (Canh, 2002).

The teachers' linguistic problems are further evidenced in Moore's (2006) report on the problems he faced in the role of an applied linguistics lecturer in an off-shore postgraduate TESOL programme in Vietnam due to the language proficiency level of the participants who were local practicing teachers.

To some extent, in-service training, which includes summer training, qualification improvement training, demonstration lesson training, and in-school training, has been provided by different stakeholders such as universities, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Provincial/ District Department of Education and Training, and international donors. However, like the pre-service training, it is primarily carried out in lecture format, and teachers are told things such as what student-centred learning means, rather than "how to implement it in actual lessons" because Vietnamese teacher trainers are "strongly theory-oriented" (Hamano, 2008, p. 406).

A number of international providers have also been involved in providing teacher in-service training for Vietnam, particularly for English language teaching. Usually, teachers are sent to participate in this training once a year during the summer vacation. The length of the training courses varies from a couple of days to a couple of weeks (Hiep, 2002), and the training approach is dominantly transmission, using a cascade approach, because of time constraints and the large number of teacher participants. A cascade approach means only a few key teachers from each province are invited. They are expected to pass on the knowledge they have received from the training to their colleagues in the schools in their province. Hiep (2002) describes the impact of these in-service workshops on teachers' classroom teaching as follows:

It is often the case that teachers, after having obtained their knowledge of communicative language teaching through a short-term workshop or training course, attempt to use the methodology in their classes. However, their attempts are formulaic in that they strictly adhere to the processes that they had recently learned at the workshop. When they realise that not all of the ideas of the new methodology can work for their students, they lose

confidence and decide not to use any of it. As a result, many teachers develop a belief that communicative methods are only applicable in other countries, where the teaching and learning contexts are different. (p. 37)

International providers include the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the British Council, the UK Department for International Development, etc. Although all providers share the same objective of providing support to teacher training in response to the introduction of the new curriculum, there is an obvious lack of coherence in terms of the training agenda. The most influential project, in terms of teaching methodology, is the ELTTP project run by the Department for International Development. The model of teaching promoted in this project is Presentation-Practice-Production (Byrne, 1976) or PPP for short. Since the PPP is recommended in the Ministry's training manual, it has become part of teachers' classroom repertoire.

It is not uncommon that in-service teacher training programmes in Vietnam are fundamentally based on the assumption that teacher change is simply a linear process, which is rooted in changes in teachers' professional knowledge. Therefore, training programmes tend to overemphasise the simple transmission of new techniques of teaching different language skills and language components such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc. Partly because of time constraints, little attention is paid to the investigation of the beliefs teachers bring to the training venues, and even less to considering the development of full understanding of pedagogical principles, which can serve as a catalyst for teachers to change their own misconceptions or inappropriate beliefs about language teaching. This traditional approach to teacher development has downplayed the role of engaging teachers in such self-initiated professional developments as self-monitoring of their teaching, initiating action research projects, etc. (Richards & Farrell, 2005). In addition, while teacher research has been acknowledged as being functional in enabling teachers to "generate new understandings and knowledge" (Freeman, 1998, p. 6), it has "not been accepted as a normal part of the teaching process" and "ordinary teachers appear not to think that

they themselves can play a key role in doing research and generating knowledge” (Khanh & An, 2005, p. 4). Reasons for the low status of teacher research include lack of time, lack of research experience, and lack of theoretical knowledge (Khanh & An, 2005).

2.5. Summary

English language education in Vietnam cannot be understood thoroughly and accurately outside the general historical and educational landscape of the country. This chapter has provided a contextual analysis of Vietnamese educational system, English language education and teacher education in the country. It has also presented a historical review of the external influences on Vietnamese attitudes to knowledge and teaching-learning styles. It is evident from the chapter that despite exposure to outside influences during and after the period of colonisation, the Vietnamese belief in students’ unquestioning acceptance of information presented by their teachers and the textbooks remains at the core of the Vietnamese education system. Vietnamese teachers are considered indispensable in the learning process, to the point where they may be “overly concerned with students and colleagues’ expectations, and worried about a loss of control and a loss of respect if they attempt to make alterations to what they are doing” (Hiep, 2000b, p. 23). Vietnamese educational philosophy, which is similar to that of many other countries in Asia and probably elsewhere in the world, places the teacher in a position of absolute authority over his/her students but subject to the authority of the Provincial Department of Education and Training and the Ministry of Education and Training. This philosophy lies at the conserving end of the attitude to knowledge continuum, and is in contrast to western philosophy, which is at the extending end of the continuum where students are encouraged to think and learn independently, as well as to develop analytical and questioning abilities. The word for ‘to learn’ in Vietnamese has no other meaning but ‘to imitate’ (Mack & Lewis, 2003, p. 32). In *the Great Dictionary of Vietnamese* edited by Y (1998), the word *học* [learn] is defined as “*thu nhận kiến thức, luyện tập kỹ năng được truyền giảng hoặc từ sách vở*” [receive knowledge, practice skills, transmitted or from books].

The chapter has also demonstrated some unique features of Vietnamese English language teaching and learning contexts as well as those of teacher education and teacher development in the country. As discussed in the chapter, English is taught largely for the examinations, and this may affect teachers' beliefs about language teaching in general, and grammar in particular.

In such a sociocultural context, this case study sets out to unlock the teachers' beliefs which serve as a "lens through which they view" (Richards, 1998, p. 1) themselves as teachers, their own teaching practices, their students, the content they are teaching, and the classrooms and schools in which they work. Despite the recognised importance of the study on teachers' beliefs (e.g. Borg, 2006, 2009; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burns, 1996; Farrell, 2009), this research avenue has not been well-established in Vietnam. This study, with a focus on teachers' beliefs and practices in form-focused instruction, is an attempt to gain insights into teachers' practical knowledge, which I believe is so crucial to decision-making regarding teacher education and teacher development (e.g. Farrell, 2007, 2009) in Vietnam. According to researchers and scholars (e.g. Borg, 2003a; Freeman, 2002), teacher cognition, of which teacher beliefs are one dimension, is complex, dynamic, and contextualised. Burns (1996) argues that the social and institutional context in which teaching is practised should be one consideration in researching teachers' beliefs. Borg (2003a) recommends further research on "the impact of contextual factors on the instructional decisions teachers make in teaching grammar" (p. 105). The macro-contextual information provided in this chapter establishes a sociocultural framework for the present case study of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding form-focused instruction in a Vietnamese upper secondary school. An understanding of the context in which teachers work is essential in examining teachers' beliefs and the implementation of those beliefs in the classroom (Borg, 2006; Burns, 1996; Farrell & Lim, 2005).

The next chapter will review the literature on second language teachers' beliefs about language learning, and particularly about form-focused instruction, with a view to creating a theoretical framework for this case study.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the literature on teachers' beliefs is to be reviewed in an attempt to uncover the relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom actions. Section 3.1 reviews major perspectives on form-focused instruction in second language acquisition research and second language teaching methodology. Then, Section 3.2 presents an operational definition of the basic concepts to be used in the study, particularly the distinction between teachers' beliefs and teachers' knowledge, including a presentation of factors that shape teachers' beliefs. Previous studies on second language teacher beliefs and practices are reviewed and summarized in Section 3.3. The next section, Section 3.4, reviews studies on teachers' beliefs and practices in form-focused instruction, which is the focus of the present study. The final section, Section 3.5, summarizes the chapter and highlights the research gap in which the present study aims to situate itself.

3. 1. Grammar and Form-Focused Instruction

3. 1. 1. Role of Grammar in Second Language Acquisition

For the purpose of this study, grammar may be defined “as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning” (Ur, 1988, p. 4). The teaching of grammar has always occupied a central place in foreign/second language teaching in general and in English language teaching in particular. Therefore, the teaching of grammar has been one of the long-standing debates in the field.

The teaching of grammar is traditionally defined as presenting and explaining grammar followed by grammar practice activities (Ur, 1996), or just presenting and practising grammar (Hedge, 2000). Ellis (2006) criticises this as an “overtly narrow definition of grammar teaching” (p. 84). He then proposes that:

Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it. (Ellis, 2006, p. 84)

Like the variation in the ways that grammar teaching is defined, attitudes towards formal instruction are different swings of the pendulum. The most fundamental question concerning grammar instruction is whether grammar should be taught, and if it should be taught, when and how it should be taught. Put another way, the controversy over the role of grammar in second and foreign language teaching has centred around the argument whether explicit grammar knowledge supports or inhibits second language acquisition, or whether there is an interface between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2006). Regarding this issue, there are three different positions: the non-interface position (e.g. Krashen, 1985; Terrell, 1977; Truscott, 1996, 1999), the interface position (e.g. DeKeyser, 1998; Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Lyster, 2004) and the weak interface position (e.g. Ellis, 1993). Advocates of the first position argue that formal grammar instruction is of limited use, therefore unnecessary (e.g. Krashen, 1982, 1985; Terrell, 1977). For these scholars, if second language learners are sufficiently exposed to rich and varied comprehensible input of the target language, they will develop their interlanguage and gradually acquire the target language through a process of hypothesis making and testing. Krashen (1993) argues that explicit grammar instruction can at best have "peripheral and fragile" effects since explicit grammatical knowledge about structures and rules for their use may never turn into implicit knowledge underlying unconscious language comprehension and production. Echoing Krashen's view, Truscott (1996, 1999), while arguing against the impact of grammar correction on second language (L2) acquisition, claims that the effects of explicit grammar instruction are short-lived and superficial because it fails to bring about what he calls "genuine knowledge of language" (Truscott, 1999, p. 120). He further claims that the benefits of forms-focused instruction can only be seen in learners' performance of discrete-point tests which measure only explicit metalinguistic knowledge, not the

learners' ability to use the target language for communicative purposes. This view is shared by Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2002), who point out that:

while there is substantial evidence that focus-on-forms instruction results in learning as measured by discrete-point language tests (e.g., the grammar test in the TOEFL), there is much less evidence to show that it leads to the kind of learning that enables learners to perform the targeted form in free oral production (e.g. in a communicative task). (p. 421)

In a similar vein, methodologists such as Long and Crookes (1992), Long and Porter (1985), Pica (1987) and Wenden (1991) have all asserted that the naturalistic acquisition of grammar rules results from the negotiation of meaning during communicative interaction. However, studies conducted by Harley and Swain (1984) and Swain (1985) on French immersion students revealed that ample exposure to comprehensible input is not sufficient for the attainment of a high level of communicative competence.

Critics of the non-interface position, which supports a zero option for grammar, base their critique on the argument that if mere exposure to comprehensible input and meaningful interaction is sufficient, the intensity needed for naturalistic acquisition of grammar rules is unclear. "In cases where students' only exposure to the language is a few hours of classroom instruction per week, communicative approaches proved to be of limited value" (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997, p. 238). Schulz (1991) has also observed that "time available in a conventional foreign language program ... is simply inadequate, if we hope to have them develop any meaningful, lasting communicative proficiency" (p. 22). Similarly, DeKeyser (1998) suggests that when learners are given ample opportunities for meaningful practice, explicit knowledge becomes implicit knowledge and as a result, explicit focus on form instruction leads to significantly greater short term-learning than does implicit learning for simple L2 rules. Faerch (1986) notes the cognitive dimension of implicit versus explicit learning of knowledge of grammar rules. Taking a different stance from Krashen, Faerch

suggests that grammar rules can help to support foreign language learning, even when the goal is fluency. He argues that learners often feel hampered by explicit knowledge, not because they possess this type of knowledge but because they experience social sanctions like error correction by teachers, following their ‘misusing’ this knowledge. Thus, if grammar is taught in a secure, non-threatening, and motivating classroom, it is not necessarily the case that their explicit knowledge will hamper their communication. Researchers and applied linguists who are against the non-interface position have reported ample empirical evidence to support the role of explicit grammar instruction. For example, Ellis (1994) and Nassaji (1999) have confirmed that learners who receive formal instruction learn the language faster than those who do not, and that a mere focus on meaning fails to enable learners to produce adequate language competence. This view is further confirmed by Pica (2005), who observes a wide range of content-based classrooms where the target language is English and attention in the class is directed to meaning rather than form, and finds that students’ language production is “fluent, but linguistically inaccurate” (p. 343). Very recently, Ellis (2006) states that there “is ample evidence to demonstrate the teaching of grammar works” (p. 102). From a practitioner’s perspective, Azar (2007) maintains that:

One important aspect of grammar teaching is that it helps learners discover the nature of language, i.e., that language consists of predictable patterns that make what we say, read, hear and write intelligible. Without grammar, we would have only individual words or sounds, pictures, and body expressions to communicate meaning. Grammar is the weaving that creates the fabric. (p. 2)

Referring to her practical experience as a language teaching practitioner, Azar goes on to argue that students without a good knowledge of grammar will have difficulty in both academic reading and writing because they cannot understand how a sentence is structured and how sentences are coherently and cohesively linked to create a text. She observes that the students in her writing class who were taught grammar had an

advantage over those students who were not taught grammar. This view supports what Mulroy (2003) has said about the relationship between knowledge of grammar (linguistic competence) and ability to use the language (linguistic performance),

Sentences always have and always will consist of clauses with subjects and predicates and words that fall into classes fairly well described as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Individuals who understand these concepts have a distinct advantage over others where the use of language is involved – and that means everywhere. (p. 118)

However, researchers have also found that explicit grammar instruction can affect second language acquisition only if conditions such as the careful selection and sequence of rules and the determination of learners' readiness have been satisfied (see Ellis, 1994; Robinson, 1996; Fotos, 1994). As Fotos (1994) has noted:

A compelling body of evidence has accumulated recently supporting the position that formal instruction on language properties is related to the subsequent acquisition of those properties. These findings present a dilemma for many teachers who have become committed to the use of communicative approaches to language learning, wherein learners are given a rich variety of comprehensible input, and teacher-fronted grammar instruction is generally omitted. (p. 323)

Talking about the grammar-communication dichotomy, Fotos (2005) recommends that “[I]t is time to take the position that a combination of grammar instruction and the use of communicative activities provide an optimum situation for effective L2 learning” (p. 668). Sharing this view, other researchers suggest the weak interface position, which claims that the conversion of explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge is conditioned by the learners' readiness to acquire the target structure by getting involved in a number of acquisitional processes such as noticing and noticing

the gap (Schmidt, 1990). Ellis (2006) argues that “the weak interface position lends support to techniques that induce learners to attend to grammatical features. It has been used to provide a basis for consciousness-raising tasks that require learners to derive their own explicit grammar rules from data they are provided with” (p. 97). This leads to the birth of the form-focused instruction movement in the early 1990s, which advocates a combination of a focus on meaning and a focus on forms (Doughty, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Harley, 1998; Hinkel, 2002; Lightbown, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1991; White, 1991; White, Spada, Lightbown & Ranta, 1991). In a form-focused lesson, emphasis is on meaning, but learners are encouraged to notice forms in the input as well in order to maintain meaningful communication. Savignon (2002) explains that “while involvement in communicative events is seen as central to language development, this involvement necessarily requires attention to form” (p. 7). Folse (2009) elaborates this view in the following argument:

In learning a language, I think vocabulary is the single most important component for comprehension, but grammar is the backbone of the language. To improve their English proficiency, ELLs need to reduce errors. A paragraph that has at least one error in every sentence is not good writing, just as a conversation that has an error in every sentence does not represent good speaking. (p. 57)

3. 1. 2. Form-Focused Instruction in the Classroom

Form-focused instruction (FFI) is an umbrella term for “any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form” (Ellis, 2001, p. 1). Long (1988, 1991) makes a distinction between two types of form-focused instruction: focus on formS (FoFs) and focus on form (FoF). The former, according to Long (1988), consists of the teaching of discrete grammar points in accordance with a synthetic syllabus where a linguistic target for a lesson is preselected. Language items are broken down into words, and grammar rules

are presented as models to learners in a linear sequence. Acquisition is “a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure has been built up” (Wilkins, 1976, p. 2). The clearest form of FoFs is an approach often referred to as Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) (Byrne, 1976), which is the outcome of the interface position (Doughty & Williams, 1998). According to the PPP model, the target grammatical item is first presented explicitly and then practised until it is fully proceduralised (Ellis, 2006, p. 97). The use of this model in Vietnam has been referred to in Chapter 2 above. In this model, the teacher models and explains the language point to be taught, then the learners practice the language point through exercises which carefully control the language they use. Finally, the learners are given more open activities where they can use the language point more freely and internalise it for future use. The teacher may or may not finalise a lesson with an explicit statement of the rule. Teachers are often advised to present new grammar items meaningfully, in some kind of communicative context, in a way which will make their use clear. This may be through a situational presentation in which the teacher introduces the new language in a specific situation or through a story, often using pictures or other aids to illustrate meaning (Edge & Garton, 2009). In contrast, Doff (1988) advocates both contextualization and isolation of grammar elements in second language teaching with an emphasis on making grammar meaningful to learners. He suggests a limited role for the metalinguistic aspect of teaching through contrasting L2 grammar items with each other and occasional grammatical explanations in the first language. Practice is aimed at helping students to develop what they know *about* the language into an ability to *use* the language. Effective practice guides, verifies, and corrects what the students are producing (Edge & Garton, 2009, p. 129). In the last stage, production, students are given the opportunities for communicative use of the language being learned and practiced. From the 1990s onwards, however, PPP was strongly criticised as lacking a firm basis in SLA theory, being too linear and behaviourist in nature, so failing to account for learners’ stages of developmental readiness (Ellis, 2003); and as being unlikely to lead to the successful acquisition of taught forms (Skehan, 1996). The model was also criticised as being teacher-centred and unable to fit more humanistic learner-centred

frameworks (Harmer, 2007). However, Swan (2005) defends PPP as a useful routine for presenting and practicing structural features under semi-controlled conditions.

N. Ellis (1993) has found that learners who were exposed in experimental conditions to explicit instruction in complex rules, together with structured exposure to examples, actually performed best in accuracy tests and also demonstrated explicit knowledge of the rules. These findings lend themselves to the conclusion that explicit grammar teaching with the support of examples is more effective than implicit grammar learning. Johnston (2000), in his study of knowledge base that experienced English language teachers draw on in their teaching, also finds that examples played an important role and were used extensively in grammar explanations. All teachers in Johnston's study felt that examples are a key part of good explanations, especially to low-level classes. These teachers believed that examples helped their students to observe patterns of a particular grammar rule.

By contrast, focus on form (FoF) is defined by Long (1991) as "...overtly draw[ing] the students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46).

FoF often "consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). Thus, this approach focuses primarily on meaning, but with attention being paid to form, as necessary, in the context of meaning-focused activity. Research on FoF suggests a key role for grammar instruction within a communicative approach (e.g. Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 1994, 1995; Long, 1996, 2000; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada, 1997). However, in practice, FoF is flexibly interpreted. For example, Shak and Gardner (2008), under the heading 'focus on form', suggest grammar activities including completing sentences with a correct grammatical form, or matching active or passive sentences to a picture. In fact, there are different ways in which FoF is realised in second language classrooms. These range from more explicit instruction to implicit

feedback, and incorporate varying degrees of elaboration (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Sharwood Smith, 1991). An explicit approach emphasises the explicit comments on forms involving metalanguage, an aspect of language classroom that has been often neglected (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2002). Advocates of the implicit approach (e.g. Krashen, 1999; Skehan, 1996; Willis & Willis, 1996) argue that the explicit teaching of grammar is useless because learners do not learn what they are not ready to learn (Pienemann, 1984). As a result, learners should be exposed to ‘comprehensible input’ within meaningful discourse, without explanations or practice so that they can acquire the grammar intuitively and unconsciously (Krashen, 1999). A recent model of implicit grammar teaching is task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Long & Crookes, 1992; Skehan, 1996), which is based on the assumption that the use of communication-based tasks is the basis for language learning. But researchers have begun to cast doubt on the effectiveness of tasks as a vehicle for the learning of grammar (e.g. Richards, 2002; Seedhouse, 1999; Swan, 2005).

With regard to instructional activities, advocates of the FoF movement do not encourage an exclusive use of implicit techniques. Instead, they see implicit instruction and explicit instruction as being on a continuum. Depending on a particular structure or grammar point to be taught, teachers can use implicit techniques such as the *input flood* with which a number of examples of the target form or structure are presented in a text so that students can notice it in the real context where it is used. Another implicit technique is called *input enhancement* in which the target form is highlighted to help students to be aware of it. Fotos (2002) suggests an implicit *structure-based task* which requires students to complete a meaningful task using the target structure before it is explicitly taught and practiced further. Two major explicit techniques that have been suggested are *consciousness-raising tasks* and *focused communicative tasks* (Ellis, 2001, p. 21). Tasks of the first type are designed to invite students to determine grammar rules from instances containing the target form presented by the teacher, while tasks of the second type encourage students to produce the target form during their performance of a given communicative task.

Although the efficacy of FoF instruction has been supported by several studies (e.g. Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman, & Doughty, 1995; Doughty & Verela, 1998; Williams & Evans, 1998), reservations about its applicability and usability in teaching contexts where teachers are obligated to strictly follow the mandated curricula have been reported, and there are also problems where classes are too large to allow much individual feedback. As Poole (2005) has pointed out, the studies on the effectiveness of FoF instruction were conducted:

... in settings that appear to be well-funded, adequately supplied with teaching and learning materials, and generally free of classroom discipline problems. ... No study supporting focus on form instruction appears to have taken place in a developing country, where the socioeconomic, political, and pedagogical realities may differ significantly from those in more developed countries. (p. 50)

What Poole says above justifies the need to ground pedagogical theory in specific teaching and learning contexts. It also supports the appeal to the collaboration between researchers and teachers as well as for more classroom-based research, both of which seem to be highly desirable in TESOL research. As Clarke (1994) notes, those who pursue research are rarely found in language classrooms, and the knowledge and experience of classroom teachers are rarely incorporated into theory construction. Azar (2007) found that incidental FoF was less efficient and effective in the reduction of her students' written grammatical errors than planned FoF with a predetermined grammar syllabus, and that incidental FoF was just efficient as "a quick reminder or recast" (p. 4). Williams (1995) suggests that teachers are likely to be using the activities recommended by researchers in their classroom, but have not put a name to them and perhaps do not realise the importance of research. Such claims lend support to Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers' (1997) conclusion that teachers still base their grammar teaching on the perceptions of their own experiences as language learners and teachers, while rarely justifying "their approaches by

referring to research studies or any particular methodology” (p. 255). Echoing these authors, Borg (1999a) points out that the theoretical differences regarding FFI “become blurred in practice” (p. 25), and classroom observation data show that teachers tend to “alternate between or blend these traditionally exclusive strategies depending on specific instructional factors” (p. 26).

Evidently, while communicative teaching has been the order of the day, the role of implicit and explicit grammar techniques remains unresolved (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997; Ellis, 2006). In this regard, it is noteworthy that Ellis (2006) reviews current issues in the teaching of grammar, and points to the lack of empirical evidence within SLA research to provide clear answers about what, when and how grammatical items should be taught. However, while making several suggestions for further research, he does not suggest that language teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching should be investigated, nor does he refer in his review to any work carried out in this areas. Unlike Ellis, Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers have recommended that:

In light of the lack of theoretical and empirical consensus [regarding explicit grammar instruction] it is crucial that we add to our understanding the voices of classroom teachers who face this problem on a daily basis and have developed working solutions for the populations they address. (p. 246)

In the same vein, Burns (2009) recommends that teachers’ beliefs about grammar should be a central research avenue:

Grammar teaching has not disappeared in the age of CLT. It is more the case that it is slowly coming of age. To find ways of effectively integrating grammar into CLT practice, it is also important that teachers’ beliefs about grammar and the personal and practical knowledge they hold about ways of teaching it should be placed more centrally into the research spotlight. (p. 15)

Fortunately, the call for examining teachers' beliefs about language, language learning and teaching in general, and about form-focused grammar instruction in particular, has been heeded over the last few decades (see Borg, 2006, for a review). However, there has been only a small number of in-depth studies conducted in developing countries, where insufficiently-trained teachers are working in a knowledge-based and examination-oriented educational system with limited resources and limited access to second language acquisition (SLA) theories codified in academic journals and methodology books. This study is, therefore, an attempt to make a modest contribution to the community discourse and to give Vietnamese teachers a chance to bring their tacit beliefs about form-focused instruction to the surface.

3. 1. 3. When Form-Focused Instruction Should Begin

Regarding the question of whether FFI should be delayed until the later in the learning process or should be delivered to even absolute beginners, there are two major perspectives. The first perspective maintains that it is best to emphasise the teaching of grammar in the early stages of L2 acquisition, whereas the second perspective suggests that it is best to emphasise meaning-focused instruction to begin with and introduce grammar teaching later when learners have already begun to form their interlanguages (Ellis, 2006, p. 90).

Supporters of the first perspective suggest that beginning-level learners cannot engage in meaning-centred activities because they lack the necessary knowledge of the L2 to perform tasks. Thus, a forms-focused approach is needed initially to construct a basis of knowledge that learners can then use and extend in a meaning-focused approach (Ellis, 2006, p. 90). Teaching grammar early is valuable because it provides a basis for real learning that follows (N. Ellis, 2005, Lightbown, 1991). Azar (2007), in her experience, has observed that FoF works well for students with a good grounding in grammar, but it is not sufficient for students without an understanding of the nature of language. She suggests that the choice of FoF should “consider the students' learning

preferences, educational and grammar backgrounds, skill level, and academic and work goals” (p. 5) in addition to the course purposes, the time available and other things. Thus, she recommends that explicit grammar teaching is “a springboard for interactive, communicative practice opportunities” (p. 7).

Advocates of the delayed FFI argue that grammar should be delayed because early interlanguage is typically agrammatical (Ellis, 1984; Perdue & Klein, 1993). Ellis (1996) argues that emphasis on early grammatical accuracy may impede the development of communicative ability.

Both those who agree and those who disagree with an early FFI seem to rely more on their intuition than on empirical evidence. In fact, there is little classroom-based research on this issue. Therefore, in the classroom teachers are likely to refer to their beliefs to decide whether FFI is needed by their learners or not, and to act upon those beliefs.

3. 1. 4. Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback takes the form of responses to learners utterances that contain an error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these (Ellis, Lowen & Erlam, 2009, p. 303).

Explicit grammar instruction and corrective feedback are two side of the coin of grammar pedagogy. Since scholars have not reached a consensus concerning how grammar should be taught, if grammar teaching is necessary, their opinions of the benefit of corrective feedback remain, understandably, divided. One group represented by for example, Ellis et al. (2009), Hammerly (1985) and Higgs and Clifford (1982), and Lyster and Ranta (1997) suggests that corrective feedback can be helpful to adult foreign language learners. Another group (e.g. Krashen, 1985,

1999; Hammond, 1988; Truscott, 1996, 1999), views foreign language learning as quite similar to first language learning, and claims that corrective feedback is of little, if any, impact on the learners' acquisition of the target language. They posit that error correction can be harmful and should be avoided, since it may activate the "affective filter" by raising the students' level of anxiety, which in turn, prevents the learner from actually acquiring communicative competence. In this regard, Hammond (1988) claims that corrective feedback is of "no value" (p. 414) in speeding up the acquisition of the target language. Truscott (1996, 1999) puts a strong case for abandoning correction of both oral and written grammatical errors. He argues that error correction is not only ineffective to the improvement of students' linguistic performance but also distressful and embarrassing to the students, and justifies this argument with some empirical research. However, in re-evaluating the anti-grammar view of the communicative approach recently, advocates have begun to question the zero position of corrective feedback. For example, Lyster, Lightbown and Spada (1999) review several studies and provide "evidence that corrective feedback is pragmatically feasible, potentially effective, and, in some cases, necessary" (p. 457). Similarly, Ferris (2004) suggests that there is positive evidence from SLA studies that lends support to error correction. Koch and Terrell (1991) point out that the de-emphasis of grammar and lack of corrective feedback in classes taught by the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell 1983; Terrell, 1977) might well increase the anxiety level of some students. For Azar (2007), corrective feedback is a natural and accepted activity in teaching grammar.

While a large body of descriptive research described the effectiveness of different corrective feedback strategies, studies comparing the effects of those strategies on L2 acquisition remain uncommon. One of the rare developmental studies to evaluate different corrective feedback strategies was conducted by Carroll and Swain (1993) in a laboratory setting. The findings suggest not only that various types of corrective feedback can lead to changes in non-native speakers' developing grammar but also that when feedback is accompanied by metalinguistic information and salient target models, the benefits are increased.

Despite the limited number of studies on the correlation between corrective feedback and learners' L2 acquisition, a research agenda focusing on learners' and teachers' beliefs, attitudes and perceptions regarding corrective feedback is emerging. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) research on language learning anxiety indicates that, while most students are apprehensive about making errors in language classes, few of them actually are afraid of error correction. Schulz (1996) administered a survey questionnaire to 340 students enrolled in various German language courses at the University of Arizona and found that a great majority of students were positive towards corrective feedback while both teachers and students valued highly the corrective feedback on students' writings. Later, Schulz (2001) surveyed 122 Colombian and 92 American foreign language teachers, as well as 607 Colombian and 824 American students studying different foreign languages, about their beliefs about grammar instruction and corrective feedback. Findings showed that a vast majority of students of both groups viewed teachers' corrective feedback as desirable, whereas nearly half of teachers from both groups agreed that corrective feedback was necessary to their students. Schulz recommends that "Language learning could thus be hindered if students have specific beliefs regarding the role of grammar and corrective feedback and if their expectations are not met" (p. 256). Ng and Farrell (2003) studied the beliefs and practices of Singaporean teachers and found that they corrected the learners' grammatical errors more frequently than they self-reported. The reasons these teachers gave for their frequent explicit corrections were that explicit corrective feedback was less time-consuming and more responsive to the need to prepare the students for examination.

Despite the disagreement on the impact of corrective feedback on second language acquisition, what researchers have found in relation to teachers' and learners' attitudes and beliefs about corrective feedback on grammar is again indicative of the discrepancy between theory and practice. This also urges researchers to pay more attention to what is really happening in the classroom and the practitioners' beliefs. However, Ellis (2009) cautions that research on corrective feedback may be of little

practical value if teachers just use one single corrective feedback strategy in the classroom. If this is the case, I believe, it is necessary to uncover teachers' beliefs and practices regarding corrective feedback to gain insights into why they favour a particular corrective feedback strategy. Such an understanding will contribute to the attempts to narrow the gap between theory and practice.

3. 1. 5. Use of First Language in Form-Focused Instruction

First language use in foreign language teaching, e.g. the use of Vietnamese for grammar explanations in EL classes in Vietnam, has been debated for several years without reaching a consensus. Some scholars caution that the overuse of first language will unduly reduce learners' exposure to target language input (e.g. Atkinson, 1995; Ellis, 1984). However, other scholars (G. Cook, 2010; V. Cook, 2001; van Lier, 2000) have argued that target-language exposure is necessary, but not sufficient to guarantee target language learning, since target-language input must become intake. The target-language input must be understood by students and internalised, and judicious and theoretically principled first language use can facilitate intake and thereby contribute to learning.

Auerbach (1993) discusses the role of English in ESL classrooms, warning that an English-only policy in classrooms "is rooted in a particular ideological perspective, rests on unexamined assumptions, and serves to reinforce inequities in the broader social order" (p. 9). While her focus is mainly on ESL classrooms where English is the dominant language outside the classroom, as in much of the United States, several points she raises are important in EFL classrooms where little English is spoken outside the classroom. Auerbach argues for the reasoned, appropriate use of the learners' L1 in the L2 classroom wherever this will have positive effects on the learners and learning. Elaborating Auerbach's claim, Butzkamm (2003) presents a theory that challenges the English-only theory in foreign language teaching, in which he argues that:

Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue opens the door, not only to its own grammar, but to all grammars, inasmuch as it awakens the potential for universal grammar that lies within all of us. (p. 31)

Some scholars (e.g. G. Cook, 2010; V. Cook, 2001; Swan, 1985) comment that an emphasis on English-only in the classroom, as recommended by ‘strong’ (Howatt, 2004) CLT approaches, overlooks the value and relevance of the bilingual dimensions of language learning. Empirical evidence from a variety of contexts shows that there is a wide discrepancy between recommendations and the practice actually observed or reported in classrooms. Edge and Garton (2009, pp. 130-132) have observed that although students are strongly encouraged to use the target language, they may use their first language.

Studies on grammar instruction in foreign language teaching contexts (Duff & Polio, 1990; Kim & Elder, 2005; Mitchell, 1988; Polio & Duff, 1994) show that grammar instruction is typically delivered to L2 learners in their mother tongue rather than through the medium of the target language. For example, in South Korea, Liu, Ahn, Baek and Han (2004) report the use of L1 by thirteen high school teachers of English ranging between 10 percent in model lessons, to 90 percent. In another study which looked into the classroom discourse of seven native-speaker secondary school teachers of Japanese, Korean, German and French in New Zealand, Kim and Elder (2005) found that these teachers used the students’ L1 (English) for approximately 12 to 77 percent of the classroom time. Macaro (1997) reviews the studies, including his own, regarding teachers’ use of L1 and concludes that exclusive or near-exclusive use of the target language is “rarely encountered in any learning context apart from classrooms with mixed L1 learners” (p. 96).

Although research on teachers’ beliefs about the use of the first language in FFI remains limited, the literature on this issue indicates variation in teachers’ beliefs

about the use of the first language in the classroom. For example, the teacher in Burns' (1996) case study allowed her students to use their L1 as a strategy to get the students more confident about talking to each other. Levine (2003), who studied beliefs about and attitudes towards a range of foreign languages in US universities, found that the more the students were allowed to use their L1, the less anxious they felt about the new language. She suggests that future research should investigate the reasons why teachers choose to use the first language and allow their students to do so with actual observation of classroom verbal behaviour. McMillan and Turnbull (2009) conducted a qualitative study which focuses on late French immersion teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the teacher's use of the target language and the first language in Canada, where teachers' code-switching practices, as well as other factors, contribute to these beliefs and attitudes. Data from multiple sources showed that the two teachers had different beliefs about the use of first language in their classroom. Such beliefs were influenced by a number of factors such as their own experiences as second language learners, their preferred learning styles and personalities, and their perceptions of student target language anxiety. This study also rejected the commonly held notion that more teacher use of the first language led to more student use of the first language. The result of the study conducted by Hobbs, Matsuo and Payne (2010) on the native and non-native teachers of Japanese in a British secondary school demonstrates a considerable variation in attitude and use of code-switching among teachers from different cultural backgrounds and educational traditions. Non-native speaker teachers were more in favour of greater use of the first language than their native-speaker colleagues.

With specific reference to FFI, Scott and de la Flunte (2008) examine the role of the first language in form-focused grammar tasks in intermediate French and Spanish language classes. In order to explore the ways the students used their first and second languages to solve a grammar problem, the researchers used conversation analysis of audiotaped interactions and stimulated recall sessions. Students worked in two groups. Students in group 1 were allowed to use their first language, while students of group 2 were required to use the second language. Findings showed that students of group 1

worked collaboratively in a balanced and coherent manner, whereas students of group 2 exhibited fragmented interaction and little evidence of collaboration. The study also showed that the use of the first language in form-focused grammar tasks reduced the students' cognitive load. Apparently, more research is needed to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to the use of the first language in FFI, especially in contexts where both teacher and students share the same L1.

In summary, while SLA researchers and applied linguists have not found a common voice about the various issues related to second language grammar pedagogy, studies on the practices and attitudes of teachers and students (e.g. Andrews, 2003; Borg & Burns, 2008; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Polat, 2009; Schulz, 1996, 2001) suggest that both groups are favourably disposed to some element of explicit grammar instruction in the classroom. It is evident in these studies that grammar teaching is not a "monolithic enterprise" (Borg, 1999a, p. 25) but is defined by teachers' interacting decisions about a range of issues like what language point to focus on, how to structure the grammar lesson, how to present grammar, etc., each of which continues a focus for further research in its own right. For this reason, Borg (1998a) points out the need to investigate "teachers' personal pedagogical systems" (p. 10), which are "formed largely through experience and grounded in teachers' understandings of their teaching contexts" (Borg & Burns, 2008, p. 458). The following section will review the literature on teachers' beliefs and the correspondence between beliefs and practices as well as the factors that shape teachers' beliefs.

3. 2. Teachers' Beliefs

3. 2. 1. Defining Teachers' Beliefs

Green (1971) defines a belief "as proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief" (p.104). This psychological nature of beliefs makes them "neither easily defined nor studied" (Johnson, 1994, p. 439). Pajares (1992), in his review of research literature, claims that beliefs are a "messy construct." Borg (2003a), in his literature review, identifies sixteen different terms for teacher cognition that have

been used in language teacher beliefs literature over the last few decades. Addressing this ‘messy’ issue, I agree with Borg’s suggestion that:

Arguably, one or more of *cognition, knowledge* (and its subtypes), *beliefs, attitudes, conceptions, theories, assumptions, principles, thinking and decision-making* should be adequate for most purposes. (Borg, 2006, p. 272; original emphasis).

Therefore, in this study, the term ‘teacher beliefs’ is used as a generic term to refer to the “statements teachers make about their ideas, thoughts and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what ‘should be done’, ‘should be the case’ and ‘is preferable’” (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004, p. 244). This definition shows the interrelationship between beliefs and practices and suggests the need to study teachers’ beliefs in relation to their professional practices as well as the need to use a case study approach to the study of teachers’ beliefs. Adopting this definition, I also agree that beliefs constitute a dimension of cognition (Borg, 2006) because they guide teachers’ behaviours and actions. Therefore, like other constructs of human cognition, they are situated (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). As Clancey has pointed out, “Every human thought and action is adapted to the environment, that is, *situated*, because what people *perceive*, how they *conceive of their activity*, and what they *physically do* develop together” (Clancey, 1997, pp. 1-2; original emphasis). Put another way, beliefs are socially constructed even though they are personal propositions. From the moment an individual person is born, his or her belief system is formed, affected and changed as a result of his or her world experience and professional experience. Thus, beliefs are shaped by multiple factors, which are discussed in the subsequent section.

3. 2. 2. *Factors that Shape Teachers’ Beliefs*

One of the questions related to teacher cognition research is the origin of teacher beliefs. Following Lortie’s (1975) concept of the “apprenticeship of observation”,

many researchers have provided empirical evidence of the impact of teachers' prior learning experiences on their beliefs about teaching and learning (e.g. Almarza, 1996; Block & Hazelip, 1995; Boz, 2008; Cumming, 1989; Ellis, 2006; Freeman, 1992, 2002; Golombek, 1998; Smith, 1996). In a study of ESL student teachers, Miller and Aldred (2000) found that teachers schooled in teacher-centred classrooms maintained beliefs and attitudes that made it difficult for them to embrace CLT. This was in line with Farrell's (1999), and Farrell and Lim's (2005) studies on Singaporean primary school teachers of English.

However, as Bailey, Berthgold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski, Fleischman, Holbrook, Waissbluth and Zambo (1996) point out, the "apprenticeship of observation" or any prior experience, will only influence a teacher's instructional behaviours to the extent that s/he permits. This raises an issue that an overemphasis on prior learning experience may lead to the ignorance of the impact of the social contexts and the institutional cultures in which teachers work (Little, 1990; Minick, 1985) as well as the common knowledge of individual teachers and of the groups and communities in which teachers participate (Stein & Brown, 1997). Since it has been reported in the literature that teachers' beliefs are socially constructed (Barcelos, 2003) and distributed across individuals (Putnam & Borko, 2000; Zeng & Murphy, 2007), it is also necessary to look at the "interaction between different senses of plausibility" (Prabhu, 1990, p. 174), or the social sources of teachers' beliefs in the various groups and settings in which learning to teach occur (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver and Thwaite (2001) have reported that despite individual diversity, teachers appear to share a "collective language pedagogy" (p. 496). Beliefs, therefore, are not only rooted in teachers' prior learning experiences as language learners but may also be situated in the "fields of interaction" among individuals (Hanks, 1991).

Beliefs not only shape what teachers do and how they do it but they are in turn shaped by teachers' accumulated experiences. Crookes and Arakaki (1999) examine the sources of ESL teachers' ideas and find that accumulated teaching experience was the source cited most frequently by the teachers in their study. The influence of teaching

experience on teachers' beliefs is also reported by some other researchers (e.g. Breen et al., 2001; Larcote, 2005; Mok, 1994; Nunan, 1992). The recent study conducted by Phipps and Borg (2009) indicates that teachers' beliefs which are grounded in their experience exert most influence on their practices. In other words, professional experiences have a "formative effect on their grammar practices" (p. 388). However, the number of studies on the impact of teaching experience on teachers' beliefs is quite small, and most of these studies were conducted with ESL rather than EFL teachers. Clearly, the issue of the social nature of teachers' beliefs needs further investigation, especially in under-resourced contexts such as Vietnam where teachers are non-native speakers teaching English as a foreign language in a state school, and where access to published scholarship and research is limited. In this study, my argument is that since teachers' beliefs are both intrapersonal and interpersonal, they partly originate from the public theories, and partly from their life experiences, and are modified through their practical environments. This view is supported by scholars studying the effect of both personal and institutional variables on teachers' beliefs. For example, Burns (1996) argues that one consideration in research into teachers' beliefs is the social and institutional context in which teaching is practised. She develops a framework of three interconnecting and interacting contextual levels for studying teachers' beliefs. At the first level, which is the broadest level, is the 'institutional culture' with which teachers interpret the institutional ideologies and philosophies. This contextual level creates the cognitive frameworks for teachers' beliefs about specific teaching programmes and student groups. At the second contextual level are teachers' beliefs about learning, learners and language, which guide teacher decisions on what to teach and how to teach it. And at the third and most specific contextual level are teachers' beliefs about specific instructional behaviours in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs at all these three levels are interdependent, creating "the intercontextuality of teachers thinking and beliefs" (p. 158). The idea that teachers' beliefs are intercontextualised is supported by other scholars (e.g. Feryok, 2010; Tudor, 2003), and it helps to explain why teachers sharing common experiences may also share common beliefs and practices as some studies appear to suggest (Breen et al., 2001). Tudor (2003) claims that:

The teacher's reality is thus an ecological one which is shaped by the attitudes and expectations of students, of parents, of school administrators, of materials writers and many others including, of course, each teacher as an individual in his or her own right. (p. 6)

As a result, Borg's (2003a) recommendation that further research is needed about "the impact of contextual factors on the instructional decision teachers make in teaching grammar" (p. 105) motivates this study.

3. 2. 3. Teachers' Beliefs and Teachers' Knowledge

What teachers in general know, and what forms that knowledge might take, has been the subject of considerable inquiry, but only recently. According to Munby, Russell and Martin (2001),

The category 'teachers' knowledge' is new in the last 20 years, and the nature and development of that knowledge is only beginning to be understood by the present generation of researchers in teaching and teacher education. (p. 877)

Among those prominent in more or less the first phase of work in this area are Munby (1982), and Connelly and Clandinin (1988). Munby draws on Schön's (1983) epistemology of practice and focuses on teachers' knowledge as expressed in metaphors used in framing and solving classroom dilemmas. Connelly and Clandinin, influenced by Dewey's (1938) notion of *the continuity of experience*, in which knowledge is socially constructed and reconstructed, look at teachers' knowledge in terms of images and narratives. Carter (1990) views teachers' knowledge as practice-based and non-propositional:

Teachers' knowledge is not highly abstract and propositional. Nor can it be formulated into a set of specific skills or preset answers to specific problems. Rather it is experiential, procedural, situational, and particularistic. (p. 307)

A particular useful notion for the current argument about teacher knowledge is that of Wallace (1991), who makes a distinction between "received knowledge," which derives from academic sources, and "experiential knowledge," which is an expansion of Schön's (1995) knowledge-in-action, or knowledge gained from classroom experience through reflection. For Wallace, teachers' knowledge is a mixture of these two types of knowledge, guiding teachers' instructional practices, and reflection is a learning bridge from received knowledge to experiential knowledge.

So, critical reflection is essential in teachers' knowledge construction, given the fact that teachers' experiential knowledge is more powerful to their instructional practices than the knowledge transmitted to them from the training courses on account of "the local and contextualised nature of almost all knowledge of the human world" (Crookes, 2009, p. 132). Johnson (2006) reviews the literature on L2 teacher cognition research (e.g., Borg, 2006; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Golombek, 1998; Woods, 1996), and acknowledges that this area of inquiry "depicts L2 teacher learning as normative and lifelong, as emerging out of and through experiences in social contexts" (p. 239). She also expresses her concern about how to help teachers link received knowledge to experiential knowledge as they reframe the way they describe and interpret their lived experiences so that they also become active users and producers of theory in their own right, for their own means, and as appropriate for their own instructional contexts.

Now researchers have realised that, in order for this goal to be realised, teachers first of all need to be given the opportunities to articulate their existing beliefs about language, language teaching and learning. Then they should be guided into a process of self-inquiry by means of reflection and action research with a view to challenging their own beliefs and changing them if necessary. This idea is embedded in Dewey's

position regarding a way to cut through the common theory-practice division, which is elaborated by Widdowson (2003) that teachers, for their professional growth, should be given the opportunities to make sense of their own practices by reflecting “on their own practice, and that of others” in order to “theorise about it – to abstract and make explicit the principles that inform certain ways of doing things” (p. 3). In the same vein, Crookes (2009) recommends that:

Rather than having a body of knowledge, teachers need to know how to make knowledge, or get knowledge, or integrate with others in the use and application of knowledge (p. 132).

From a sociocultural perspective, the role of experience in knowledge construction has been recognised in theories of situated cognition which explain that knowledge entails lived practices, not just accumulated information, and the processes of learning are negotiated with people in what they do, through experiences in the social practices associated with particular activities (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Moreover, social activities are regulated by normative ways of reasoning and using tasks and other resources in collective activity, or what Lave and Wenger (1991) have termed a community of practice. Thus, the knowledge of the individual is constructed through the knowledge of the communities of practice within which the individual participates (p. 237).

When knowledge construction is viewed this way, the theory-practice dichotomy becomes unnecessary. As Burns (1996) remarks that the traditional distinction between theory and practice is “essentially misleading” because such distinction negatively reinforces the traditional theorist-teacher divide (p. 175). Thus, the understanding of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ knowledge sheds light on teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. Such understanding helps us to have insights into how teachers’ beliefs are related to their classroom practices. Breen (1991) suggests that:

By uncovering the kinds of knowledge and beliefs which teachers hold and how they express these through the meanings that they give to their work, we may come to know the most appropriate support we can provide in in-service development (p. 232).

In Burns' (1996) opinion, such an endeavour will contribute to the development of "informed theories of practice" (p. 175). These informed theories of practice is resulted from the interaction between teachers' formal knowledge (i.e. theories of practice) taught in teacher education and their personal practical knowledge (i.e. theories for practice). According to her, teachers' theories for practice construct "essential forces in determining behaviour" (p. 175) in the language classroom. Tsui (2003) describes the interaction between 'theories for practice' and 'theories of practice' as "theorising practical knowledge and practicalising theoretical knowledge" (p. 257).

For Burns (1996), the notion of *theories for practice* is a much more useful concept to teacher education because they constitute conceptual frameworks that shape what teachers do when they teach (p. 175). These two notions of *theories of practice* and *theories for practice* will be adopted in this study to discuss teachers' knowledge and beliefs, but they will be expanded into *expert theories of practice* and *teachers' personal theories for practice* respectively just to avoid unnecessary confusion. Given the complexities of teachers' knowledge, I believe these two types of theories are interrelated because "in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, belief, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined" (Verloop, Van & Meijer 2001, p. 446). This view is shared by many other scholars (e.g. Lewis, 1990; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Woods, 1996) and is adopted in this study because it helps to shed light on the relationships between teachers' beliefs and their actions.

Since the focus of the present study is on teachers' beliefs and practices in form-focused instruction, a more comprehensive literature review on second language teachers' beliefs and practices will be presented in Section 3.3 below.

3. 3. Studies on Second Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

3. 3. 1. Pre-service and In-service Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

In mainstream education, work by scholars such as Clark and Peterson (1986), Elbaz (1983), and Shavelson and Stern (1981) laid the foundation for the field of teacher cognition. For example, Shavelson and Stern (1981), referring to the relationship between human thought and action, postulate that teachers' pedagogical behaviour is guided by their thoughts, judgments, and decisions. Thus, an understanding of the teaching process depends on both a description of teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions, and an understanding of how these cognitions are translated into action.

However, the field of second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) teacher education lags behind mainstream educational research in its attempt to understand the cognitive dimensions of second language teaching (Johnson, 1994). According to Borg (2009), although the study of teacher cognition in the mainstream education stretches back over 30 years, second language teacher cognition "is a more recent phenomenon, which emerged in the mid-1990s and has grown rapidly ever since" (p. 163). Research on second language teachers' beliefs is fuelled by a perspective that:

...we need to know more about language teachers: what they do, how they think, what they know, and how they learn. Specifically, we need to understand more about how language teachers conceive of what they do: what they know about language teaching, how they think about their classroom practice, and how that knowledge and those thinking processes are learned through formal teacher education and informal experience on the job. (Freeman & Richards, 1996, p. 1)

A review of the literature indicates that Horwitz (1985) is the pioneer in exploring the beliefs about language learning and teaching held by foreign language (FL) teachers. She developed two instruments, the Foreign Language Attitude Scale (FLAS) and the

teacher version of the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to elicit the beliefs prospective FL teachers held about language learning in four major areas: foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, and appropriate language learning strategies. Findings from her survey reveal that pre-service teachers enter the methods class with many preconceived ideas about language learning and teaching, some of which may be unrealistic ones that can interfere with their understanding of, and receptivity to, the information and techniques presented in class. She, therefore, suggests that a systematic assessment of the beliefs held by pre-service teachers should be “the first step in their development as FL teachers” (p. 333).

Despite the suggestion made by Horwitz regarding the importance of research investigating language teachers’ beliefs about language learning, which might have implications for the design and content of second language teacher education programmes worldwide (Peacock, 2001), relatively few studies have followed-up on Horwitz’s (1985) groundbreaking survey of prospective FL teachers’ beliefs about language learning (Allen, 2002); indeed, according to Peacock (2001, p. 178), there is “a shortage of research” in this area. However, the growth in the literature on teachers’ beliefs in the area of L2 or FL education has been quite impressive, with 180 studies being reported between 1976 and 2006 (Borg, 2006). Such an ever-growing number of studies in this area indicates that teachers’ beliefs “is a well-established domain of research activity” (Borg, 2006, p. 46) in the area of SL and FL education. As in mainstream education, two types of research on teacher beliefs have dominated the literature in the field of second language education. Some studies have aimed to descriptively investigate second language teachers’ beliefs about the nature of second language learning and teaching, while other studies have explored with greater depth the relationship between second language teachers’ beliefs and their teaching practices, especially in relation to grammar. This is a positive response to one of the conclusions that Fang (1996) makes in his literature review that although teachers’ beliefs about certain subject areas remains a source of inspiration for

researchers, inadequate attention is paid to teachers' beliefs about particular components of a subject area (p. 59).

With regard to the focus on research, studies on teachers' beliefs in the area of SL/ FL education have examined a number of issues (see Borg, 2006 for a full review). These include pre-service FL teachers' beliefs and the impact of prior learning experience on novice teachers' beliefs about language and language teaching and learning, as well as changes in teachers' beliefs during the training programmes (e.g. M. Borg, 2005; da Silva, 2005; Diab, 2009; Farrell, 1999, 2006; Fox, 1993; Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1994; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Numrich, 1996; Peacock, 2001; Yang, 2000) and in-service second language teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g. Brown, 2009; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Golombek, 1998; Woods, 1996; Zeng & Murphy, 2007). Regarding Woods' (1996) seminal work, which focused on how teachers' knowledge systems, beliefs, attitudes, values, and experience shaped their understanding of teaching and how they arrived at planning and instructional decisions in teaching, this is an influential account of the pedagogical reasoning and action processes employed by second language teachers in their work.

There are three major limitations of the current studies on teachers' beliefs and practices in the field of SL/FL education. Geographically, most of these studies were conducted in English-speaking countries, leaving the FL context under-researched. Methodologically, most of the studies employed self-report instruments with very few in-depth case studies being documented in the literature. Regarding the research focus, there remains a lack of research interest in collective cognitions and practices, thus ignoring the communal dimension of teaching (Schulman & Schulman, 2004, p. 265). This research gulf needs to be filled given the call for a shift away from "a concern with individual teachers and their learning to a conception of teachers learning and developing within a broader context of community, institution, polity, and profession" (Schulman & Schulman, 2004, pp. 267-269).

3. 3. 2. Relationship Between Teachers' Beliefs and Teachers' Instructional Practices

As teachers play a critical role in classroom teaching, and teachers' instructional beliefs have become a central issue in education, what they believe as well as what they do not believe have powerful influence on their classroom behaviours (Handal, Bobis, & Grimison, 2001; Lovat & Smith, 1995). Pajares (1992) points out that:

Beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; hence, they play a critical role in defining behaviour and organising knowledge and information. (Pajares, 1992, p. 325)

The influence of teachers' beliefs upon their instructional practices is seen most clearly within the context of curriculum innovation. In this regard, Hargreaves (1994) states that "What the teacher thinks, what the teacher believes, what the teacher assumes – all these things have powerful implications for the process, for the ways in which curriculum is translated into practice" (p. 54).

Since teachers' beliefs act as mediators between the intended curriculum goals and their actual implementation, if teachers' beliefs do not match those goals, it is likely that resistance will be generated resulting in a low uptake (Burkhardt, Fraser, & Ridgeway, 1990). In Cuban's (1993) words, "The knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes that teachers have ... shape what they choose to do in their classrooms and explain the core of instructional practices that have endured over time" (p. 256). In effect, the low degree of success in many educational reforms has been seen as a major reason why teachers' beliefs need to be examined (Fullan, 1993).

In the field of SL/FL education, numerous studies have documented justification of the influence of teachers' beliefs on their delivery of curriculum initiatives in a variety of different instructional contexts. For example, Burns (1996) suggests that what teachers do is affected by what they think and the kinds of pedagogical beliefs

that they hold. She elaborates, arguing that the beliefs teachers hold are “fundamental in motivating classroom interactions. They determine what is presented for learning and how the representation of content takes place” (p.154). She identifies three interacting contextual levels of teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices: teachers’ beliefs about the institutional culture; about language, learning and learners; and about specific instructional activities. Similarly, Smith’s (1996) study showed that teachers who valued grammatical accuracy designed the curriculum and developed learning tasks which emphasised language codes (p. 207). One of the two teachers in Borg’s (1998a) study, who believed that his students enjoyed inductive grammar work, derived his grammar work from students’ errors, while the other teacher, who believed that language learning should be meaning-based rather than structured-based, tended to replace grammatical terminologies with less technical equivalents. In another study, Borg (1999c) found that ESL teachers’ beliefs determined to a large extent their frequency of use of grammatical terminology in the classroom.

Several studies (e.g. Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Li, 1998) lend support to Burns’ (1996) claim that when teachers’ beliefs are incompatible with those espoused in SLA theories, it may affect their ability to embrace new theories. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999b) reported on a study that documented the beliefs and practices of communicative language teaching (CLT) by Japanese second language in-service teachers. The study shows that teachers’ actual teaching was shaped by their personal ideas and experiences, rather than by the academic literature pertaining to CLT. In Turkey, Kirkgöz (2008) conducted a case study on teachers’ instructional practices, and the impact of teacher understandings and training upon their delivery of the Communicative Oriented Curriculum initiative in the context of a major curriculum innovation in teaching English to young learners in Turkish state schools. Using two ethnographic data collection tools, comprising classroom observations and interviews, the author discovered that teachers’ beliefs had an impact on the extent of their implementation of the curriculum initiative. Kirkgöz suggested that for the success of curriculum innovation, it was necessary to take into account teachers’ existing beliefs

and classroom practices before introducing new pedagogical ideas embedded in the curriculum initiative. In Hong Kong, Carless (2007) conducted an interview study with eleven secondary school teachers from nine different schools and ten teacher educators regarding their beliefs about the feasibility of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Hong Kong secondary school contexts. The teachers and teacher educators believed that there were so many contextual variables such as noise or classroom disciplines, students' use of the first language, and the grammar-oriented examinations that were the barriers to the implementation of TBLT. The teachers also reported that they had to emphasise grammar in their classroom teaching to respond to the students' expectations. This is echoed by Orafi and Borg (2009), who examined teachers' delivery of a new communicative English language curriculum in Libyan secondary schools. Three teachers were observed and subsequently interviewed to uncover the rationales underpinning their classroom practices. Results showed that teachers' beliefs about their role, their ability, pair work, the examinations, and especially about students' proficiency in English, influenced significantly their instructional behaviours, which differed considerably from the requirements of the intended innovation. Similarly, Canh and Barnard (2009a) inquired about the implementation of a new communicative, learner-centred curriculum in Vietnam and found that teachers' beliefs about the students' proficiency levels, motivation, and the examinations, had a strong influence on their delivery of the new curriculum, which caused deviation from the curriculum requirements.

These findings are in line with suggestions made by several other researchers that teachers seem to refer to their belief system to find solutions to their instructional problems (e.g. Ashton & Webb, 1986; Harrington & Hertel, 2000; Horwitz, 1985; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Peacock, 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989; Smylie, 1988; Yang, 2000). In the same vein, Breen et al. (2001) have also indicated that beliefs are the guiding principles of teachers' pedagogical behaviours. These authors argue that "any innovation in classroom practice ... has to be accommodated within the teachers' own framework of teaching principles" (Breen et al., 2001, p. 472).

While the impact of teachers' beliefs on teachers' classroom practices has been acknowledged, that impact is not unidirectional. Some studies report a congruence between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual practices, others indicate a divergence. The inconclusive relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is due to the fact that:

Teachers' decisions in teaching grammar were influenced by their conflicting cognitions about language, learning in general, L2 learning, grammar teaching, students, and self. Thus grammar teaching often reflected the resolution of conflicts among competing cognitions held by teachers. (Borg, 1999a, p. 26)

The convergence between teachers' beliefs and their teaching behaviours have been documented in the literature on teacher cognition. Numerous studies have shown a consistent association between teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g. Barcelos, 2000; Stipek, Givvin, Salmon, & MacGyvers, 2001; Tseng, 1999; Yi, 2004). Using qualitative methods comprising interviews, observations, and stimulus recall procedures, Johnson (1990) examined ESL teachers' implicit theories and beliefs about second language learning and teaching in order to determine the extent to which these beliefs influence classroom instruction. Findings showed that although teachers differed significantly in terms of their instructional practices and theoretical orientations, their instructional practices were in accordance with the underlying assumptions of their theoretical orientation toward second language learning and teaching. The study also highlighted the influence of contextual factors such as academic, real-life, cultural, and social needs of the students on teachers' instructional practices.

Farrell and Lim (2005) reported a case study which examined the beliefs and classroom behaviours of two English language teachers in an elementary school in Singapore. The result indicates that both teachers' instructional strategies were in line with their stated beliefs about grammar instruction in the pre-study interviews.

Recently, Farrell and Kun (2007) examined three Singaporean primary school teachers' beliefs regarding their students' use of Singlish in English language classes in the context of the "Speak Good English Movement" launched by the Singapore Government in 2002. This case study reveals that teachers' stated beliefs were aligned with their actual classroom practices regarding the corrective feedback on the students' oral usage of Singlish. However, the authors caution that teachers hold complex beliefs and they may be in conflict with each other. Regarding the research methodology, the authors suggest future researchers "should monitor classroom practices to see if there is evidence of these beliefs in actual classroom practices" (p. 398) because of the ever-changing nature of beliefs (Senior, 2006), and teachers' potential challenges in articulating their own beliefs.

The result of Polat's (2009) study on Georgian English language learners and teachers in a private school in Tbilisi indicates that both groups showed consistency between their reported beliefs and in-class practices regarding the use of some traditional techniques of grammar teaching, whereas teachers used more techniques like drills and structural analysis than they reported in the questionnaire, but the use of contemporary techniques was rare, which contradicted what teachers and students reported in the questionnaire. However, Polat concludes that in general, consistencies are more frequent than inconsistencies.

Despite the documented positive relationship between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices, some discrepancies do exist. In the field of science and mathematics education, it has been reported that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice is not clear (e.g. Bright & Yore, 2002; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). Likewise, in the field of SL/FL education, Mahurt (1993), in a case study of the change process from skill-based to whole language teaching, finds an incongruence between the teacher's beliefs and her classroom practices. Karavas-Doukas (1996) studied 14 Greek teachers of English and found that these teachers had positive attitudes toward CLT principles through their responses to the survey questionnaire, but classroom observation data showed that "classroom practices (with

very few exceptions) deviated considerably from the principles of the communicative approach” (p. 193). The findings support Nunan’s (1987) claim that, although the teachers in his study showed agreement with the communicative principles promoted in the CLT literature, their actual classroom teaching demonstrated traditional patterns of interaction, rather than genuine interaction, thereby minimizing the students’ opportunities for genuine communicative language use in the classroom. In the same vein, traditional practices abounded in the lessons observed by Sato and Kleinsasser, as they commented that:

although most teachers said that they used role-plays, games, simulations and so on, classes observed for this study were heavily teacher-fronted, grammar was presented without any context clues, and there were few interactions seen among students. (1999b, p. 505)

Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004) conducted a case study to examine three teachers’ verbal beliefs and their correlation to their practices regarding focus on form. The teachers were using the same communicative task, and showed inconsistencies in terms of the timing for focus on form and error correction as well as in terms of the error correction techniques they employed. These researchers concluded that the correlation between teachers’ beliefs and their teaching practices was not as strong as hypothesised. The researchers explained that teachers tended to articulate their espoused theories when asked abstractly about their beliefs. In contrast, when asked to comment on concrete classroom events or experiences, they were very likely to refer to their theories in use, i.e., their practical knowledge or experiential understandings of teaching. However, this study fails to consider other variables such as group dynamics which may affect teachers’ instruction because each teacher was observed only once. In the context of a teacher development project for Oman, Freeman (2007) found a gap between beliefs about CLT and practices, which was apparent from his observation of 10 lessons taught by pre-service teachers and graduates throughout Oman.

3. 3. 3. *Factors that Influence the Transfer of Beliefs into Classroom Practices*

Explaining the discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices, Fang (1996) notes that:

The inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and their practices is not unexpected. Earlier researchers have noted that the *complexities of classroom life* can constrain teachers' abilities to attend to their beliefs and provide instruction which aligns with their theoretical beliefs" (p. 53, emphasis added).[As a result,] teachers' theoretical beliefs are transferred into instructional practices only in relation to the complexities of the classroom. (p. 55)

Another reason for the divergence between teachers' beliefs and teachers' instructional practices that has been documented in the literature lies in the research methodology. For example, the use of paper-and-pencil measures, i.e., the questionnaire, is likely to result in that divergence. Hoffman and Kugle (1982) have criticised this method, claiming that:

It would be easy to conclude that for most teachers there is no strong relationship between teacher beliefs and teacher behaviours. It would be more reasonable based on the findings from the focused interviews, however, to bring to question the notion that we can validly assess beliefs through a paper-and-pencil type task. (p. 6)

Perhaps, this methodological problem explains the conflicts between teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices. However, the studies which employed multiple measures, including classroom observations, stimulated recalls, think-aloud protocols and focused interviews, to examine teachers' beliefs and practices in real classrooms also show such a gap (Fang, 1996). Richardson, Anders, Tidwell and Lloyd (1991) explained that where teachers' beliefs did not relate to their classroom practices, it might be that teachers were in the process of changing beliefs and practices, but the

changes in beliefs were preceding changes in practices. Breen et al. (2001) reported their study of 18 ESL teachers working in adult classes and classes for primary school children in Australia. The teachers (14 female, 4 male) had an average teaching experience of 11.4 years, and most of them had undertaken further study and/or completed post-graduate qualifications relevant to ESL. All had some form of in-service professional development related to ESL. The authors found that, although the relationship between beliefs and practices is quite complex, language teachers of similar experience, working with ESL students in a similar situation, are likely to implement a shared principle through a diverse range of different practices. They conclude that:

...despite individual diversity in the teachers' enacting of their role, *as a collective* there was an underlying and consistent pattern between the ways they thought about their work and the ways in which they acted in the language class. There therefore appears to be a degree of professional consensus along the line of Bourdieu's *le sens pratique*. (p. 496)

This term is similar to what Phelan et al., (2006) call a "culture of sameness" (p. 176), where individual teachers share the common task of teaching according to a common standard in order to address the conflicts between the demands of the normative and normalisation.

In fact, as reported in the literature, factors contributing to the gap between teachers' beliefs and actual teaching practices are numerous. They may be rooted in teachers' inability to articulate their beliefs, or in student variables (e.g. student proficiency level and learning attitudes or motivation), in educational contexts (e.g. a mandated syllabus, insufficient instruction time, large classes, grammar-based examinations) (Feryok, 2008; Nien, 2002). They may also result from institutional culture e.g. institutional requirements, heavy teaching load, negative collegiality (Lu, 2003), or from teachers' wish to promote a particular image of themselves (Donaghue, 2003). In Singapore, Ng and Farrell (2003) found that time-constraints, students'

expectations, and the institutional policy were reported by teachers as contextual factors exerting a powerful influence on their classroom practices which contradicted their beliefs. Mohamed (2006) claims that the mismatch between beliefs and practices may be attributed to the difference between teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use which makes them unable to articulate the reasoning behind their routinised instructional practices, and verbalise the beliefs that underlay their actions.

As a summary of the tensions between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching behaviours, Phipps and Borg (2009) make the following assertions:

- Teachers' beliefs exist as a system in which certain beliefs are core and others peripheral (Green, 1971; Pajares, 1992). Core beliefs are stable and exert a more powerful influence on behaviour than peripheral beliefs.
- Tensions between what teachers say and do are a reflection of their belief sub-systems, and of the different forces which influence their thinking and behaviour.
- Contextual factors, such as a prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and high-stake examinations mediate the extent to which teachers can act in accordance with their beliefs.
- [Methodologically], ... in the study of teachers' beliefs different elicitation strategies may elicit different responses (Borg, 2006). (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 381)

Thus, the divergence, or tensions (Phipps & Borg, 2009) between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices:

should not be seen as a flaw in teachers. ... We know, for example, that the social, institutional, instructional, and physical settings in which teachers work often constrain what they can do... Another issue we must bear in mind is that a teacher will hold a complex set of beliefs that may not always be compatible with one another. (Borg, 2009, p. 167)

Such an argument has some justification, given that teachers' beliefs are inherently situated within the context of social and cultural realities where teaching and learning take place (Barcelos, 2003). The role of contextual factors in language teachers' decision-making processes has been acknowledged by several researchers (e.g. Burns, 1996; Smith, 1996; Woods, 1996). The current view is that relationships between beliefs and practices are interactive and ongoing (Fullan, 1991, 2001; Richardson, 1996). An important point made by Phipps and Borg (2009) very recently is that, despite disparities between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual practices, their instructional behaviours are consistent with their "deeper, more general beliefs about learning" (p. 387). Phipps and Borg (2009) found in their study that:

... a characteristic of core beliefs is that they are experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction. Where core and peripheral beliefs can be implemented harmoniously, teachers' practices will be characterised by fewer tensions; where, though, the actions implied by core and peripheral beliefs are at odds, ... peripheral beliefs will not necessarily be reflected in practice. (p. 388)

The present case study is designed to examine both teachers' verbal beliefs about form-focused instruction and their actual teaching strategies, in an attempt to explore whether or not their beliefs are related to their practices, as well as factors accounting for the correspondence or disparity between beliefs and practices. In order to identify the theoretical framework for the study, Section 3.4 below will review the studies on second language teachers' beliefs and practices in form-focused instruction.

3. 4. Studies on Teachers' Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction

3. 4. 1. Studies on Teachers' Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction Outside Asia

Second language grammar teaching, together with literacy instruction, are the two domains that have attracted significant research attention with regard to teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006). Given the purpose of the present study, which concerns teachers' beliefs and practices related to FFI, literacy instruction will not be followed here. Borg (2003a, 2006) categorises the studies of teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching into three distinctive sub-strands: (i) teachers' declarative knowledge of grammar; (ii) teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching; and (iii) the relationships between teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and their classroom practices.

With reference to teachers' declarative knowledge about grammar, six studies were reviewed by Borg (2006). Four of these were conducted in UK, chiefly with pre-service modern language teachers. On the basis of test scores, these studies indicated that teachers' knowledge about grammar was inadequate. For example, in Chandler's (1988) postal questionnaire survey with practicing teachers of English in UK, the analysis of the 50 responses indicated that teachers lacked awareness of the importance of grammatical knowledge. This was due to the fact that they acquired grammatical knowledge chiefly from their experience as school language learners. In contrast, Puerto Rico teachers in Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers' (1997) questionnaire study seemed to have a well-developed knowledge of grammar. They appeared to be more supportive of explicit grammar instruction. These Puerto Rico teachers state that they feel quite confident in teaching grammar, which is part of their learning experience. More importantly, their beliefs about grammar teaching were shaped by their experiences both as language learners and language teachers rather than by research studies or training. This result was in line with Burgess and Etherington's (2002) study. These researchers administered a 40-item questionnaire to a group of 48 EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teachers in UK universities. According to their findings, the majority of the teachers believed that grammar was

the framework for the rest of the language and that grammatical accuracy was integral to language and communication. Such beliefs led them to advocate a more explicit approach to grammar instruction on account of this approach satisfying their students' expectations and feelings of security, although they also indicated their favour of an integrated, focus-on-form approach to grammar instruction. This study was replicated by Barnard and Scampton (2008) with New Zealand EAP teachers. Like British teachers in Burgess and Etherington's study, the New Zealand teachers, while following a form-focused approach as promoted by Long and Robinson (1998), attached importance to extensive practice and to explicit correction of formal errors. However, all these studies shared the same methodological limitation, which is the sole reliance on a self-report questionnaire. Thus, participants' responses may reflect their ideals rather than their actual practices or beliefs.

Johnston and Goettsch (2000) investigate the beliefs about grammar teaching of four experienced ESL teachers participating in a 10-week grammar programme in a mid-western American university. Each of the four teachers was observed twice. Following the observation, each teacher was asked to reflect on the specific explanations observed in their classes as well as on their general approach to explanations of grammatical and other linguistic issues. The study revealed that teachers believed that examples were a key part of good explanations. One teacher believed that examples with context were more useful than other types of explanations while another teacher relied on giving examples and having students look for patterns if a particular rule is not handy. One teacher elicited examples from the students themselves, framing them before and after with her own brief explanation. The authors conclude that teachers' knowledge base is situated, process-oriented, and contextualised. Therefore, the boundary between theory (knowledge of language) and practice (teaching) becomes erased (pp. 464-465).

Unlike other researchers, Schulz (1996, 2001) was interested in comparing FL teachers' and students' attitudes towards grammar teaching and error correction, a topic that had rarely been touched upon in previous studies. Using the questionnaire

with identical questions, which was administered to 824 students of German, Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish and 92 instructors at the University of Arizona, Schulz (1996) finds that while students' attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction was in general positive, teachers' beliefs were divided in this regard. Specifically, teachers of commonly taught languages differed to teachers of less commonly taught languages in every aspect of formal instruction. Also, the students were more positive towards error correction than the teachers. Here again, like the disagreement between the students and the teachers, there was a great discrepancy between teachers of commonly taught languages and their colleagues of less commonly taught languages. According to Schulz, the disagreement between teachers and students with regard to formal instruction and error correction was derived from myths about the usefulness of grammar study handed down from previous generations, the influence of the grammar-based curriculum and discrete-point testing methods, and students' own learning experiences (pp. 348-349).

Despite the limitations of the sampling in this study, which was not randomized and was confined to one American university, the study supports the fact that students hold favourable attitudes towards formal instruction and error correction as well as the discrepancy among teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. It is also interesting to note that while students in the study hold favourable attitudes towards grammar instruction, most of them do not want to have more grammar in their course. Schulz's findings were supported by Bernat (2004) who surveyed 20 Vietnamese adult migrants ESL learners aged 24-59 about their beliefs regarding English language learning. These learners were participating in a 100-hour English For Work course in Sydney, Australia. Findings indicated that a majority of these learners believed that learning grammar was the most important part of learning a new language and that accuracy was critical to their English oral communication.

In 2001, Schulz administered a questionnaire to 607 Colombian FL students and 122 of their teachers, as well as to 824 US FL students and 92 teachers to elicit student

and teacher perceptions concerning the role of explicit grammar instruction and corrective feedback in FL learning. Data comparisons indicated relatively high agreement between students as a group across cultures in terms of their strong positive beliefs about explicit grammar instruction and corrective feedback, while agreement among teachers as a group on this aspect was not so strong. Also, in comparison with their American counterparts, Colombian students and teachers were more favourably inclined toward the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction and error correction. However, a number of discrepancies were evident between student and teacher beliefs within each culture, as well as in comparisons of the two groups across cultures, particularly regarding the role of formal grammar instruction in language learning. Very recently, Polat (2009) has reported a consensus among Georgian teachers and students in the importance of grammar in language learning, where both groups valued the traditional approach to grammar. Nonetheless, mismatches between teachers' and learners regarding their beliefs about some teaching techniques were also reported. For example, while both teachers and students agreed that 'pre-teaching rules' should be used in grammar teaching, more students than teachers preferred more drills and error correction. Teachers were, in contrast, more positive about structural analyses and ordering structures. Similarly, Brown (2009) surveyed 49 teachers and approximately 1,600 students of different foreign languages in an American university and found that while teachers valued meaningful information exchange over grammar, their students preferred to have formal grammar instruction take precedence over communicative exchanges in the L2 classroom.

The fact that students' beliefs in formal grammar teaching are more favourable than teachers' beliefs has been supported by a number of studies (e.g. Brown, 2009; Loewen, Li, Fei, Thompson, Nakatsuka, Ahn, & Chen, 2009; Polat, 2009; Schulz, 1996, 2001; Tomlinson & Bao Dat, 2004). From his literature review, Borg (2006) concluded that in addition to the mismatch between students and teachers in terms of their perceptions of various aspects of grammar teaching, explicit formal instruction was dominant in all these studies, and that teachers' learning experience had a more

powerful impact on their beliefs about grammar teaching than formal research-based theories about grammar teaching. Borg's conclusion further supports what Nespor stated two decades ago:

...teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks. But why should this be so? Why wouldn't research-based knowledge or academic theory serve this purpose just as well? The answer suggested here is that the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts. (Nespor, 1987, p. 324)

With a sole focus on teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar to adult learners, Borg and Burns (2008) administered Likert-scale questionnaires electronically to 176 English language teachers from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Asia in order to explore their beliefs about teaching grammar to adult learners and about integration of grammar into their work. They found that the teachers showed a strong belief in the positive impact of grammar practice on the development of learners' fluency, and the number of teachers favouring discovery learning was greater than those supporting explaining rules. In addition, teachers in the study supported the integration of grammar into skills work, but 'integration' was reconceptualized according to their own beliefs. The study also indicated that teachers' beliefs were in no way influenced by teachers' experience or qualification or by whether English was being taught as a foreign or second language. In addition, these teachers did not refer to any technical term such as 'focus-on-form' in their responses.

Methodologically, it is evident that most of the studies reviewed by Borg, and those published subsequently in relation to teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching, used questionnaires as a tool of data collection. As a result, it is not clear how the beliefs teachers hold about grammar teaching affect their classroom practice due to the lack of data triangulation. In studying teachers' mental lives in order to find a connection

between their beliefs and their practice, it is obviously not sufficient to only elicit their beliefs through verbalization. This is a common drawback of all studies on teachers' beliefs that use questionnaires as the sole method of data collection.

To compensate for the drawback of questionnaire-based studies on teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching, an increasing number of studies with a focus on how teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching were reflected in their actual instructional practices have been conducted since the late 1990s. This topic has been researched with increasing refinement. Quantitatively, studies on this topic (N=24) has outnumbered those of other aspects of grammar teaching as demonstrated in Borg's (2006) review. Among the pioneers in researching this topic are Mitchell and Hooper (1992), and Mitchell, Brumfit, and Hooper (1994a, 1994b). Studies by these authors used classroom observations and interviews to find out the extent to which the beliefs reported by British secondary school teachers of foreign languages were reflected in their classroom practices. All these studies indicated a consistency between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Another issue that emerged from these studies was that there seemed to be a causal relationship between teachers' knowledge about language (KAL) and their beliefs about grammar teaching and their pedagogical behaviours.

Looking at factors that shaped teachers' grammar pedagogy, Johnston and Goettsch (2000) examined the influence of four experienced teachers' knowledge base on the way they taught grammar in the classroom in America. They found that teachers' grammar pedagogy was strongly influenced by their beliefs about the way learners learn grammar as well as by their pedagogical content knowledge. Borg (1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2003c, 2005) conducted a series of studies with EFL teachers in Malta. Reviewing these studies in his seminal book (Borg, 2006), he contends that teachers' instructional decisions in relation to grammar teaching were shaped by "the interactions of a complex range of factors" (p. 124) such as their perceptions of students' expectations, their educational biographies, and their beliefs about the best way of learning grammar, rather than by one separate factor alone. Particularly, Borg's (1998a) exploratory interpretive case study of an experienced FL

teacher in Malta teaching in an English language adult learners showed that the teacher was socialised into particular beliefs, pedagogical orientations, and practices by means of prior experience, in-service training, and institutional and other contextual factors.

Burns and Knox (2005) studied two teachers who had taken an MA course on systemic functional linguistics in Australia. The authors found that teachers' grammar pedagogy was also shaped by a wide range of factors such as institutional, pedagogical, personal, and physical. Especially, although these two teachers were influenced by their language learning experience with traditional approaches to grammar, they managed to incorporate the principles of systemic functional grammar into their teaching through the research process. Yet, the authors cautioned that such a change in teachers' beliefs and practices was the result of research intervention. Mohamed (2006) explored the interconnections between teachers' beliefs, their instructional practices and professional development, examining the extent to which the introduction of an innovative teaching approach impacts teachers' beliefs and behaviour. It focuses particularly on grammar instruction in the context of English teaching in secondary schools of the Maldives. Methods used were a questionnaire, observations and interviews. Results showed that although teachers were observed to generally follow their pedagogic beliefs, several points of difference between their beliefs and practices existed. Despite their increased understanding of the introduced innovative approach to grammar instruction, only limited changes to their beliefs and practices were observed. Grammar teaching involved a routinised pattern of rule explanation followed by practice exercises. A student's ability to correctly complete an exercise was taken to be evidence of successful learning. It is interpreted from the study that teachers' core beliefs can be so ingrained that they act as impediments to change and alternative approaches to instruction cannot be appreciated. This accounts for the gulf between theory and practice, which has been confirmed by several authors. For example, Borg and Burns (2008) conclude that "formal theory does not play a prominent and direct role in shaping teachers' explicit rationales for their

work” (p. 479). This conclusion is line with Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers’ (1997) claim that:

Reasons given for how and why conscious grammar was taught were based mostly on teachers’ perceptions of their own experience as teachers and learners. It is interesting that our participants rarely justified their approaches by referring to research studies or any particular methodology. (p. 255)

These empirical findings justify the need to gain insights into the beliefs that underpin teachers’ actual practices in the classroom. Those insights will help researchers and methodologists to be more aware of the contextual situatedness of teaching and teacher learning. Without those insights, it is hard to devise appropriate professional development approaches that can contribute to the improvement of the classroom life.

The impact of contextual variables that account for the tensions between teachers’ professed beliefs and their actual grammar teaching is again evidenced in Phipps and Borg’s (2009) study with three university EFL teachers of Turkish, British and American nationalities working in a private English-medium university in Turkey. Using a multiple-source qualitative study, the authors found that there were contextual tensions between what the teachers believed and what they actually did in the classroom. The authors noted that the mere identification of tensions between teachers’ beliefs and practices was insufficient, “rather attempts need to be made to explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons behind such tensions” (p. 388). Further discussion of the influence of contextual factors on teachers’ materialization of their beliefs into classroom practices will be presented subsequently.

3. 4. 2. Studies on Teachers’ Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction within Asia

This literature review thus far indicates that most of studies on teachers’ beliefs have been conducted in the ESL contexts of the English-speaking countries, leaving the

EFL teachers, especially EFL teachers in Asian countries under-researched. Woods (1996) has called for more research on the issue in settings where English is taught as a 'foreign language' rather than a 'second language' (p. 298). However, very few of the 180 studies reviewed by Borg (2006) were undertaken in Asia. This section reviews the teacher beliefs studies undertaken in Asian contexts, although a few of them have been discussed in the sections above.

Findings from the studies conducted by Andrews (1994, 1997, 1999, 2003) and Andrews and McNeil (2005) with EFL teachers in Hong Kong showed a causal relationship between teachers' language awareness (TLA) (of which teachers' explicit grammar knowledge is just one component), and teachers' metalinguistic awareness (TMA) and the effectiveness of their classroom teaching. As demonstrated by the data from observations of teachers' simulated teaching (i.e., micro-teaching), the teachers had difficulty in operating their declarative knowledge of language in the classroom due to their limited language awareness and metalinguistic awareness. In the 1994 study with 82 EFL teacher trainers on TEFL training courses, and the questionnaire data showed that more than half of these teacher trainers did not have adequate knowledge about grammar. Then in 1999, Andrews extended his study to a further 40 teachers. Half of these teachers were non-native speaker practicing and prospective teachers of English in Hong Kong, and the other half were native English speaker prospective teachers of modern languages in UK. Instead of using a questionnaire as he did in his 1994 study, Andrews used a 6-item test to measure the explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology of these teachers in an attempt to compare the test performance between the two groups: native and non-native speaker teachers. The test result showed that the non-native speaker teachers of English in Hong Kong significantly outperformed the native English speaker teachers of modern languages. However, this study did not tell us who among the non-native speaker teachers did better: the practising teachers or the prospective teachers. In 2003, Andrews undertook another study with 170 secondary school teachers of English in Hong Kong (more than 95% were non-native speakers of English). Using a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews, Andrews found that the way teachers

taught grammar was not influenced by their teaching experience, but by their language proficiency, explicit grammar knowledge as well as by their beliefs about grammar. Particularly, teachers' beliefs in a form-focused approach to grammar were positively correlated to their beliefs in a deductive approach to grammar. In contrast, teachers' beliefs in an inductive approach to grammar were modestly correlated to their beliefs in a meaning-focused approach to grammar, while their beliefs in a deductive approach to grammar were in no ways correlated to their beliefs in a meaning-focused approach to grammar. Typically (although not exclusively), their style of presentation was deductive, their practice activities were mechanical and form-focused, and production took the form of written composition. Interestingly, many of the teachers surveyed seemed to feel constrained to follow such a pattern because of rigid and overcrowded teaching syllabuses, the demands of the examinations, and the characteristics of their students, while some features of the CLT approach did nevertheless seem to have been absorbed into their belief system, if not necessarily into their pedagogical practice. There was recognition among all the participating teachers, for instance, that students needed grammar primarily for communicative purposes, but at the same time, they needed explicit grammar knowledge to support the development of their implicit knowledge and to help them cope with examination demands. The findings of this study support what was reported by Breen et al. (2001), that a shared principle might be implemented through a diverse range of practices while a common practice may be justified by a variety of principles (Breen et al., 2001, pp. 495-496). Andrews suggests that a case study that involves the analysis of classroom data be used to explore the individuality of the relationship between each teacher's cognitions and their pedagogical practice (p. 373).

Recently, Carless (2009) interviewed twelve English language teachers in ten different secondary schools in Hong Kong to examine their beliefs about task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the PPP approach. The results showed that teachers generally preferred PPP rather than TBLT, since they believed PPP was more effective in facilitating direct grammar instruction.

Richards, Gallo and Renandya (2001) investigated the core beliefs language teachers held about the process of teaching and learning as well as the causal relationship between changes in teachers' beliefs and changes in their practices. They administered a questionnaire to 112 second language teachers (54 from Singapore; 22 from Thailand; 22 from Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines; and 14 from Australia). Seventy-nine per cent of these teachers were female and 21 percent were male. The result indicated that the most commonly reported core beliefs teacher held centred on the role of grammar in language teaching and the related issue of how grammar should be taught. These researchers concluded that "many of the respondents still hold firmly to the belief that grammar is central to language learning and direct grammar teaching is needed by their EFL/ESL students" (p. 54) although their stated beliefs advocated a communicative approach to teaching.

The contradiction inherent in teachers' beliefs is also evident in the study of Zeng and Murphy (2007) on six EFL university teachers in China. The analysis of the data obtained from the triangulation of the online questionnaire, asynchronous focus group and email-based individual interviews showed that these teachers held conflicting beliefs about grammar teaching. They emphasized both the importance of grammar rules and that of language socialization in language learning. The diversity of learning and professional experiences of the teachers in this study may be attributable to their conflicting beliefs, or to the gap between teachers' espoused theory and theory-in-use.

In Singapore, Farrell (1999) used reflective assignments to examine ESL student teachers' prior beliefs about teaching grammar, and found that the beliefs about grammar teaching held by these student teachers were shaped by their language learning experience with traditional methods of drill and memorization of rules. Since they had only experienced a deductive approach to learning English grammar, they were not aware of alternative approaches to the teaching of grammar. Lim (2003) studied two experienced English teachers in a Singapore primary school, and the data collected from teacher interviews, classroom observations, document analyses, and samples of pupils' composition scripts revealed that teachers' instructional decisions

and practices were often influenced by factors other than their own personal beliefs, some of which were beyond the teachers' control though their beliefs about grammar teaching did influence their actual classroom practices to a certain extent. Chia (2003) found that questionnaire data provided by 96 primary school teachers who were attending the Singapore-Cambridge Certificate in the Teaching of Grammar course indicated that teachers were strongly in favour of explicit formal instruction. They reported a preference for formal instruction based on explicit, deductive teaching in which drilling played a central role. Ng and Farrell (2003) conducted a case study to examine the correspondence between teachers' beliefs about grammar and their grammar teaching practice and found varying levels of congruence between teachers' stated beliefs and actual classroom practices. Lack of congruence between beliefs and practices was explained in relation to the contextual factors which exerted a powerful influence on what teachers did in the classroom (time, need to prepare students for exams, institutional policy). These findings were supported by Farrell and Lim's (2005) recent case study in an elementary school in Singapore. Data collected from multiple sources: pre-study interviews, pre-lesson interviews, post-lesson interviews, and classroom observations, showed that there was a consistency between their stated beliefs about the importance of grammar and their teacher-centred lessons which were characterised by explanations and instructions followed by eliciting responses from the students on their knowledge of grammatical items. Furthermore, the findings suggested that teachers indeed had a set of complex belief systems that were sometimes not reflected in their classroom practices for various complicated reasons, some directly related to the context of their teaching.

In Turkey, Phipps and Borg (2009), as noted in the previous section, examined the tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three experienced teachers of English of Turkish, British and American nationalities working in a private English-medium university. The teachers were observed and interviewed over a period of 18 months. The authors reported that all three teachers tended to adopt a focus-on-forms approach, present and practice grammar, correct grammatical errors and use grammatical terminology. However, they also reported a number of tensions

between teachers' stated beliefs and their practices, mainly related to inductive and contextualised presentation of grammar, meaningful practice and oral group work. It was evident in this study that teachers' practices reflected their beliefs that learning was enhanced when learners were engaged cognitively, when their expectations were met, and when order, control and flow of the lesson were maintained. Especially, the authors found that the beliefs which were derived from experiential knowledge were the most influential on teachers' work.

In Vietnam, Canh and Barnard (2009b) replicated Burgess and Etherington's (2002) questionnaire study with a small group of Vietnamese EAP teachers. Findings showed that, like their British and New Zealand counterparts, Vietnamese teachers involved in the survey considered grammar to be a central feature of language and a crucial element in their pedagogy. There was also strong conformity of views regarding the need for explicit grammar instruction, the usefulness of explaining rules, the need for practice and the importance attached to error correction. However, unlike teachers from the other two groups, Vietnamese teachers seemed to reject the notion that grammar could be learned through exposure to language in natural environments. This disparity in views is worthy of further investigation, and it is to be examined in the present study. At the same time, Canh and Barnard's study, despite its useful information, is limited in terms of both the scope and the method. This gives rise to the need to elaborate the issue with multiple-sourced data.

It is evident that teacher beliefs research in Asian contexts remains limited in terms of both the scope and the geographical coverage. Most of the studies are descriptive and have been conducted in Singapore and Hong Kong. Consequently, the issue of EFL teachers' beliefs about grammar and how those beliefs relate to their teaching practices remains under-explored. Given the significance of this kind of research, which is believed to provide insights into "the rationales underlying the teachers' instructional decisions" (Borg, 2001, p. 155), thereby improving "our understanding of how teachers teach grammar and of the thinking informing their instructional

decisions” (p. 156), this gap should be filled. This case study, which is conducted in a Vietnamese upper secondary school, is a modest attempt towards that goal.

3. 5. Summary

The literature review above lends support to Borg (2003c) who comments that despite recent growing interest among second and foreign language education researchers in examining teachers’ beliefs about grammar:

... few investigations of L2 teachers’ practices and cognitions in grammar teaching have been conducted, and hence our understanding of how teachers teach grammar and of the thinking informing their instructional decisions is still quite undeveloped. (p. 156)

Given the swings of the pendulum and the gap between theory and practice with regard to FFI as indicated earlier in this chapter, it is critical to have more empirical studies on how teachers actually teach grammar in the classroom and the underlying rationales of their teaching. The present study is an attempt to make a contribution to further insights of the issue in an under-resourced EFL context.

The literature review presented in this chapter also shows that very few studies about teachers’ beliefs about second language education in general, and about form-focused instruction in particular, have ever been undertaken in Asian contexts. Most of the reported studies are undertaken in either Hong Kong or Singapore. Zeng and Murphy (2007) have noted that “compared to the amount of literature about native speaking ESL teachers’ beliefs... in western countries, there are fewer studies in pertinent research domains of non-native speaking EFL teachers” (p.2). This is in alignment with Borg’s concern that “secondary schools in state sector education have been the focus of very little attention” (Borg, 2006, p. 274). If we agree that teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ learning to teach are situated and context-dependent, more research on teachers’ beliefs and practices in a variety of different contexts, especially in the

‘expanding circle countries’ (Kachru, 1986), where teachers are non-native, the syllabus is prescribed and access to expert theories of practice is limited, is an urgent need.

Methodologically, most of the studies on SL/FL teachers’ beliefs and practices, particularly those related to teachers’ thinking and practices with reference to FFI, employed self-report verbal methods such as questionnaires or interviews without any triangulation with their classroom practices. These instruments may elicit teachers’ beliefs on the surface level or their ideals, rather than what they really believe. Phipps and Borg (2009) suggest that “studies which employ qualitative strategies to explore language teachers’ actual practices and beliefs will be more productive (than, for example, questionnaires about what teachers do and believe) in advancing our understanding of the complex relationships between these phenomena” (p. 388). Virtually, very few in-depth qualitative case studies have been reported in the literature while most of them focused on just one or two teachers.

Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002) claim that studies on teachers’ beliefs would be incomplete without “a systematic examination of the relationship between those beliefs and teachers’ practices” (p. 182). Given the complexities of teachers’ beliefs and practices (Borg, 2006), more in-depth case studies are probably needed to uncover such complexities of what is beneath the classroom life. This case study is designed to examine teachers’ beliefs about form-focused instruction held by a small group of eight Vietnamese teachers working in a state upper secondary school as well as the correlation between their beliefs and their actual classroom behaviours. It is, thus, an attempt to make a modest contribution to the community discourse by adding to a common understanding of one of the thorny, but urgent issues in SL/FL teaching – teachers’ beliefs and practices about FFI.

The next chapter will present the research design, research methods and methods of data analysis for the present case study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents key ontological, epistemological and axiological differences between positivist and naturalist paradigms in educational research, outlining and explaining the rationale of the methodological choices for the present study. It then describes the methodology adopted in the study, detailing the overall design, the instrumentation that was employed, the process of selecting the case and getting entry, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

4. 1. Research Design

Methodology addresses the issue of how we go about finding out whatever it is that we believe we know or can come to know (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Generally speaking, research methodologies come from two major different epistemological and disciplinary traditions: positivist and naturalist. While the former emphasises quantitative methods, the latter advocates qualitative methods. The difference between the two traditions lies in the view of the nature of reality, i.e., whether there is a single reality or multiple realities; the epistemological relationship between the known and the knower, i.e., whether they are independent or inseparable; the role of value in research, i.e., whether research is value-free or value-laden; generalisations, i.e., whether generalisations are context-bound or context-free; causal relationships, i.e., whether a cause-effect relation can be established or not; and logic, i.e., whether a deductive or inductive way of reasoning is favoured (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Richards (2003, p. 36) highlights these differences between the two traditions from three perspectives: ontological, epistemological, and axiological, as shown in Table 4.1. below.

Table 4.1.

Differences in Research Traditions

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Tradition</i>	
	<i>Positivist</i>	<i>Naturalist</i>
<i>ontological</i>	It is possible to build up a coherent picture of the structure of an external world and the relationship between events within it.	The concept of reality is essentially a construction based on the interaction of the individual with the environment.
<i>epistemological</i>	On the basis of such observation/ investigation it is possible to establish general truths and laws that are accessible to all and can inform action.	The exploration of this relationship enables us to understand the ways in which the world is interpreted and common understandings are constructed.
<i>axiological</i>	These truths and the processes by which they are established are essentially value-free.	All truths, like all investigations and understandings, are value-laden.

(Source: Richards, 2003, p. 36)

Research belonging to the positivist tradition is referred to as quantitative research “because the data are typically numeric in nature” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 6), comprising measurements, tabulations, ratings, and rankings. This research tradition is commonly used in second language education to “investigate the effect of different methods, materials, teaching techniques, types of classroom delivery, and so on, on language learning” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 6). In contrast, naturalistic research is sometimes called qualitative research “because it is concerned with capturing the qualities and attributes of the phenomena being investigated rather than with measuring or counting” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 7). Both traditions possess advantages and disadvantages (Peshkin, 1993). Quantitative research is obtrusive, controlled, objective, and product-oriented. Its major advantage is that “it is possible

to measure the reactions of many subjects to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of data” (Patton, 1990, p. 165). In contrast to a quantitative inquiry, qualitative research involves naturalistic, uncontrolled, subjective, and process-oriented observation. It typically produces a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases. In summary:

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interviews; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4)

Thus qualitative researchers are those who “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). Authors like Marshall and Rossman (1999), and Robson (2002) claim that the functions of qualitative research are exploratory and descriptive. To be more specific, the essential purpose of qualitative research is to explore and describe participants’ understanding and interpretations of social phenomena in a way that captures their inherent nature. Such a purpose is elaborated thus:

Although definitions vary, the aims of qualitative research are generally directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world, by learning about people’s social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories. (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 22)

Recently, the boundary between qualitative and quantitative research has tended to be increasingly blurred. Research methodologists (e.g. Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994; Snape & Spencer, 2003) have argued that quantitative and qualitative approaches are in fact compatible, and social researchers have recently

taken a more pragmatic view of ‘what works’. In other words, what matters is the fit between the research methods used and the research questions posed (Shulman, 1997; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) rather than “the degree of philosophical coherence of the epistemological positions typically associated with different research methods” (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 21). Within the context of teacher belief research, Borg (2006) advises that the choice of research methods should be made with reference not only to methodological considerations but also to “what is practically feasible, acceptable and permissible in the particular context under study” (p. 280).

Van Lier (1988) justifies a focus on the subjective, qualitative tradition on five grounds:

1. Our knowledge of what actually goes on in the classroom is extremely limited.
2. It is relevant and valuable to increase that knowledge.
3. This can only be done by going into the classroom for data.
4. All data must be interpreted in the classroom context, i.e., the context of their occurrence.
5. This context is not only a linguistic or cognitive one, but it is also essentially a social context. (p. 37)

In their qualitative volume about second language education, Bailey and Nunan wrote that:

Our hope was to bring together a series of rich descriptive and interpretive accounts, documenting the concerns of teachers and students as they teach, learn and use languages. ... The book was born partly out of frustration as we sought in vain for appropriate qualitative studies as models for our own students, and partly out of respect for and fascination with teaching and learning. (1996, p. 9).

Since the publication of Bailey and Nunan's volume, there has been an increasing interest in qualitative research in applied linguistics in general and in second language education in particular (Duff, 2008). Such interest has resulted from the growing recognition that qualitative research provides insights into the contextual conditions and influences that shape almost every aspect of second language learning and teaching (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 36). Very recently, Johnson (2006) points out the inadequacy of the positivist paradigm in explaining the relationship between teaching processes and teachers' mental lives, and she reiterates Elbaz's (1991) view that an interpretative or situated paradigm is better suited to explaining the complexities of teachers' mental lives and the multi-dimensions of teachers' professional worlds. The interpretative paradigm views human cognition, teachers' cognition included, as being situated, social, and distributed. This view is aligned with Burns' (1996) framework of the intercontextuality of teacher thinking and beliefs (see 3.2.2), which emphasises the social and institutional contexts of classrooms in the study of teachers' beliefs and their instructional decisions. Evidently, a naturalistic approach is more appropriate to the research of teachers' beliefs and the relationship between beliefs and action.

Naturalistic research is actually an umbrella term for a variety of different research methods, but two frequently used methods in mainstream education and second language education are ethnographies and case studies (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 8). The two methods differ in terms of their contextual breadth with ethnographies covering a much broader scope of cultural description. Ethnographies take a holistic approach and usually do not begin with preconceived ideas or assumptions about the data. In contrast, Yin (2003), a case study methodologist in education and management, defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points; and, as one result,
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion; and, as another result,
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp. 13-14)

It is understood from Yin's definition above that one of the characteristics of case study research is the combination of a variety of data collection methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis. It is the view of multiple realities as pointed out in Yin's definition that underlies interpretivism, "which is arguably the most common approach to qualitative case studies" in contemporary social sciences including applied linguistics (Duff, 2008, p. 29). However, Dörnyei (2007) has maintained that:

The case study is not a specific technique but rather a method of collecting and organising data so as to maximise our understanding of the unitary character of the social being or object studied. In many ways, it the ultimate qualitative method focusing on the 'Particular One.' (p. 152)

Case study has been widely used in various areas of human inquiry including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, education, and applied linguistics (Merriam, 1988). The increasing popularity of case study as a research approach is credited to researchers' awareness of the limitations of the quantitative research in understanding the complexities of many issues in the fields (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Duff, 2008). Discussing the value of case study research, Dörnyei (2007) asserts that:

The case study is an excellent method for obtaining a thick description of a complex social issue embedded within a cultural context. It offers rich and in-depth insights that no other method can yield, allowing researchers to examine

how an intricate set of circumstances come together and interact in shaping the social world around us. (p. 155)

4. 2. Rationale

A review of the literature on teacher belief research shows that methods such as concept maps (Kagan, 1990; Morine-Dershimer, 1993), repertory grids (Munby, 1982, 1984), interviews (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992; Burns, 1996), metaphors (Bullough & Stokes, 1994), autobiography (Trubull, 1990), narrative (Beattie, 1995; Elbaz, 1991), and life history (Fang, 1996) have all been adopted by researchers studying teachers' beliefs. Direct observation (Thompson, 1992), stimulated recall interviews (Burns, 1996; Fang, 1996), and document analysis (Freeman, 1991; Pratt, 1992) have been used to access teachers' thinking in action. However, each of the methods noted above has its own strengths and potential limitations, and therefore no single method is free of problems (Borg, 2006, p. 279). Since teachers' beliefs are often value-laden, tacit, systematic, dynamic, and highly context-sensitive (Borg, 2006, p. 272), and "finding appropriate and valid ways of making implicit theories explicit is therefore a major methodological challenge" (Marland, 1995, p. 133). To address this methodological challenge, a qualitative case study which uses a multi-method strategy is an appropriate approach to studying teachers' beliefs and their practice because the focus of the study is on the understanding of what teachers think and how they understand the worlds in which they live and act (Freeman, 1996). Unfortunately, not many in-depth case studies of teachers' beliefs in foreign language contexts, and none at all in Vietnam, have been reported in the teacher beliefs literature. Woods' (1996) study of eight ESL teachers in Canada, in which he used ethnographic interviews, modified ethnographic observation over time, and a video-based method of eliciting introspective data (p. 25), was one of the few case studies ever reported in the teacher cognition literature. Consequently, the present study, which sets out to use a qualitative case study approach, is an attempt to fill this methodological gap.

As Stake (2005) suggests, "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 443). The present case study sets out to uncover, describe,

and explain a specific group of EFL teachers' beliefs about form-focused instruction, the relationship between their beliefs and instructional practices as well as factors that shape their beliefs in the context of an upper secondary school in Vietnam. The present investigation is a case study because it was conducted in one Vietnamese upper secondary school and involved the majority of English language teachers working in that school, i.e., in the "real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p. 13), over a seven-month period of data collection. The data were contextualised through preliminary interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall sessions. No previous hypothesis guided the data collection and findings were subjected to grounded analysis informed by the broad themes identified in the preliminary study. (See Section 4.3 below.) Therefore, it fits the characteristics and the purpose of a qualitative case study as described above. Specifically, the reasons for choosing a case study method for the present study are both methodological and pragmatic. Methodologically, I have followed Borg's (2006) advice that:

The study of cognitions and practices in isolation of the contexts in which they occur will inevitably, (therefore), provide partial, if not flawed, characterizations of teachers and teaching. (p. 275)

Similarly, Pajares (1992) reminds researchers of the methodological dimensions in researching beliefs:

It is also clear that, if reasonable inferences about beliefs require assessments of what individuals say, intend, and do, then teachers' verbal expressions, predispositions to action, and teaching behaviors must all be included in assessments of beliefs. Not to do so calls into question the validity of the findings and the value of the study. Traditional belief inventories provide limited information with which to make inferences, and it is at this step in the measurement process that understanding the context-specific nature of beliefs becomes critical (p. 327).

Pragmatically, I took the point made by other researchers that flexibility is critical in doing educational research in Vietnam given its research culture (Hiep, 2006; Gorsuch, 2006) which requires “a negotiated, adaptive, and flexible approach, and one that is sensitive to the changing research context” (Scott, Miller, & Lloyd, 2006, p. 38). One of the advantages of qualitative research over quantitative research is its flexibility regarding the research design. “This means that no aspect of the research design is tightly prefigured and a study is kept open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigation” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 37).

4.3. Preliminary Study

In order to gain preliminary information for the study reported in this thesis, I conducted a preliminary study of teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards grammar teaching and learning in December 2007. (Full details can be found in Appendix A.) Participants in this preliminary study were secondary school teachers (N=39) and students (N=516) of Grade 10 (N=189; 36.6%), Grade 11 (N= 159; 30.8%), and Grade 12 (N= 168; 32.6%). The teachers were chosen from 39 secondary schools in a variety of different provinces in Vietnam, who agreed to participate in this study after I sent them an email expressing my purpose of the study. Most of these teachers had less than ten years’ teaching experience. The students were from four secondary schools located in both the northern part and southern part of the country. These schools had some major common characteristics with the school where I would conduct my case study later such as rural location and closeness to the provincial town. I asked their headmaster teachers to invite them to respond to a questionnaire, which was sent to them electronically via the headmaster teachers.

Two research instruments were employed for this preliminary study: a questionnaire for both teachers and students and teachers’ short and simple ‘narratives’. The questionnaire was analysed quantitatively whereas the teachers’ ‘narratives’ were

analysed qualitatively. (Full details of the instruments and responses are provided in Appendix A.)

The 10-item questionnaire, which was designed to capture basic issues related to teachers' and students' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching, was written in Vietnamese to make sure that the respondents understood the statements in the questionnaire accurately. Then it was distributed to the students who were simply asked to agree or disagree with a statement on methodological preferences related to grammar instruction and error correction as an instinctive reaction. The first three items were statements on the role of grammar in English language learning, and the remaining 7 items reflected various methods of teaching grammar and error correction in the classroom.

The teachers were asked to respond to a parallel questionnaire, but four more statements were added to elicit teachers' attitudes to the use of grammatical terminologies, the order of grammar instruction, the model of teaching grammar, and the relationship between grammar teaching and the prescribed textbook. The results of this preliminary study were used as a point of reference for my subsequent data collection.

The preliminary study was essentially a survey with some short, simple narratives. The purpose was to capture a 'snapshot' of a sample of teachers' attitudes at a certain moment in time. Although this study covered a relatively large number of teachers across Vietnam, it was limited in terms of the necessary inability of the questionnaire to cover all the dimensions of teachers' beliefs about form-focused instruction. In addition, "teachers' responses to questionnaire items may just indicate their choices of what the researcher promoted, rather than their own true beliefs" (Borg, 2006, p. 185). What is more, the questionnaire did not allow deep insights into what teachers believed, what they actually did in the classroom and how they rationalised their pedagogic activity. However, while limited in these ways, this preliminary study did provide me with a number of constructs around which to build a longitudinal,

qualitative, context-sensitive and in-depth investigation which employed a multi-method research approach, i.e. a case study.

The findings of this preliminary study indicate that teachers in general strongly favoured explicit grammar instruction with an emphasis on the use of metalanguage and the presentation of grammar items in a minimal context, i.e., the sentence, for the students to work out the rules themselves. They also stated that written grammar exercises, rather than communicative tasks, were more effective for the students to master the taught grammar item. The following questions, which emerged from the findings of the preliminary study, framed my present case study:

- Why do teachers show a strong inclination towards grammar and a deductive approach to grammar?
- How do their attitudes and beliefs influence their classroom teaching?
- To what extent are the beliefs and practices of a group of teachers working in the same context regarding form-focused instruction similar and different?

4. 4. Present Study

This case study is an attempt to examine the beliefs held by a small group of EFL teachers (N=8) working in one Vietnamese upper secondary school about form-focused instruction and the sources of those beliefs as well as the extent to which their teaching practice is shaped by their beliefs.

The study was conducted in accordance to the Student Research Regulations published by the University of Waikato in the *Handbook on Ethical Conduct in Research* as well as the University's *Human Research Ethics Regulations* accessed from http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/human_researchethics.html. A copy of the informed consent letter can be seen in Appendix B. Teachers were informed of the nature and the purpose of the research as well as their right of access to any data that were collected from them. Actually, all full interview transcripts, observation transcripts and stimulated recall transcripts were sent to them for the purpose of

respondent validation. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed so as to make sure that individual teachers were not affected by the research in any way.

4. 5. Selecting the Case

Since a great number of Vietnamese senior scholars and researchers were trained in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the Eastern Europe as well as in China from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, the influence of the socialist education system on Vietnamese research culture remains very powerful (Marr, 1993; Hiep, 2006). As some international researchers have observed, in Vietnam there is a strong preference for quantitative methods following the positivist paradigm. Therefore, questionnaires and surveys are more accepted than semi-structured interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and narratives (Chuan & Poh, 2000; Scott, Miller & Lloyd, 2006; Gorsuch, 2006). In order to gain entry into any school for conducting fieldwork, it is important to obtain official approval from the school principal because of the formalities and bureaucracy of authorising field research. Teachers do not like being observed, and to a majority, video-taping their lesson is something beyond their acceptance because most of the classroom observations in Vietnamese schools are judgmental, with the observer attempting to identify the errors of the observed. It is no exaggeration to say that many Vietnamese secondary school teachers suffer the so-called ‘observation phobia’. In addition, they can, at best, participate in an interview at the school during the 45-minute interval when they can wait in the staff room for their next lesson. They are likely to tire of being asked a multitude of questions, so interviewers should avoid sensitive questions which may be interpreted by the interviewees as assessment of their practice. For example, questions like “Why did you teach [something] this way or that way?” or “Why didn’t you do this or do that?” should be avoided.

It took me a couple of months before I was able to find a school which allowed me to conduct fieldwork. I had tried several schools but all of them were unwilling to participate, especially when I explained to them the procedure of data collection and

how they were expected to help. Even though the principal and teachers in one school had signed the letter of consent, they changed their mind at the moment I was going to visit the school. Finally, through my personal relationships, I managed to find one, a specialized upper secondary school located in the Red River Delta area.

Thus, the case selected for this study is not because the individuals are interesting or unusual. Neither is it because the context is inviting or representative. It was selected simply because of the opportunistic convenience, i.e., access to the individual teachers as well as their willingness to participate as a result of my personal relationship. Scholars have advised that representativeness is not necessarily a concern in selecting a case. Rather, accessibility and the learning opportunity it offers to the researcher matter. For example, Stake (2000) has pointed out that in doing case study, the researcher leans:

toward those cases that seem to offer opportunity to learn. ... That may mean taking the one most accessible, the one we can spend the most time with. Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. (p. 446)

Of the eight teachers who agreed to participate in this study, I had known four of them since they were university undergraduates about 20 years ago. It was these four teachers, and especially, the team leader of the English language group, who helped me to invite another four teachers to participate through a snowball effect. Also, the school principal is an acquaintance of mine. This personal relationship allowed me, quite easily, to gain the permission for entry and for my fieldwork over an extended period of time. They even provided me with accommodation at the school's modest guest-house every time I made my field trips to the school, which is a two-hour drive from my home. Discussing the advantages of this method of sampling for qualitative case study, Duff (2008) states that:

The advantage of studying people with whom one is already familiar is that access and informed consent are easier to obtain. In addition, it may be possible to observe or interact with familiar participants or sites for a more extended or intensive period, and as a result, the researcher may obtain more useful data about the case. Finally, there is likely to be a greater understanding of the context based on prior knowledge. (p. 116)

This advantage was further confirmed with my own experience in this study. Since teachers in Vietnam are so busy with their heavy teaching load, paper work, housework, and extra classes, etc., it would be impossible to involve them in a study that takes them a lot of time for the interviews and stimulated recalls without having a good personal relationship. In addition, a personal relationship helps them feel more secure when their teaching is observed and video-taped, knowing that their teaching is not going to be evaluated in any way.

4. 6. Setting for the Case Study

The school, a specialised school for so-called gifted pupils, is situated in an urban area of the Red River Delta, which ranks among the most developed provinces in Vietnam. It also lies in one of the three provinces in the country which attract the most foreign investment. Recently, many industries and foreign-owned or joint venture businesses have been established in this province.

The school is a state upper secondary school, which was established in 1984. Currently it has a pupil population of 1135, accommodated in 36 classes under the supervision of 120 teachers, 35 percent of whom have earned their Masters Degree. The pupils, who are competitively selected through entry examinations, are streamlined into various specialized subjects according to their own choice, such as mathematics-specialised, chemistry-specialised, English-specialised, etc. Actually, these are the elite pupils selected from all parts of the province. Therefore, compared with the pupil population in an ordinary upper secondary school, they are

academically better and have a stronger motivation for higher learning achievements, as measured by their examination scores. Most of these pupils were from middle-income families. Since its establishment, the school has always enjoyed a provincial and national reputation for its excellent teaching and learning achievements. For the last ten years, it has always been ranked among the top five specialised upper secondary schools throughout the country with many prizes being awarded for the pupils' performance at international merit competitions in sciences and at national competitions in all subjects.

Regarding the mission of the school, the principal made it clear that the school targets an all-round education that develops the pupils' computer skills, foreign language competence and life skills so that they become socially active, physically healthy, and circumstantially adaptive. Academically excellent pupils will be selected and trained to bring out the best of their capability, and to win the highest prizes in international regional, and national merit competitions.

The status of the centre of excellent secondary education has given the school the benefit of provincial priorities in terms of investment in infrastructure and equipment. The campus is very large with new buildings for classrooms. The class size is, on average, not so large, with the number of pupils being 28-32 in each class. Lessons are divided into 45 minute periods with a bell signalling the beginning and the end of each period. All classes have five periods a day from Monday through Saturday. Teachers are mandated to teach 16 hours a week, averaging less than 3 hours a day, according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training. Usually they teach two periods, then have one period's rest before teaching the following period(s). They come to the school according to the teaching schedule. That is, if they do not have to teach any period, they are free to use their time doing housework, teaching extra private classes, etc. Once they have finished their daily teaching schedule, they head for home immediately.

In addition to the regular hours of English, pupils attend two afternoon sessions a week. Each session lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes, focusing exclusively on test-like grammar, vocabulary, and reading exercises. The purpose of these afternoon sessions is to prepare the pupils for examinations, either the General Education Diploma examination or the university entrance examination, or both.

Although it is a specialised school, the textbook is the same as the one used in ordinary schools for all subjects and mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training. However, the instruction time allocated for specialized subjects is 1.5 more than the amount prescribed in the ordinary syllabus. Despite this advantage, pupils take the same General Education Diploma and university entrance examinations as pupils from other ordinary schools, because both examinations are national and standardised.

Participants

There are 10 teachers of English in the school, all of whom are graduates from universities in Vietnam. The following is what the head of the English language teacher group wrote about the English language teachers in the school in her email [in English] to me while data collection was in progress:

Not only do they have good English competence, but also they have good knowledge of modern language teaching methodology. Moreover, they are experienced in dealing with classroom problems, organising class activities, and above all, they are willing to adopt [adapt] their teaching methods for the sake of the pupils' progress. (18 November, 2008)

She also added that the teachers had to work under pressure to help the pupils achieve good results at the examinations. Regarding grammar teaching in the context of the new syllabus prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Training, she wrote that the

new textbook emphasises all four macro-skills, i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as on grammar and phonology, but:

...the introduction of grammar is not in a scientific and natural way. The textbook only tells teachers what grammatical points to teach in that lesson, without providing a natural situation in which that grammatical phenomenon appears. In many lessons, there are so many things to learn that it is impossible for teachers and pupils to even glance at the practice. It means the textbook imposes the grammatical rules on the pupils without enabling them to notice rules by themselves or giving them a chance to put these rules into practice. As the result, pupils usually forget all about the grammatical points they have learnt, and all the time and effort spent on this activity [grammar teaching] become a waste. (18 November, 2008)

Eight out of ten English language teachers agreed to participate in this study. Seven of them are female, one of whom is a retrained teacher of Russian. Their teaching experience ranges from 3 to 23 years, averaging 14.5 years. Throughout their career life, only three of them had the opportunity to participate in one or two short in-service teacher training workshops, each of which lasted only a few days. One teacher, Teacher 2, was very recently awarded a Masters Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from an off-shore program offered by an Australian university under a partnership with a Hanoi-based university (see Table 4.2 below for the participants' profiles).

Data collection strategies

One of the difficulties facing research on teachers' beliefs is their inaccessibility to direct observation. Pajares (1992) claims that "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do – fundamental prerequisites that educational researchers have seldom followed" (p. 314). In other words, beliefs must be inferred from words and actions. Lee and Yarger (1996) also

suggest a comprehensive investigation of teacher education include multiple modes of inquiry or triangulation to capture complexities. This view is shared by many other researchers (e.g. Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996; 2001; Mathison, 1988; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999a). Burns (1992) finds that teachers can verbalise how beliefs and decision-making underpinned observed classroom practices.

Table 4.2.

Participant Profiles

<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Year of Teaching university graduation</i>	<i>of Teaching experience (No. of years)</i>	<i>Participation in formal teacher development workshops</i>
Teacher 1	46	1985	23	1991 Quang Ngai Teacher Training College Hanoi University of Foreign Language Studies
Teacher 2	45	1986	22	1993 Workshop trained by Australian trainers in Hanoi
Teacher 3	44	1987	21	Workshop 1989 + 1993
Teacher 4	43	1987	22	No
Teacher 5	32	1999	10	No
Teacher 6	31	2000	9	No
Teacher 7	26	2005	4	No

In a similar vein, Borg (2006), discussing specifically data collection strategies in researching teachers' beliefs, has made the point that:

Given that teacher cognition research is interested in phenomena which are not directly observable, a key challenge for researchers has been to identify data collection strategies through which these phenomena can be elicited. (p. 167)

He describes how he himself explored teachers' cognition in relation to grammar teaching through semi-structured interviews. These were of two types: background interviews, which took place prior to any classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews conducted after teaching had been observed (Borg, 2006, p. 204). I adopted these strategies for the present study because of its similarity in nature to Borg's study, and because of the advantages of the multiple-source qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in exploring a phenomenon in its natural setting and in assuming an interpretive epistemology (Phipps & Borg, 2009) over other strategies such as questionnaires. The interpretive approach adopted for the study is consistent with a hermeneutic paradigm, which focuses on the understanding, interpretation, and explanation of the perspectives of participants (Burns, 1996; Freeman, 1996). Specifically, I employed the following strategies to collect data for the present study:

1. Semi-structured interviews
2. Video-taped classroom observations
3. Stimulated recall interviews.

All these data-gathering techniques assume that “data are rendered in language” and language provides “the pivotal link...between the unseen mental worlds of the participants and the public world of the research process” (Freeman, 1996, p. 367).

4. 7. Semi-structured Interviews

Berg (1989) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe an interview as “a conversation with a purpose.” Similarly, researchers (e.g. Briggs, 1986; Coughlan & Duff, 1994, cited in Duff, 2008, p. 133) describe a research interview as a construction or joint production by interviewer and interviewee. For Borg (2006), flexibility is one of the values of semi-structured interviews in researching teachers’ beliefs because respondents have the freedom to talk in an open-ended manner. In a similar vein, Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, and Son (2004) assert that semi-structured interviews have “a long and successful tradition in teacher thinking research” (p. 294) because this method invites teachers to articulate their implicit theories in a supportive and non-evaluative environment.

One-to-one interviewing was chosen as one of the primary methods in this study for two reasons. Firstly, it provided a very effective means of uncovering teachers’ beliefs about form-focused instruction. Most of the interview questions were open-ended in an attempt to “allow the respondents opportunities to develop their responses in ways which the interviewer might not have foreseen” (Campbell, McNamara, & Gilroy, 2004, p. 99). By asking open questions related to the view on the role of grammar in learning English as a foreign language, the approaches to teaching grammar and the source of influence on instructional approaches, it was anticipated that teachers’ implicit practical theories would be articulated. These stated beliefs would be used to compare with the data subsequently obtained from observations of the teachers’ classroom teaching to identify the convergence and divergence between their stated beliefs and their actual practice regarding form-focused instruction. Each teacher was interviewed more than once (most of them were interviewed three times) because teachers could not be available for more than one hour before they had to get

back into the classroom to continue their teaching. This apparent drawback actually helped me to achieve a form of time triangulation by checking the consistency in the teachers' responses and to "follow-up on issues or clarify uncertainties emerging from an earlier interview" (Duff, 2008, p. 133). All the interviews were conducted prior to classroom observations with a one- or three-week interval.

Secondly, one-to-one interviewing enabled me to develop teachers' trust so that the "intersubjective depth" (Miller & Glassner, 1997, p. 106), which is fundamental to the quality of the inquiry, was achieved and they could feel more secure when being observed later. In addition, one-to-one interviewing helped me to avoid the problem of group harmony, a characteristic of Vietnamese collectivist culture.

Because of practical constraints, I was unable to conduct preliminary interviews with all of them long before observations started. Instead, each week I was able to interview two teachers just one or two hours before I observed them. Then some weeks later, I conducted a follow-up interviews with these two teachers before observing them the second time. The third time I met them, I interviewed them again if I found it necessary to clarify or to add some information before I observed them the third time. This applied to other teachers. So, altogether I observed 24 lessons (three lessons with each teacher) and conducted two or three interviews with each teacher. The preliminary interview lasted around 45 minutes while the follow-up interviews took less time.

The interviews were guided by a loosely defined series of questions covering different themes related to form-focused instruction, but the wording of questions in the actual discussion varied, as did the order of different themes. Depending on the emerging issues, additional questions were asked. The three overarching themes of the interviews were (1) teachers' experience of learning English as a foreign language; (2) teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar in learning English as a foreign language; and (3) teachers' approaches to grammar (see Appendix D for the interview guide and Appendix E for a sample of the full interview transcript). Before

the data collection started, I asked the teacher participants about their preference for the working language, and they all opted for Vietnamese, which is their first language. Thus, all the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to make sure that the teachers felt comfortable and could say exactly what they meant to say. Although the question of whether L1 or L2 should be used in research interviews remains inconclusive, as a Vietnamese speaker, and a cultural insider, I believe that it is more comfortable to use the mother tongue among people speaking the same mother tongue. Also, experience as a teacher educator informs me that secondary school teachers would not feel secure enough to use English (L2) to express and to represent their thought.

Many questions were asked explicitly, for example, “Some people think grammar is important in learning English, others argue it is not necessary. What is your opinion? What makes you think that?” in order to get them to articulate their beliefs about the role of grammar, and their theoretical reasoning. In addition, attempts were made to elicit their beliefs indirectly (e.g. If a new teacher comes to your school and asks you for advice on how to teach grammar, what would you advise her or him?) The rationale for asking these questions was that “A belief articulated in the context of a ‘story’ about concrete events, behaviours and plans, is more likely to be grounded in actual behaviour” (Woods, 1996, p. 27).

Interview questions were piloted with five in-service teachers who were studying for their Masters Degree at a Hanoi-based university, and who were not involved in the study. It was found that the questions did not have any potential ambiguity.

4. 8. Classroom Observations

Observation provides direct information rather than self-report accounts (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 178). In qualitative studies, observation tends to be combined with interviews “to ascertain selected participants’ perspectives on their actions or behaviours” (Duff, 2008, p. 141).

According to Borg (2006), observation is a valuable strategy in the study of language teacher cognition because it provides evidence of what happens in the classrooms. He further elaborates the central role of observation as a data collection strategy in research on teacher cognition arguing that it provides “a concrete descriptive basis in relation to what teachers know, think and believe can be examined” (p. 231).

Thus, observation is a means of triangulation in research on teachers’ beliefs. Through classroom observation, it is possible for the researcher to audit the consistency between teachers’ stated beliefs and/or reported practices and their actual practices. As a teacher and teacher educator, I have extensive experience of observing classrooms in Vietnam for a variety of purposes, including research purposes.

In order to “move beyond perception-based data (e.g. opinions in interviews)” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 305) and to explore further how the teachers’ beliefs about form-focused instruction were transferred into their classroom practices, all participating teachers in this study were observed. Specifically, each of the eight participating teachers were observed three times teaching three different 45-minute grammar lessons to different groups of pupils. As I followed Duff’s (2008) advice that interpretive case studies do not require a predetermined guiding observational protocol (p. 139), all the observations for this study were non-participant and unstructured (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Specifically, I video-taped all the lessons as they happened naturally in the classroom (see Appendix F for a sample of lesson observation). In order to help teachers feel secure and comfortable with the camera in the classroom, I undertook one informal demonstration observation before the data procedure really started and showed the tape to the teachers being observed. They all liked the tape and requested a copy, to which I happily responded. Although the camera has a built-in microphone, it is not powerful enough to record the classroom verbal interaction in a large class with around more than 30 pupils, which I discovered after the informal demonstration videotaping, I had to use an extra voice-recorder, which I placed on the teacher’s table. However, it was really difficult, and sometimes, almost impossible to record the pupils’ verbal exchanges because they

spoke too softly in English. Every teacher observed reserved one seat at the back of the classroom for me to video the lesson, so the equipment effect on pupils' learning was minimised or avoided.

4. 9. Stimulated Recalls

Stimulated recall, which is a means of gaining access into cognitive processing, is one introspective method “that represents a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1). According to Calderhead:

the term ‘stimulated recall’ has been used to denote a variety of techniques. Typically, it involves the use of audiotapes or videotapes of skilled behaviour, which are used to aid a participant’s recall of his thought processes at the time of that behaviour. (1981, p. 212)

Stimulated recall has been commonly used by researchers in both mainstream education and second language education to elicit teachers’ unobservable cognitive processes after their teaching (Calderhead, 1981), and it is often used as a means of triangulation (Gass & Mackey, 2000). The rationale for using stimulated recall in tapping teachers’ beliefs about their classroom behaviours is given by Gass and Mackey as “...an event that has taken place ... being recalled through the prompt and ... the prompt itself helps to ensure that accessible and accurate memory structures are brought into focus and recalled (2000, p. 89).

In this study, stimulated recall procedures were conducted to “elicit reflections and descriptions of the thinking informing classroom instruction and interactions” (Burns, 1996, p.157). Phipps and Borg (2009) have argued that, “a more realistic understanding of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices can emerge when the analysis of what teachers do is the basis of eliciting and understanding their

beliefs” (p. 382). Stimulated recall may be either highly structured or loosely structured depending on decisions the researcher makes about three issues:

replaying only researcher-selected portions of the recording versus replaying the complete tape; researchers asking prespecified questions each time the tape is stopped versus soliciting open-ended commentary from the teacher; and researcher control of when to stop the tape versus teacher control or shared control. (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 259)

One of the challenges of using stimulated recall as a research method is the question of the accuracy of recalls because the inherent problem with the *ex post facto data* is the “lapse between the actual teaching and the data collection” (Freeman, 1996, p. 370). However, Freeman (1996) argues that the issue of time lies in the structure of the research project, rather than being intrinsic to the data themselves. Bloom (1954, cited in Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 18) notes that recall accuracy depends on the time lapse between the event and the recall. He also advises that if recalls are prompted within 48 hours after the event happens, recalls can be 95 percent accurate.

Stimulated recall sessions were conducted immediately after each lesson observed. As described earlier, it is impossible to invite the teachers back for interviews or any research activity once they have left the school because of their other personal commitments. So, I made use of the 45-minute interval between their lessons for the stimulated recall. Because of the practical constraints, I replayed only selected portions of the recording. The replayed portions were selected according to the significant episodes that I had noted down during the observation. During the piloting of stimulated recall prior to actual data collection, I found that teachers were unwilling to make open-ended commentary on their teaching, I therefore decided to ask prespecified questions such as “What were you thinking when you did this (activity)?” or “What was your focus in this activity?” or “Can you explain why you did this (activity)?” (see Appendix G for a sample stimulated recall). At the end of every stimulated recall section, I invited the teacher to make further comments on

their wish, but none of them did so, probably because they had to hurry back to the classroom for the next lesson. The language used in all the stimulated recalls was Vietnamese for the reasons mentioned in 4.7.

All the interview and stimulated recall transcripts were then sent to all the participants in hard copies to check the truthfulness. I intended to send just the summaries but then changed my mind for fear of researcher biases. All the participants agreed with the transcripts though I was unsure whether they looked at them or not.

4. 10. Role of the Researcher

Although positivistic quantitative researchers, who are keen to eliminate, reduce or control variables, try to remove the researcher presence, postmodern qualitative researchers acknowledge that the presence and influence of the researcher are unavoidable and a resource (Holliday, 2007, p. 137). Put simply, in qualitative inquiry the process of research is a socio-cultural experience, and the researcher is a research instrument. This means the interpretations made by the researcher are always “filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 25), and through the intimate relationships that develop between the researcher and the data. Therefore, a qualitative case study demands that the researcher make explicit “what the relationship or history was between the researcher and researched, and what bearing that relationship had on the research process or interpretations” (Duff, 2008, p. 118). It is hoped that such explicit description helps to achieve auditability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and highlights any possible biases the researcher may have while conducting the inquiry and in arriving at conclusions of the study.

As pointed out in Section 4.5 above, my experience as a teacher educator and my interest in effective approaches to teacher education were instrumental in selecting the focus of this study. From the experience I gained through the frequent visits to upper secondary schools and informal conversations there with the teachers during

the professional workshops in which I was the resource person, I realized that teachers were very much concerned about grammar teaching and a rule-based approach to grammar, no matter how much or how little training they received about communicative language teaching (CLT). Although I undertook this study for the purposes of my research in the role of a PhD student, which I had clarified to the participating teachers right from the beginning of the investigation, my role as a teacher educator, or “a teaching methodology expert” as teachers often called me, is likely to affect not only the way the teacher taught in the classroom to some extent but also my own uptake process.

Furthermore, as an ELT professional, I have been actively involved in researching the reality of ELT in Vietnamese settings. Most of my research findings reveal that the teaching of English in Vietnamese secondary schools is grammar-centred, teacher-centred, and textbook-centred.

I acknowledge that all the above factors may affect my interpretations of teachers’ beliefs about form-focused instruction as well as their classroom behaviours to some extent. However, as Duff (2008) comments,

Accuracy in qualitative research does not mean that researchers have obtained the correct solution to a research problem or found the truth or reality, but rather that they have handled data and conveyed perspectives, observations, and biases with care and attention paid to meaningful details and have been accountable to the data. (p. 179)

I also acknowledge that “there is no single interpretive truth” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 30), and that “there can be no neutral ground from which to understand another person’s teaching” (Pratt, 1992, p. 204). Conscious of the possible biases resulting from these factors, I have tried in this study to guarantee that the findings and the interpretations as trustworthy as possible by means of backing my interpretations with “reasoned argument” and a “search for relevant evidence”

(Bromley, 1986, p. 238) and also for evidence which might contradict my interpretations.

My role in this study was as a non-participant observer, who observed teachers teaching in the classroom. I was confident that my familiarity with the educational context put me in a good position to make accurate emic interpretations as a cultural insider. However, in a hierarchical society like Vietnam, which is partly reflected in the way a variety of personal pronouns are used to address people according to their age, the status as a middle-aged ELT professional working in a major university helped me maintain the personal relationship with the teachers. But that relationship was sometimes perceived by the participating teachers as the ‘teacher-student’ relationship, in which I was viewed as a teacher, and they themselves as students. Although I had explained carefully in the introductory meetings that the purpose of my fieldtrips was just to collect data for my PhD study, I felt that on the first days of my data collection period, the teachers were concerned about my negative feedback on their pedagogical knowledge and classroom teaching. These concerns are, again, likely to impact on the way the teachers talked and the information they provided. For example, after every stimulated recall section, the teacher often asked me to give my comments on their teaching, which I always refused to do, explaining that my role was just as a researcher. After a couple of weeks, the teachers appeared to feel more secure and relaxed in talking with me and in welcoming me into their classrooms for observation, probably because they did not hear any feedback either directly or indirectly by word of mouth. Also, during the interviews and the stimulated recall sessions, I was very careful in asking the questions to help the teacher avoid the feeling that they were tested about their pedagogical knowledge. For example, instead of asking the why-questions in the stimulated recalls, I just asked them, for example, “What did you want to achieve in this activity?” or “What were you thinking while giving this activity to the pupils?” or “Could you tell me what you were thinking when asking the pupils to do this activity?”

I was also aware that in qualitative research, “the researcher must try to see through and liberate herself from the professional discourse she brings with her in order to establish relations with the people in the research setting on their own terms” (Holliday, 2007, p. 163). I saw the participants as people and teachers in their own right, not just participants in my research. As a Vietnamese, sharing the participants’ collectivist culture, which is characterised as hierarchical relationship and power distance (see Chapter II, section 2.2.), I tried to narrow the gap between myself and the participants by not allowing the potential misunderstanding among the participants that I was going to evaluate them and their teaching performance. For example, I had dinner or lunch with them from time to time or socialised with them and other teachers in the school during the lesson intervals. I also tried to hide my professional research discourse by keeping my mouth shut on any evaluative comments on the school, the pupils, the teachers and their teaching even when it was insisted that I should do so. This made the participants and other teachers in the school see me as an impartial insider rather than an outsider of their own culture. They even shared their personal and family concerns with me, which gave me the feeling of being trusted, and not alienated. Despite this positive rapport, I am aware of the possible influences of my presence on the behaviours of the researched. Yet the extensive use of naturalistic research in educational studies indicates that it is gaining acceptance and importance as a legitimate style of research (Cohen et al., 2000).

After I gained permission from the school principal, I paid the first visit to the case in order to meet the teachers and to brief them about the purpose and the nature of the research as well as to get their signatures on the letters of informed consent. Then, in the following week, I started the initial interviews, observations, and stimulated recalls to familiarize the teachers with the instruments of data collection.

4. 11. Data Analysis

Since the goal of case study is “to understand the complexity and dynamic nature of the particular entity, and to discover systematic connections among experiences,

behaviours, and relevant features of the context” (Johnson, 1992, p. 84), all the data collected for the study were qualitative, including interview transcripts, classroom observation transcripts, and stimulated recall transcripts. Analysis commenced with a very tentative start list of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1984) that were to guide the process. I went through the data again and again in order to gain some sense of the key points. The data were then coded and analyzed as described below.

Coding is the process of reducing the information obtained to make it manageable. According to Dörnyei (2007), in qualitative research codes are “not numerical but verbal, amounting to short textual labels” and they are “left open and flexible” (p. 26). Jorgensen (1989) suggests that “as different ways of arranging materials are explored, you may find it useful to consult or revisit existing literature and theories related to your problem” (p. 110). Costas (1992) supports the use of an *a priori* framework in qualitative data analysis. In discussing the coding of data, he remarks:

Researchers who attempt to build on the discoveries of research conducted in situations and on topics similar to the ones they are investigating may refer to research or published works in the relevant area. Categories are then derived from statements or conclusions found in the literature of other researchers who investigated a similar phenomenon. (p. 258)

Discussing this dilemma in analysing qualitative data, Pavlenko (2007) claims that:

In fact, the notion that themes and patterns ‘emerge freely’ in analysis, taking shape of a ‘grounded theory’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), is in itself naïve and misleading, because it obscures the sociohistoric and cultural influences on the researcher’s conceptual lens. In reality there is no way to examine texts ‘from nowhere in particular’ and it is hard to imagine that an analyst can truly ‘step outside of’ himself or herself (Santana, 1999, p. 28) to create objective interpretations. (p. 167).

In a similar vein, Holliday (2007) argues that “the themes themselves, although emergent, are also influenced by questions or issues that the researcher brought to the research” (p. 97). Freeman (1996) and Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) view the two approaches to coding in qualitative research, i.e., grounded categories and *a priori* categories’ as “two poles of a continuum” (Freeman, 1996, p. 371), rather than a pair of binary opposites. Borg (2006) notes that the common approaches adopted in empirical studies on teacher cognition are inductive analytical approaches, whereby categories and codes for interpreting and discussing data are grounded within the specifics of each study. As a result, these studies may have little to offer other studies across the field at a broader theoretical or conceptual level due to the absence of any shared or established conceptual framework for theorising and understanding the nature of teacher cognition. In the present study, I first coded the data deductively by using the general categories derived from the literature and research questions. Thus, in this study, I employed a deductive strategy as the initial approach to data categorisation. This means my coding was based on initial categories derived from my original research aims and those were suggested in the literature on form-focused instruction (e.g. Ellis, 2006) and are similar to those used by Phipps and Borg (2009). They include, for example, role of grammar, source of beliefs, declarative/ procedural knowledge, presentation, practice, production, correction of grammatical errors, and use of grammatical terminologies. Following conventional ‘cut-and-paste’ techniques, I gathered all the chunks of data belonging to the same category together (Almarza, 1996) by seeking the smallest “units of information” or “incidents” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) in the data that can stand by themselves, i.e., key words and phrases in the interview and stimulated recall data and relevant episodes of the observational data. This was completed by written summaries of each different category (Hewson & Hewson, 1989). However, I also looked into categories that emerged from the data. Themes that emerged from the data include the use of L1 (Vietnamese) in form-focused instruction, the influence of teaching materials and socialisation on teachers’ beliefs and practice. Thus, data were arranged according to guided categories (Freeman, 1996), which “spring from a priori categories that previous knowledge and experience might suggest about the topic, [but also] they respond to what the

researcher actually finds in the data” (pp. 371-372) . Many of the categories actually stayed. Below is an example of how the data were categorised in this study.

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Coding Categories</i>
1. Grammar is the basic, the foundation knowledge	(Role of grammar)
2. I present the general first through examples.	(Grammar presentation)
3. I think pupils need to memorize rules.	(Declarative/Procedural knowledge)
4. I often ask them to do just exercises in the textbook.	(Grammar practice)
5. I learned from observing other teachers in the school.	(Source of beliefs)

Specifically, I followed a four-step procedure of data analysis. First, I analysed the semi-structured interview data to understand teachers’ stated beliefs about FFI by identifying key words and phrases used by individual teachers. I used the cut-and-paste technique to describe each category of teachers’ beliefs about FFI as well as to identify patterns across teachers’ beliefs about FFI. Second, I analysed the observational data to understand teachers’ actual classroom behaviours regarding FFI and to identify key episodes of FFI related to teachers’ stated beliefs. Again, I cut and pasted key episodes in order to fit them into the sub-categories. Then I compared and contrasted observational and interview data for tabulation. This was to look for individual and group patterns of classroom behaviours (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), and how they related to teachers’ stated beliefs. Third, I analysed the stimulated recall interviews to unpack teachers’ underlying reasons for their classroom behaviours. This was achieved by, again, identifying key words and/or phrases used by individual teachers. I, then, compared the key words/phrases from stimulated recall interview and observational data in order to identify patterns in teachers’ classroom behaviours as well as to interpret their reasoning for their behaviours with reference to their stated beliefs. Finally, I triangulated all the findings in order to establish the

relationship between teachers’ stated beliefs, actual practices, and factors influencing their beliefs and practices (Gates, 2006). Then, I interrogated all the data again for additional or contradictory findings in order to refine the content of all categories of teachers’ beliefs, practices and influencing factors. Patterns were then organized into broad categories (Borg, 2003c), which were selected to fit the research questions of the study substantially. The broad categories for the present study include:

1. Role of grammar
2. Approaches to grammar
3. Corrective Feedback
4. Use of L1 in grammar instruction
5. Convergences and divergences between beliefs and practices
6. Factors affecting beliefs and practices

Under these broad categories were sub- categories. For example, under the theme “Approach to grammar”, there were sub-categories such as “Presentation,” “Practice” and “Production”. All these were viewed and discussed following Burns’ (1996) three-level conceptual framework of intercontextuality. The whole procedure of data analysis is presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table: 4. 3.
Overview of the data analysis procedure

<i>Step</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Pre-analysis</i>	<i>Steps in analysis</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
1. Analysing the semi-structured interviews	Teachers’ stated beliefs about FFI	Transcription and translation of data Preliminary definition and development of sub-categories within the six thematic categories.	1A. Identifying key words, phrases used by individual participants and coding them. Cut-and-paste 1B. Listing the above under relevant thematic categories. 1C. Grouping key words/ phrases into sub-	Descriptions of each category of teachers’ beliefs about FFI. Identification of patterns across teachers’ beliefs about FFI

			categories.	
2. Analysing the classroom observations	Teachers' actual classroom behaviours regarding FFI	Transcription and translation of data Identification of key episodes of FFI related to teachers' stated beliefs	2A. Cut-and-paste of key episodes into the above sub-categories. 2B. Comparison and contrast of observational and interview data 2C. Tabulation of comparative data of individual teachers	Description of each teacher's classroom behaviours regarding FFI. Individual and group patterns of classroom behaviours and how they relate to their stated beliefs
3. Analysing the stimulated recall interviews	Teachers' reasons for classroom behaviours	Transcription and translation of data Identifying and connecting sources of teachers' beliefs/practices	3A. Identifying key words/phrases used by individual teachers. Cut-and-paste 3B. Comparing the key words/phrases from SR interviews and obs data 3C. Preliminary coding 3D. Grouping key words/phrases into categories	Description of each category of teachers' classroom behaviours. Patterns in teachers' classroom behaviours in relation to their stated beliefs. Description and interpretation of teachers' reasoning for their behaviour with reference to their stated beliefs.
4. Triangulating findings	Establishing the relationship between teachers' stated beliefs, actual practices, and influencing factors	Reviewing all the data previously identified	4A. Interrogating all data again for additional or contradictory findings 4B. Refining the content of all categories of teachers' beliefs, practices and influencing factors.	Thick description of each category of teachers' beliefs and practices. Interpretation of the relationship between individual and group beliefs and practices of FFI Relating the above to the sources/factors affecting

4. 12. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two critical qualities of any empirical study to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. In qualitative research, validity is concerned with the quality of data collection procedure that enables our reading to be in line with the ways things are (Kirk & Miller, 1986). In contrast, reliability is concerned with the degree of consistency that the data collection procedure demonstrates to make sure that the same reading is achieved if the same procedure is followed (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Both validity and reliability in qualitative research are represented by the criteria of truthfulness (Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 290), which includes credibility to internal validity, transferability to external validity, dependability to reliability, and confirmability to objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). How these criteria are related to the present study will be discussed in the following sections.

4. 13. Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility (or internal validity) depends on evidence of long-term exposure to the context being studied and the adequacy of data collected (e.g., use of different methods). However, it is useful to cite Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), who claim that internal validity is not a valid criterion in case study, which “does not seek to identify causal patterns in phenomena” (p. 460). This is true of the present study. Still, what follows is a brief description of how the data for the study were collected. Data for this study were collected during the period from October 2008 to April 2009 (see Appendix C for the data collection schedule). (No field trips were made in November 2008 because of the semester exam and in January 2009, which was a lunar new year holiday). Before I started collecting the data, I spent two weeks visiting the school and talked informally with teachers in order to establish rapport with them and to convince them that the data I would collect were just for my PhD research, not for assessing their teaching or their school or their

pupils in any way. This is critical given the fact that most of school teachers in Vietnam are observed for assessment purposes (see 2.4), and teachers seemed to have the observation phobia. By the end of these two weeks, nine teachers out of 10 English language teachers agreed to participate in the study and they signed the letter of consent. However, two weeks after the data collection began, one of them withdrew for personal reasons. During these briefing weeks, I observed each teacher once, but video-taped only two skill lessons for the demonstration stimulated recalls to which all nine teachers were invited to come. However, these pilot stimulated recalls lasted only 30 minutes each because the teachers had to attend their weekly professional meetings. Taking into account the issue of teachers' availability for the stimulated recalls, I decided to conduct the stimulated recalls in a flexible manner, depending on the teacher's available time during the official data collection process.

Since triangulation, the use of multiple data sources and research methods, which allows the researcher to view the focus of inquiry from several vantage points, has been called "the heart of qualitative research's validity" (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 34), three types of triangulation, i.e., data triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation were employed for the present study. Specifically, I collected the data from a fairly large number of participants (8 out of 10 English language teachers working in one upper secondary school) (data triangulation) by means of interviews, observations, and stimulated recalls (methodological triangulation) over a period of six months (time triangulation). (A school year in Vietnam normally lasts nine months, but two months are spent preparing the pupils for two semester examinations).

Credibility deals with the question of how data are categorised as well as how the similarities within and differences between categories are judged. This can be achieved through an interrater process which is to seek agreement from experienced researchers and participants. This process was not implemented in this study for practical reasons. However, I did show the participants all the transcripts of the

interviews, classroom observations and stimulated recalls for confirmability (Janesick, 2000).

4. 14. Transferability

Transferability or comparability (external validity), the term Lincoln and Guba (1985) use in place of the common term ‘generalisability’ refers to the external validity of the study, i.e. the richness of description and interpretation that makes a particular case interesting and relevant to those in similar situations. It is “the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups” (Polit & Hungler, 1999, p. 717). Since the present study is a case study, it is not generalisability, but particularity (Stake, 1988) or particularisability (Larsen-Freeman, 1996) that matters. As van Lier (2005) claims, “...in the practical world in which case studies are conducted, *particularisation* may be just as important - if not more so – than *generalisation*” (p. 198: original emphasis). Particularisation, in van Lier’s words, means that “insights from a case study can inform, be adapted to, and provide comparative information to a wide variety of other cases” (p. 198). Thus, particularisation is synonymous with Lincoln and Guba’s terms ‘transferability’ or ‘comparability’ by which they mean that it is up to readers of case studies to decide for themselves “whether there is a congruence, fit, or connection between one study context, in all its complexity, and their own context, rather than have the original researchers make that assumption for them” (1985, p. 51). As noted elsewhere in this chapter, the present study was conducted in an upper secondary school in Vietnam, and it focused on the examination and description of the beliefs held by a group of English language teachers working in the school as well as the relationship between their stated beliefs and their actual practice in the classroom. No intention is therefore made to generalise the findings. However, they are likely to be ‘relatable’ (Bassegy, 1981) to other upper secondary schools of similar characteristics in Vietnam. Put another way, “it is the reader’s decision whether or not the findings are transferable to another context” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110).

4. 15. Dependability

The degree of reliability and consistency of data interpretation is called dependability. The term is related to the importance of being open to changes that were made during the research process. In the present study some changes were made during the data collection in the interview schedule. First, I planned to conduct one long and detailed preliminary interview with each teacher before observing her or him. However, teachers had only a 45-minute interval between their lessons, and it took them around 10 minutes to move from the classroom to the interview venue. It was impossible to invite teachers to come to school for the interview once they had left the school after their teaching shift because, in Vietnam, teachers came and went, rather than spent the whole day at the school. This means if they teach in the morning at the school, they will spend the afternoon teaching private classes at home or moonlighting doing a second job for extra income. So, instead of interviewing each teacher once, I interviewed them three times. The two follow-up interviews were conducted after I had observed them the first or the second time. Another change was in the way I conducted the stimulated recalls following the observation. In fact, after I observed individual teachers I did not have time to preview the video-taped lesson before the stimulated recall as I had planned previously because of the reason stated above. So I had to conduct the stimulated recall right after the observation within around 35 minutes. Therefore, I was unable to decide the key events in the lesson through previewing the tape. I had to rely on my memory to pause the video tape at moments I thought might be meaningful to trigger the teacher's retrospective thoughts about what they did at those moments. Participants were also invited to signal any points that they wished to discuss in the stimulated recall sessions. This was to give them the chance to set the agenda for discussion.

4. 16. Confirmability

Confirmability (or objectivity) refers to the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed by others through a detailed description of the data collection procedure,

data categorising and data analysis. This was achieved in this study by providing the sample data coding and the quotations of data to support interpretations. Samples of the interviews, observations and stimulated recalls are also provided in the appendices (see Appendix E for sample interview transcript, Appendix F for observation transcript, and Appendix G for stimulated recall transcript).

4. 17. Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the research design, rationale for choice of methods, data collection strategies, and data collection procedures which were employed in the present study. Given the fact that beliefs are context-bound and situated (Burns, 1996), it is argued in this chapter that the choice of a case study strategy is appropriate. Such a research strategy helps to investigate the beliefs about grammar teaching individual teachers hold, the extent to which their beliefs are carried out in their actual grammar teaching in the classroom, and the relationships revealed across the whole group of teachers between a commonly articulated belief and the practices that they identified with it. Also, approaches to coding and analysis were described to make the study trustworthy and transparent. Results of data analysis will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES REGARDING FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

This chapter reports on the outcomes of the data-gathering phase. The data collected are analysed in relation to the overarching research question posed in this thesis:

What are the beliefs of secondary school teachers about form-focused instruction?

Inherent in this question is the assumption that teachers' beliefs have been a major research area in mainstream education in general (e.g. Calderhead, 1986; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992) and second language education in particular (e.g. Breen et al., 2001; Borg, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; Freeman, 2002; Woods, 1996), and that teachers' beliefs affect their instructional decisions (e.g. Borg, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; Davis, 1981; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Farrell & Kun, 2007; Johnson, 1994; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Phipps & Borg, 2009), but the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practice of teaching is still unclear (e.g. Calderhead, 1996; Phipps & Borg, 2009). This gives rise to the need to further investigate into the complex relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices (Borg, 2006; Burns, 2009). Such "complex relationships" are explored in the subsidiary questions:

1. What are the primary sources for these beliefs?
2. To what extent are these beliefs reflected in their classroom teaching of grammar?
3. What factors affect teachers' transfer of their beliefs into classroom grammar teaching?
4. What is the theoretical relationship between experience, knowledge, beliefs and practice?

Survey research using questionnaires or interviews alone is obviously not enough to investigate these major issues. Therefore, it is advised that researchers “employ qualitative strategies to explore language teachers’ actual practices and beliefs” with a view to “advancing our understanding of the complex relationships between these phenomena.” (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 388). In addition, given the challenges in investigating teachers’ beliefs and how their beliefs influence their teaching, scholars like Barnes (1982), Orpwood (1985) have recommended case study research as an appropriate approach. Following this recommendation, for the purpose of this study, I employed a case study approach with the conviction that this research approach will provide for a deeper insight and understanding of the beliefs about form-focused instruction held by a group of EFL teachers working in one Vietnamese upper secondary school and how those beliefs influence their instructional practices within their own school.

Data from a qualitative case study should be presented in such a way that it reflects the procedure of data collection and data analysis that the study entails. Since this case study involves eight cases, findings will be presented by theme, rather than by case (Duff, 2008) with each sub-section of the chapter being devoted to one major theme. This helps me to look at both individual cases and conduct a cross-case analysis of data from eight cases in the study so that themes can be seen more clearly within the coherence of individual cases.

This chapter presents the findings. First, a summary of the English syllabus for the upper secondary school in Vietnam is presented in Section 5.1. Then, Section 5.2. presents the analysis of the beliefs about grammar teaching and learning that participants stated in the interviews in order to highlight the common beliefs among the participants as well as individual personal views regarding the role of grammar in foreign language education as well as the beliefs that informed their approaches to grammar instruction in the classroom. This will be followed, in Section 5.3., by the observational extracts that characterised participants’ work on form-focused instruction. These observational extracts will be analysed with reference to the

participants' explanation of the decisions they made concerning the observed instructional strategies, which was elicited from the stimulated recall sessions conducted immediately after the observed lessons. Then, Section 5. 4. presents factors that shape teachers' beliefs, which are grounded in the interview and stimulated recall data. This format, I believe, will mirror participants' beliefs about grammar, the degree to which those beliefs were transferred into classroom instructional strategies as well as the beliefs underlying those strategies. The purpose behind this endeavour is to portray common patterns of beliefs and practices across the participants as well as the thinking and practices unique to each individual in order to identify how similar/different the beliefs and practices participants working in "a community of practice" hold regarding form-focused instruction. This format will also make transparent to readers the approach which is central to this case study on the one hand, and make sure that all the accounts presented are grounded in the data from which they emerge.

To provide readers with contextual information regarding the way this qualitative case study was undertaken, a brief summary of the English language syllabus for the Vietnamese secondary school will be presented first. This is a summary of the information presented in chapter II, "The Context of the Study". The next section will focus on teachers' beliefs about the importance of grammar, about the role of explicit grammar knowledge (see Ellis, 2006 in 3.1.1) in learning English as a foreign language. This will be followed by the presentation of teachers' beliefs about approaches to grammar. At the end of the chapter, a summary of the main points related to teachers' beliefs about grammar will be presented.

5. 1. Summary of the English Syllabus for the Upper Secondary School

As presented in Chapter II, English instruction in Vietnam starts from Grade 6 of the lower secondary school. After finishing Grade 9, the pupils move up onto the upper secondary school. The textbook set for both the lower and upper secondary schools is mandated by the central Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), following a

claimed communicative, learner-centred, task-based approach. The textbook set for the upper secondary school consists of three books for three different grades: Grade 10, Grade 11, and Grade 12. Each textbook consists of 16 Units and 6 revision lessons to be delivered within 32 weeks. Each Unit is composed of five lessons presented in the following sequence: Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Language Focus involving Pronunciation, and Grammar and Vocabulary. Thus, every Language Focus lesson, in addition to short pronunciation and vocabulary exercises, introduces between one and three discrete-point grammar items in the form of three exercises (see Appendix H for a sample lesson from the textbook). Most of these grammar items are assumed to be recycled since they have been taught, or at least appear in the textbooks for the lower grades, and in most cases they are not linked to materials for skills lessons of the unit. The *Language Focus* lesson is aimed at “enabling pupils to use grammar and vocabulary appropriately in communication,” (MOET, 2006, p. 14) and is prescribed to be delivered within a 45-minute class period.

In Vietnam, the upper secondary school is under the direct supervision of the Provincial Department of Education and Training (DoET), which exercises inspection of teaching and learning as well as assessment in the school. DoET also takes the responsibility for teacher employment and teacher evaluation. Teaching of all subjects is evaluated against the same criteria issued by MOET (see 2.4), which are so abstract that they are subject to subjective interpretation. Such evaluation is implemented by a small team of inspectors who are veteran in-service teachers from various schools within the province and are nominated by the DoET. The inspectors do their work under the guidance of DoET specialists. Although these inspectors are never trained in evaluating teachers, their evaluation is influential in teachers’ career lives such as salary rises or opportunities for professional development.

In addition to being observed for evaluative purposes once a year, each teacher, according to MOET regulations, must observe other teachers in the school for approximately 18 lessons a year. These observations are theoretically for experience-

sharing in post-observation departmental meetings, but I was told that these meetings were quite rare. However, as will be shown later, this type of ‘socialisation’ influences the beliefs and practices of the participants to some extent, which, in this study, I call the ‘collectively normative pedagogy.’

Neither the teachers’ real names or pseudonyms are used. Instead, each teacher is numbered according to their teaching experience, with number 1 being the most experienced teacher, and number 8, the least experienced. The coding system used in this study follows the format teacher number-source of data-line of reference. For example, T4.I2.84 means Teacher 4, the second interview, speaker turn 84 in the transcript; T7.O.2.Unit 13.Grade 11. means Teacher 7, second observation, Unit 13 in the textbook, and grade 11 pupils; T7.SR3.22 means Teacher 7, stimulated recall following the third observed lesson, speaker turn 22 in the transcript. All the interviews and stimulated recall sessions were conducted in Vietnamese, and the extracts presented here and in the later lesson extracts are translated by myself.

5. 2. Beliefs about Grammar Learning

What is presented below is an analysis of the beliefs the teachers in this study held about the importance of grammar in learning English as a foreign language with reference to the context of a specific upper secondary school. Information about these beliefs is primarily gained from preliminary interviews.

5. 2. 1. Importance of Grammar

Data from the interviews show that seven out of eight teachers attached a great importance to grammar in language teaching. They believed that grammar was the foundation for communicative competence to be built on, and they did not think that learners could communicate in English effectively and accurately without a good knowledge of grammar. They viewed grammar as the “foundation of language” (Teacher 4 & Teacher 5) “one of the three pillars of language” or the “cement which

is used to stick bricks together in order to make a house.” (Teacher 2), an “indispensable part of foreign language learning” (Teacher 6), and being “instrumental to the language skills” (Teacher 7). Teacher 6 was quite frank, saying that “since I was a school girl, I have always thought grammar is above everything, and I have attached great importance to grammar” (T6.I3.62)

All the teachers in this study saw a limited role of implicit knowledge. For example, Teacher 4 gave an example of how small children who were not taught grammar soon forgot the utterances which they imitated from others, and became almost illiterate in English later. She was frank in saying that:

I know there is a view that teachers should allow opportunities for the pupils to speak English without teaching grammar. But take my daughter for example. She kept asking me, ‘Mum, why is it like this?’ Then I had to explain to her the forms of ‘to be’, but she didn’t even know what ‘to be’ was. It was because her teacher just wrote the sentence ‘My name is’ on the board, and then let them speak. Now my daughter’s English is better. So I think grammar teaching is necessary. (T4.I2.84)

Teacher 2, who was the chair of the foreign language department, and who had just earned the Master’s Degree in TESOL, challenged the zero option for grammar instruction in foreign language teaching – as initiated by advocates of Natural Approaches (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Terrell, 1977).

Grammar teaching is to form a solid foundation of linguistic knowledge. ...If today you teach listening, tomorrow, writing, it has nothing to do with grammar, then it is impossible to achieve the goal, which is the use of language for real communication. ... It cannot be denied that grammatical structures determine the semantic aspects of language and of speech. This structure means differently from that structure. ... Without knowledge of grammatical structure, pupils cannot express themselves. (T2.I1.08)

When asked why some pupils with very good grammar knowledge cannot use the language for communicative purposes, she explained that:

It is because there are many factors other than grammar. For example, for oral fluency, you need the ability to respond quickly, or communication strategies. Similarly, to write well, you need logical thinking, etc. (T2.I1.20)

Clearly, she did not accept that pupils' inability to use English for communication was due to the non-interface between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge.

In a similar vein, Teacher 1 said that she taught grammar carefully to her pupils who made many errors in their writing and speaking. After some time, these pupils made impressive progress in their speaking and writing. She concluded that this was the evidence to support the view that explicit grammatical knowledge was transferred into the ability to use the language:

I believe that if pupils are just taught how to speak, to listen, to read and to write without being taught grammar, they cannot achieve accuracy. (T1.I1.165)

The view that explicit grammar knowledge underpins communicative competence is also shared by Teacher 6, who did not believe that learners' communicative competence could be developed before they were taught grammar. She stated that:

My view is conservative but the pupils first need to have a good knowledge of grammar so that they can apply that knowledge to speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is because supposing you want to make an utterance that you went to Hanoi yesterday, you cannot get the message across if you just know individual words such as 'go', 'yesterday', 'Hanoi' without knowing what the past tense is. (T6.I2.33)

In order to justify her strong beliefs that without explicit grammar knowledge, foreign language learners cannot get the message across accurately in the target language, one teacher cited an interesting story a boy in her class told about his aunt, who married a Swedish husband and had lived in Sweden with her husband for several years, but was unable to use a right reporting verb in her reported speech. The boy requested her to explain. “You taught me to use ‘says’[in reported speech], but my aunt, who speaks English every day, uses ‘he speaks.’ Why’s that?” (T7.I1.104). What this teacher implied is that it was the explicit grammar knowledge that influenced implicit knowledge, not the other way round.

Viewing explicit grammar knowledge as the pre-requisite for grammatical accuracy, four teachers (Teachers 1, 2, 5, 8) said that the pupils would not be confident enough in using English for communicative purposes without explicit grammar knowledge. They thought that inadequate knowledge of grammar was the cause of the pupils’ frequent errors, which led to their lack of confidence in using English for communicative purposes. For example, Teacher 1, who is the most experienced in the group, pointed out that:

When the pupils have good knowledge of grammar, their use of English is grammatically correct, and they feel more confident in communicating in English. [By contrast] when they see that they make a lot of errors in their speaking or writing, they lose their confidence. One can learn the language through imitation, but never feels confident due to failure of understanding [others]. (T1.I2.16)

Apparently, these teachers viewed implicit learning as just imitating others’ utterances, rather than learning through meaningful communication in order eventually to be conscious of how language is used. However, the only male teacher did not agree with the others. He claimed that grammar learning was needed only when the pupils’ educational purpose was to pass the exam. “If the purpose of

learning is to communicate, grammar plays a minimal role because in daily communication, grammar is rarely attended to as the case of Vietnamese people communicating in Vietnamese” (T3. I1.04). Yet, it is necessary to note that his view of communication seems quite simplistic, just like traveller’s survival spoken English. “Just a shrug of shoulders or a nod is enough without the need for grammar” (T3. I1.04).

5. 2. 2. Grammar and Communication: Role of Explicit Grammar Knowledge

Since these teachers held strong beliefs about the role of grammatical knowledge in foreign language learning, they saw a limited role of implicit knowledge. All of them, except the male teacher, believed that in their context where pupils do not have much access to the target language environment, explicit knowledge is critical in developing their proficiency in the target language. They pointed out that, unlike learning English as a second language in English-speaking countries, learning English as a foreign language in a country like Vietnam, pupils had neither exposure to the target language nor the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom, therefore a formal approach to grammar was more important if teachers did not want their pupils to use ungrammatical or pidginized English.

I think, in Vietnam, the pupils do not have adequate conditions for language learning. They just learn the language inside the classroom, therefore they need to learn grammar. If you just let them use the language for communication without knowing grammar, what do they communicate with? If, for example, they are in the environment where they hear people speaking English frequently, they can imitate them, but here such an opportunity is almost non-existent. (T5.I1.23)

However, the Department chair did not believe that formal instruction alone would help to achieve the goal of foreign language teaching and learning completely.

If teachers and pupils work to the best of their capacity and teachers know how to encourage the pupils to use the language at least in the class periods, only 60%-70% of the foreign language learning goal could be achieved. Personally, I think in order to improve the pupils' language competence it is necessary to create the target language environment for them to have contact with the language naturally. (T2.I1.70)

She further clarified this by explaining that English was just one subject in the school curriculum, and the pupils could not invest sufficiently in learning English.

They [the pupils] have to learn other subjects. For example, they have one class period for English today, other periods for other subjects. Obviously, their use of English is discontinuous, therefore it is limited at a certain level. They, including the good pupils, forget what they have been taught. (T2.I1.72)

In order to compensate for this disadvantage, the Department chair said that they spent two hours every afternoon during week days teaching in-depth grammatical items to all tenth-graders to prepare them for future examinations that demand of pupils high-level grammatical competence.

While the debate among scholars and methodologists concerning whether to begin with instruction or communication is still going on, six teachers in this study stated that grammar teaching should precede the development of communication skills so that the pupils could apply the grammar they were taught to communicative activities. Except for the only male teacher and the youngest teacher (Teacher 8), who thought that pupils should be given the opportunity to use the language freely before they were taught grammar explicitly, all teachers in this study thought that there was no good reason for delaying grammar teaching until later in the learning process. These teachers believed that there was no way to develop learners' communicative skills in foreign language unless grammar teaching started right from the first formal encounter the learners experienced with the foreign language, therefore even absolute

beginners needed to be taught grammar right from their first lesson. Teacher 7 stated that “Without grammar, pupils would put words together in an ungrammatical way without knowing how to put them in the right order” (T7.I1.25). Along these lines, the chair of the Department elaborated on her perspective that:

If grammar is an important component of language like other linguistic components such as phonology and lexis or communicative skills, it has to be taught right from the beginning. ...Without learning grammar, language learning is just parrot learning. (T2.I1.28)

For her, without grammar, learners could not achieve a high level of proficiency:

Saying that teaching communicative skills without teaching grammar is ungrounded. Without being taught grammar, pupils, at best, can speak pidginized [ungrammatical] English, putting words together. It is like the English of children selling postcards on the Hoan Kiem Lake or working on Nha Trang beach. I think grammar is one of the three pillars of language, the other two are pronunciation and vocabulary. There is no reason for devaluing the teaching of grammar. (T2.I1.02)

As several of their earlier comments indicate, the great majority of these teachers see grammar as playing a highly important role for their pupils. Teacher 7, for example, suggested that explicit grammar knowledge underpins communicative ability in all four skills. In her view, “You cannot be a good user of the language unless you follow grammatical rules” (T7.I1.17), but she admitted that “good grammatical knowledge alone does not guarantee proficiency unless the language skills are practised frequently” (T7.I1.19). In a similar vein, Teacher 5 believed that “grammar is instrumental to other language skills” (T5.I1.11), and she exemplified the instrumental role of grammar to reading skills saying that:

Grammar helps the pupils to understand the reading text better when they come across new grammatical structures. They may know all the words, but they don't understand the new grammatical structures. So teaching grammar helps them understand the sentences in the [reading] text better. (T5.I2.08)

The view that explicit grammar knowledge allows learners to build a cognitive framework for further learning and gives them the confidence to use the language in communication is echoed by Teacher 5, who pointed out that:

Communicative competence is important, but it must be developed on the grammatical foundation. Without grammar, communication is just very limited. If the learners want to move up to higher levels of proficiency to become fluent and accurate users of the language, they cannot go without grammar learning. (T5.I1.21)

The importance that these teachers attached to grammar learning in developing the learners' communicative skills in the target language was detailed in the way they believed how grammatical knowledge was related to language skills. In this regard, data from the interviews indicate that although the teachers strongly believed in the role of grammar to all four macro-skills, i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing, they thought that grammar was particularly critical to writing proficiency. "Grammatical knowledge determines the pupils' writing proficiency" (T2.I1.10), and "The importance of grammar to writing is out of question" (T6.I1.04). Teacher 2 elaborated on her view, saying:

Grammatical knowledge affects the pupils' reading and writing skills more than their listening and speaking. While listening, pupils do not pay attention to grammar whereas they don't need complicated grammatical structures to get the message across orally. The skill that is affected most by grammar is writing. (T2.I1.12)

Pupils' expectations are also influential on teachers' view of focus on form. The belief that pupils need grammar more than communication is further evidenced in the following statements made by various teachers in the group:

I think the pupils prefer learning grammar. They are unwilling to learn to speak. In my afternoon lessons, I try to teach them language skills, but they insist that I should teach them grammar. They value it [grammar] more. (T4. I2.25)

After each grammar lesson, the pupils seem more satisfied because they have gained something visible while their gains in the skills lessons are more abstract. On the surface, the skills lessons may be exciting, but pupils are just attentive to noting down [grammar] rules in their notebooks, viewing them as their own assets. (T2.I3.68)

The new syllabus allocates only one class period for grammar and pronunciation. That's why, the overwhelming majority of the pupils are interested in learning grammar only. (T1. I2.10)

In addition to their perspectives on the role of grammar in developing learners' communicative competence, assessment is another factor that makes teachers favourable towards grammar teaching. Teacher 5 elaborated on her view that:

If we want to achieve the objectives that the pupils are able to read, to speak, to listen, and to write, grammar helps the pupils a great deal to understand the reading and listening texts, writing and speaking. It [grammar] is especially important for the pupils to take the exams. We are often told that teaching English nowadays focuses on listening, speaking, reading and writing, but a majority of the high school pupils are learning English for the exams only, to take the graduation exam, which focuses largely on grammar. This makes grammar particularly important. (T5.I2.20)

Despite teachers' beliefs about the causal relationship between grammar and communication, they preferred teaching grammar discretely and separately from skills work. Although there were signs of incidental focus on form in the skills work, those signs were just like burning-out candles on a well-lit street. Virtually, from the two Reading Comprehension lessons I observed before conducting this study (Unit 4, Grade 11; Unit 3, Grade 10), there was very little incidental focus on form. In the interviews, they unanimously stated that they just dealt with grammar in skills lessons in case the grammatical structure inhibited students' performance of skills work. "We prefer separating grammar from skills lessons" (T2.I1.10) and "we just talk superficially about the grammatical structure that the pupils don't know or they have forgotten" to facilitate their performance of the task without "explaining anything" about the structure (T4.I2.176) because "what matters in a skills lesson is skills development; it's time-consuming to teach grammar in skills lessons" (T7.I2.32). However, they put a great emphasis on grammar in teaching writing skills.

We tend to separate grammar from skills lesson. For example, in a speaking lesson, all activities are for speaking while in a reading lesson, the focus is on reading comprehension. However, the writing lessons have much to do with grammar, especially when we give feedback on the pupils' writing, we focus carefully on grammar. (T2.I1.10)

The preference of a grammar-then-communication strategy led Teacher 5 to a critical view of the new English syllabus and textbook for the school pupils, which is, as noted in Section 5.1., claimed to be communication-oriented. She commented that:

In the old syllabus, grammar was presented in isolation, item by item. When we finished teaching one item, the pupils applied it to their work. I find it easier. For example, when the pupils were taught 'to be,' they practised using it immediately. It was easier for them and therefore they used it in their own sentences more accurately. Now, with the new syllabus, which is

communicative or something like that, the pupils are confused greatly, especially when using verbs. ... They don't know why something has to be added to make 'to be' negative or why an auxiliary verb should be added to other verbs. (T5.I1.19)

Only Teacher 2, the Department chair, supported the view that grammar should be integrated in communicative activities because she believed grammar was as important as communicative skills in foreign language learning.

Teaching the knowledge about the language without teaching communicative skills is like a closed box. When we give the box to the pupils, they should open the box, i.e., apply the knowledge to communication. Thus, the pupils can apply their knowledge to communication, which is the ultimate goal of foreign language learning. Communication, in its turn, helps them to consolidate the knowledge about the language. (T2.I1.32)

Nonetheless, it seems to me from the quotation above and her subsequent classroom practice that this teacher still favoured a form-then-communication sequence. According to what she said, the pupils need to be provided with the closed box with grammatical knowledge inside first, then they are requested to open that box through the act of using the taught grammar knowledge for personal communication in order to get the taught knowledge etched deeper in their mind. The form-then-communication preference is further illustrated in the subsequent section "Approaches to grammar," but this is how Teacher 4 described her grammar teaching procedures:

Usually, I first present the examples to introduce the grammar point to be taught in the lesson. The pupils will look at those examples on the board and deduce the rules before I explain and write the rules on board. Then I get the pupils to practice. Finally, the pupils are allowed free practice in which they

produce their own sentence. At home, the pupils are requested to write a few sentences so that they can memorise the grammar item. (T4.I1.20)

There are two important points that need to be considered regarding teachers' strong beliefs about explicit grammar knowledge and a planned focus on form. First, the Vietnamese learning culture has always viewed the memorisation of facts as an important dimension of intellectual development, and the goal of schooling is the mastery of as much factual information as possible. Another point is the tradition of English language teaching in Vietnam, which has always emphasised the teaching of discrete-point grammar items. This is reflected in the new textbooks, which are claimed to be in accordance with the communicative language teaching principles, but present grammar in one separate lesson under the sectional headline as "Language Focus" to be delivered in one class period as defined in the syllabus (see Appendix H for a sample lesson). This implicitly informs teachers that grammar should be taught separately from skills work. It is, therefore, not surprising when the interview data indicate that seven out of eight teachers in this study believed that learners would learn best when they were taught grammar carefully and systematically in terms of rules. The following section will look into their beliefs about their reported approach to grammar.

5. 2. 3. Approaches to Grammar

As presented above, most of the teachers involved in this study highly valued explicit grammar knowledge, and it is not surprising that they preferred a teaching approach which moves from form to meaning, starting with conscious learning then gradually shifting to subconscious learning. This is evidenced in the way the thinking of all the teachers in the study appeared to be dominated by the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model of grammar pedagogy. It is interesting to note that while the new curriculum promotes a communicative, learner-centred, and task-based approach, none of the teachers in this study except for the youngest one mentioned these terms. The youngest teacher, Teacher 8, had been teaching for nearly two years. She

described her approach to grammar teaching as TBL, but when probed what TBL meant she said it was ‘teaching-based learning’, and only corrected it as ‘task-based learning’ when prompted by the interview question, “Have you ever heard of task-based language learning?” Then she described her TBL approach to grammar as follows:

First, I introduce a situation containing the target grammar structure, then I ask the pupils to provide similar situations to see if they can use the grammar item. Through these situations, I guide the pupils to practice by repeating and substituting some elements. Finally, they will be asked to formulate the structural pattern and the use of the grammar item. In case they are wrong, I will provide the correct rules. (T8. I2.53)

The observation showed that what she meant by ‘situations’ was in fact just decontextualized single sentences containing the target grammar structure.

Teacher 2, the Department chair, described the shape of her grammar lesson as being composed of four steps: recognition, analyse, compare, and confirm (these are the original English words she used in the interviews). She clarified this procedure, the pupils were first provided with the target grammar point in sentences and they recognised the form and use of the grammar point, then they analysed its function(s). In the next step, the pupils compared the use of the grammar point in different situations. Finally, the teacher confirmed the form, the meaning and the use to establish the rules. She explained that she learned this procedure from the EFL textbooks published in the UK and it satisfied the pupils’ expectation to acquire knowledge actively (T2.I1.58). However, this teacher appeared to perceive that the grammar lesson procedure was distinctive from the model of grammar pedagogy when she pointed out that the model she used to teach grammar was the Presentation-Practice-Production model. In the first interview, she argued that the PPP model was suitable because, in a foreign-language context like Vietnam, it was necessary for the pupils to be led into situations in which the target structure is used so that the pupils

could work out the rules, form, and use of the target structure through induction. She concluded that “I think this approach matches the pupils’ thinking” (T2.I2.32). Then later, in the third interview, she elaborated:

For the last ten years, I’ve occasionally participated in [in-service] workshops. I came to know this model [the PPP] in 1993. I became interested and felt that this was what my pupils needed (T2.I3.46)... [My pupils] are learning English as a foreign language, not as a mother tongue. When people learn a language in that language environment, they are probably not conscious of grammar. But my pupils are learning a foreign language. Without grammar, they would not be able to link words together into complete utterances (T2.I3.08)

Teacher 7 was supportive of this view. She explained that she used this model in all her lessons because she found it suitable and effective for her pupils, which was reflected in their accurate performance of the grammar exercises. She explained further that:

This [the PPP model] is an inductive approach. Pupils are provided with examples first, then they work out the rules from those examples. This helps them remember [the rules] better. (T7.I1.38)

However, most of the teachers acknowledged that they either skipped the production stage or spent very little time on free activities because of time constraints. Below are some of their thoughts.

If the pupils’ English is good, I shorten the controlled practice in order to expand the free practice. But if the pupils are weak, explicit explanation and controlled practice take up all the time. There’s no time left for other activities. (T5.I1.51).

I try to spend few minutes before the lesson finishes for the pupils to use the taught structure in their own way. How much time is spent for this free practice depends on the target structure and on the pupils' level of proficiency. In some lessons, more time is devoted to free practice, in other lessons, less time. For some target structure it is so difficult for the pupils to use freely. For example, when we teach quantifiers such as 'few' or 'a few', it's so difficult for us to think of situations for them to use these grammar points. (T2.I3.40)

Understandably, time is always a big challenge to all teachers when they are mandated to cover two or three grammatical items plus the pronunciation practice as defined in the syllabus within a 45-minute lesson with a class size of around 30 pupils. Five teachers described the procedures of their grammar lesson in exactly the same way as Teacher 5 does:

I always provide some simple examples to introduce the lesson content [the grammar item to be taught] to the pupils so that they can have an idea of what the grammar item to be taught is. Then, I elicit the rules from them for practice. For strong classes, the controlled practice is shorter in order to save time for free practice in which the strong pupils have the opportunity to use the taught grammar item in their own sentence. For weaker classes, free practice is ignored. The pupils cannot use it [the taught grammar item] freely, and neither are they interested. Also there's no time left. (T5.I1.31)

While the teachers valued the PPP as a suitable formal approach, what they said in the interviews also shed light on the contributions of their professional training, peer observation and teaching experience to the development of their procedural knowledge of grammar pedagogy. For example, Teacher 5 stated that she learned the model in her pre-service training programme, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 did not know about this model until they participated in an in-service workshop in the mid-1990s. Four other teachers acknowledged that they learn this model by observing other teachers in the school. Teacher 4, who believed that the PPP was the way she should

teach her pupils, said in the interviews that as she was a retrained Russian teacher, she was not taught much teaching methodology, but she managed to learn a great deal from other teachers in the school. She pointed out that:

I was a retrained Russian teacher. I was not taught methodology carefully, just superficially. I just rely on learning from my colleagues' experience.
(T4.I1.40)

Then in the third interview, she clarified this point: "I have learned a great deal from my colleagues. My school has some very good teachers who I often observe and learn from" (T4.I3.47). Teacher 6 told me that she had some friends who taught English at the lower secondary school. These friends explained the PPP model to her and she found that it was a new model, so she followed the model in her classroom work. Especially, Teacher 8, the youngest teacher, maintained that although she was taught the task-based learning in her university methodology course, she seemed to be more influenced by the way her colleagues employed the PPP model in the classroom.

There is ample evidence in the observational data that these teachers strongly favoured the PPP model of grammar pedagogy. The following section (Section 5.3) provides further analysis of the instructional strategies that the teachers used for form-focused instruction and their underlying thoughts about those strategies.

5. 3. Operationalization of Beliefs in the Classroom

As indicated in 5.2., teachers in this study held strong beliefs about the importance of grammar learning and they favoured the PPP approach to grammar. This section presents observational data and stimulated recall interview data to examine how their beliefs were translated into their classroom practices as well as the rationales underlying those practices. Five themes (categories) which are identified from data analysis are Presentation, Explicit Teaching of Rules, Practice, Corrective Feedback and Use of L1 to teach grammar. These themes/ categories are discussed below.

5. 3. 1. Presentation through Sentence-level Examples

Two issues emerged from the multiple-source data regarding the strategies teachers used to present the target grammar item. Firstly, although all of them stated in the interviews that they always presented the target grammar in a situation to help the pupils understand the grammar item more easily, they understood the ‘situation’ as meaning one or two decontextualized single sentences denoting a here-and-now thing. It was not uncommon to observe that most of the teachers in this study follow more or less the same sequence of presenting the target grammar item in single paradigm sentences, then eliciting rules from the pupils, then doing the grammar exercises in the textbook as controlled practice. Secondly, despite their perception of the value of presenting the target grammar point through texts, all of them, except for the two most experienced teachers, preferred sentence-based grammar presentation, thinking that this presentation strategy was easier for both the teachers and the pupils. Teacher 8, the least experienced in the group, considered it to be more time-consuming to present grammar through a text. She said that:

I think it takes time to present grammar through texts because pupils need to go through the whole text to recognise the target grammar point, and in many cases they cannot do that without the teacher’s help. It is less time-consuming if I present grammar in a single sentence. (T8.I2.90)

Teacher 7 also preferred a sentence-based approach to grammar presentation though she was aware of the value of a text-based approach. Below is what she said in the interview:

I think it would be more interesting to present the grammar through a text because it provides a situation for the pupils to understand not only the form, but also meaning and use. But it’s really difficult to find such an appropriate text, so I tend to present grammar through isolated sentences. (T7.I1.66)

It is necessary to note that the target grammar items to be taught have been predetermined in the syllabus. Usually, more than one grammar item are to be taught within a 45-minute lesson, while these predetermined grammar items, more often than not, are not included in texts for skill development such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Perhaps this is the reason why they found it time-consuming to prepare supplementary texts which include those predetermined grammar items which are used. Even if they could find those texts, it would be impossible to use a text-based approach to grammar within the fixed lesson period.

Teachers' adoption of a sentence-based approach to grammar presentation is exemplified in the following observation extract. The grammar item to be taught as prescribed in the syllabus is "Cleft Sentences". To begin the lesson, she revised the relative clauses by asking the pupils to choose a suitable relative pronoun to complete four sentences she wrote on the chalkboard in the form of a gap-filling exercise. Then she wrote the sentence, "Tom borrowed my bike yesterday" on the board and elicited from the pupils different sentence elements such as the subject, the object, the adverb. Observation Extract # 1 follows this.

Observational Extract # 1

01 T: Nếu tôi nói một câu như thế này chúng ta sẽ thấy như thế nào? Đây chỉ là một câu thông báo bình thường. Thế nhưng bây giờ tôi muốn nhấn mạnh rằng đó là Tom người đã mượn xe đạp của tôi thì tôi sẽ nói như sau *How do you think if I say a sentence like this? This is just a common statement. But now I want to emphasise 'Tom', who borrowed my bike, I will say as below*

02 T: <writes on board> It was Tom that borrowed my bike yesterday.//

03 T: Nào chúng ta thấy câu thứ hai này khác câu thứ nhất ở điểm nào? Ta thêm 'it was' và sau Tom là mệnh đề quan hệ bắt đầu bằng 'that'. Nhưng nếu tôi không muốn nhấn mạnh vào từ 'Tom' mà tôi muốn nhấn mạnh vào từ 'my bike' thì tôi lại có câu: *Now you see in what way does the second sentence differ from the first sentence? We add 'it was' and Tom is followed*

by a relative clause beginning with 'that'. But if I don't want to emphasise the word 'Tom', but 'my bike' instead, I have the sentence:

04 T: <writes on board> It was my bike that Tom borrowed yesterday.//

05 T: Lúc này tôi không nhấn mạnh vào chủ ngữ nữa mà tôi nhấn mạnh vào tân ngữ 'my bike' và sau my bike là mệnh đề quan hệ. *Now I don't emphasise the subject but the object, 'my bike', which is followed by a relative clause*

06 T: Giờ tôi không muốn nhấn mạnh vào 'Tom' và 'my bike' tôi nhấn mạnh vào thành phần trạng ngữ thì tôi sẽ có câu mới là *Now I don't want to emphasise 'Tom' and 'my bike' any more, but the adverb. I will have a new sentence, which writes as*

07 T: <writes on board> It was yesterday that Tom borrowed my bike.

08 T: Chúng ta thấy thành phần được nhấn mạnh ở đây là trạng ngữ đúng không? Và chúng ta thấy rằng ba câu này là cleft sentences. Từ đây ta suy ra cleft sentences được dùng để làm gì? *We see the emphasised element here is the adverb, right? And we see these three sentences are 'cleft sentences'. From these examples, what do you think cleft sentences are used for?*

09 Ps: nhấn mạnh *emphasis*

(T7.O.2.Unit 13, Grade 11)

She explained in the stimulated recall that presenting grammar through example sentences is more effective for pupils' learning.

I presented through examples so that the pupils could realize how the grammar structure is used. I think providing the pupils with examples, then allowing them to work out the grammatical rules helps the pupils understand better how the grammar structure is used. (T7.SR 2.3)

She went on to explain that she found "this strategy in [methodology] books" and her university teachers "also presented grammar this way." Also, her teaching experience showed that this presentation strategy was effective. Sharing this view on the

effectiveness of sentence-based grammar presentation, Teacher 4 maintained that by eliciting rules from the given paradigm sentences, the pupils had to think, thereby memorising rules better. She admitted that when she gave the examples then asked the pupils to discover the structural pattern and the rules in order to:

... stimulate pupils to think about how the target grammar point is used, and why it is used that way. If they are right, they will remember the rules longer and even if they are wrong, they will remember longer when corrected by the teacher. I've always followed this approach in my teaching.
(T4.I2.41)

This teacher obviously believed that when the pupils worked out rules of usage from the linguistic instances provided through a trial-and-error mode, they could transfer those rules into their long-term memory, thereby developing their cognitive skills. Similarly, Teacher 5 claimed that when the target grammar point is presented in single sentences, it “helps the pupils to see the structure more clearly; they can notice the structure and they can understand” (T5.SR.3.31).

Teacher 8, the youngest, also adopted this strategy to present grammar. She described the structure of her grammar lesson in the preliminary interview as follows:

First, I provide the pupils with a situation in which the grammar item appears. Then I give the pupils the terminology for that grammar item. This is followed by the pupils' observation and comments on the grammar item. Finally, I will work with the pupils to formulate the formulaic structure, the rules, the meaning and the use. (T8.I1.52)

Observational Extract # 2 illustrates what she did in the classroom. In this lesson, she was introducing the hypothetical sentence. After revising conditional sentences Type 1 and Type 2, she wrote on the board the title of the lesson, “Conditional Sentence Type 3.” Then she went on to tell the whole class (her original words in English):

Observational Extract # 2

01 T: So ah I have some examples. First I have the situation <writes on the board>: She didn't prepare. She didn't pass the exam. It is the fact about event in the past because we use simple past in these sentences: She didn't prepare and she didn't pass the exam.

02 T: <writes on board>: If she had prepared she would have passed the exam.

(T8. O2. Unit 11, Grade 10)

She believed that by giving the simple sentences first then combining them together to exemplify the target grammatical structure, she was giving a situation to facilitate the pupils' discovery of the rules.

I was creating a situation to introduce to the pupils that this was a hypothetical condition. I wanted to present the conditional sentence type 3 this way because I think if the situation is visual, the pupils will notice it immediately and they will find it easier to understand. (T8.SR2.48)

So, the teacher interpreted 'situation' as isolated sentences referring to the *here-and-now*, rather than a meaningful context in which pupils want to communicate something. This form of grammar presentation was commonly observed across five teachers in all their lessons. However, Teacher 3, the male teacher, used a different strategy to present the same grammar point in his class. Instead of giving exemplars to illustrate the target grammar point, then eliciting the pupils the rules as Teacher 8 did in Observational Extract # 2 above, and as many other teachers did, he asked the pupils to articulate the rules as far as they could before they were instructed to do the exercises in the textbook. He thought that it was not necessary to present the grammar item because it just revised the lower secondary school syllabus.

For presentation, I try to be very brief. For example, I ask them to do the exercises since the new syllabus just recycles [the lower grade syllabus]. After they have done the exercises, they articulate the rules. Then if there's time left, I give them supplementary exercises; if there's no time left, I round-up the rules to make sure they [the pupils] have mastered them. (T3.I1.54)

This assumption guided what he did in the classroom. In all of his lessons that I observed, he followed the same procedures, which were first checking the pupils' memorisation of rules, then getting the pupils to do the exercises, and finally telling rules explicitly for the pupils to note down in their notebooks. Observational Extract # 3 below exemplifies his presentation strategy as described:

Observational Extract # 3

01 T: <writes the lesson title on board: Conditional Sentence Type III>

02 T: Hôm nay chúng ta sẽ ôn lại câu điều kiện conditional sentence type 3. Trước khi chúng ta làm bài tập trong sách, tôi muốn một em nào đó nói cho tôi biết quy tắc của câu điều kiện loại 3 nó được dùng khi nào và động từ trong các mệnh đề của câu điều kiện có dạng như thế nào. Nguyễn thị Thuỳ Linh nào. *To day we revise the conditional sentence type III. Before we do the exercise in the textbook I want one of you to state the rules of conditional sentence type III, when it is used and what the verb form in the clauses of the conditional sentence is.*

03 T: <nominates one pupil>,

04 T: động từ trong mệnh đề if ở ...*The verb in the if-clause is in ...*

05 Thuy Linh : quá khứ hoàn thành *the past perfect*

06 T: <repeats the pupils' words in Vietnamese>

07 T: Quá khứ hoàn thành có dạng như thế nào? *How to form the past perfect?*

08 Thuy Linh : had and past participle

09 T: Good. Cả lớp thấy đúng chưa? *Is it correct, class?*

10 T: đúng rồi *Correct*

11T: Bây giờ thế còn cách dùng câu điều kiện loại 3 thì sao? *Now how about the use of the conditional sentence type III?*

12 Thuy Linh: đề diễn đạt một việc gì đó không có thật trong quá khứ *to express something not real in the past.*

13 T: <Repeats Linh's words>. Good

14 T: Now you do exercise 1. Two of you go to the board and write the answers on the board and the rest do the exercise on your seats.

15T: <nominates two pupils to go to the board and do the exercise>

(T3. O2. Unit 11, Grade 10)

As indicated earlier in 5.1., most of the grammar points in the English language syllabus for the upper secondary school are recycled. Teacher 3 assumed that the pupils had forgotten what they had learned in the lower grades. However, he asked them to state the rules. He thought he needed to remind them of the rules before they were asked to do the exercises, which were his lesson focus. He explained that:

These are Grade 10 pupils. ... In the lower secondary school, they might not have paid sufficient attention to this grammar item. ...My experience tells me that they had forgotten everything. ...Now they are reminded of the rules they will, I think, do the exercises well. (T3.SR2.6-8)

Through his attempt to refresh the grammatical knowledge stored in the pupils' long-term memory, this teacher, in fact, believed that without explicit grammar knowledge the pupils would not be able to do the exercises. Therefore, instead of presenting rules first, he tried to bring the pupils' explicit knowledge to the surface.

Unlike other teachers in the group, the two most experienced teachers thought that presenting grammar through a text or a dialogue was better for the pupils to memorise the rule. Both of them said in the interviews that allowing pupils to notice the form in a text was a way of encouraging active learning. This was in contrast to the explicit approach to grammar presentation, which could be time-saving, but the pupils could

not get the rules ingrained in their minds. Both claimed that they learned this presentation strategy from internationally published ELT materials which were popular in Vietnam, like the *Headway* series (Soars & Soars, 1989), *New First Certificate Master Class* (Haines & Stewart, 1994), or some other materials used to prepare the students for the Cambridge First Certificate in English examination. For example, one of the teachers said that:

I use an extract from a text for the pupils to read then allow the pupils to give their comments [on the target grammar item]. Why should I do this? Why should I present grammar this way? I think when the pupils come across the grammar that has been used in the text they have read, they will remember better when the structure is used. (T1.I1.92)

Actually this is what she did in the classroom. For example, in one lesson in which she was introducing the English articles, she began the lesson by handing out a worksheet containing a short and simple text about a shopkeeper in Oxford, which was taken from an ELT textbook, to the pupils and asked them to read it. Then she did a consciousness-raising activity as illustrated in Observational Extract # 4 below.

Observational Extract # 4

- 01 T: Today we are going to revise the articles.
- 02 T: <hands out a worksheet to the pupils> Look at your worksheet and read the text and underline the examples of 'the+noun'/////
- 03 T: <2 minutes later> What are they, please, the whole class what are the examples?
- 04 Ps: <silence>
- 05 T: What are they?
- 06 Ps: the river Thames, the shop, the village, the children, the Grand hotel
- 07 T: Now circle the examples a/an+noun
- 08 Ps: a shop, an old village, a shopkeeper, a car
- 09 T: Now square the examples with no articles zero articles

10 Ps: bread, milk, fruit, vegetables, newspapers, everything

11 T: everything is not a noun, it's a pronoun

12 Ps: sweets, ice creams, school, friends, Oxford

13 T: Now please look at the rules there are rules when do you use 'the', when do you use a/an and when do you use no articles?

(T1. O2.Unit 8, Grade 11 English stream)

Following this, there was an activity which required the pupils to put 'a', 'the' or 'Ø – no article' in given sentences on the worksheet. Also, the pupils were supposed to state the reason for their use or non-use of the articles in each case by referring to the rules provided on the worksheet.

She explained that she thought if she told the pupils the rules instead of letting them work out the rules, they would feel that they were imposed, thus did not remember the rules well. She said:

I handed out this text so that the pupils could see when the English used 'a' or 'the.' They notice the language by themselves, they understand it and they discover the rules by themselves. It is easier for them to remember [the rules].

(T1. SR.2.14)

She added that she learned this presentation strategy from the ELT materials written by British authors, specifically from the *New Headway* series (John & Soars, 1989). However, Teacher 2 acknowledged that they could not always adopt this text-based approach to grammar presentation simply because they could not find appropriate texts for certain grammatical items. "For example, when we teach 'Inversion,' we cannot find any texts which have many examples of inversion" (T2. I1.10). By contrast, Teacher 4 agreed that using a text to present grammar might be more useful but because time constrained her using this strategy, she thought it was more economical to present grammar through single-sentence examples (T4. SR2.33).

Although Teacher 2 shared Teacher 1's view that grammar was better presented in a text, the way she used 'texts' to present grammar is different. In one of her lessons that I observed, she gave the pupils a specifically-written text in which there were a few misuses of the English indefinite pronouns like 'someone,' 'everyone,' 'anyone' etc., which were the focus of the lesson. The pupils were asked to find a grammar mistake in each of these sentences and correct it. After eliciting the pupils' answers, she handed out another text which was a photocopy from a grammar book describing rules of how the English indefinite pronouns are used. The pupils were asked to refer to the rules and check their answers then explain why they thought something was an error, and why they corrected it the way they did by referring to the relevant rules given in the second text. The following Observational Extract described what happened after she had drawn a table on the board to introduce all the English indefinite pronouns and elicited the pupils' answers to the first text.

Observational Extract # 5

01 T: It is not correct? Why? What should it be? What do you think? ///

02 P: <silence>

03 T: What do you think? What should it be? OK we'll check it later. Next sentence <This continues till the end of the exercise>

04 T: <Gives pupils another handout, which describes the rules of how to use somebody/anything/nowhere/everywhere. E.g. Some is used in positive sentences, any is used in negative sentences and questions.>

05 T: Please read the rules and refer back to your exercise [ex. 1] Read the rules carefully and do the exercise again in pairs or groups.

(T2. O1, Unit 8, Grade 11)

Normally, a text is used for a consciousness-raising activity which aims at learners' awareness of how a particular target grammar item is used in its natural context, but in this case the teacher used a specifically-written text for an error analysis activity as a strategy for grammar presentation. The issue to explore here is the rationale for using error analysis to present grammar. The reason she gave in the stimulated recall

was simple: error analysis sheds light on the gap in the pupils' knowledge about the grammar item to be taught. She added that:

I wanted to use this to diagnose what the pupils had known, then to orient the pupils to what they need to focus on. They know what they have confused, then I will confirm. Such a pre-orientation helps to sustain their direction [to the gap of their knowledge]. (T2.SR1.18).

She went on to explain that once the pupils were able to identify the gap in their grammar knowledge, and they tried to fill that gap themselves, their grammar would be better. That was the principle of active learning.

I wanted the pupils to master the rules actively. They start with their errors, then they are provided with rules and use those rules to self-correct their errors. This way helps them to acquire the knowledge better.(T2.SR2.42)

Since I, myself, had never come across the idea of presenting grammar through error analysis in the literature, I asked her where she got the idea from. She said that while she used this strategy in the classroom, the pupils were interested because the strategy was new to them and it helped them understand grammar better. Also, she added that it was the concept 'boomerang' that she picked up from her Masters course, meaning metaphorically that letting your pupils set on their own journey from where they are, then after their journey they will gain something upon return.

Also, it is interesting to note that while both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 believed in the superiority of a text-based approach over the sentence-based approach to grammar presentation, the way they used texts is really interesting. The approach is fundamentally form-driven with texts being chosen to serve grammatical needs, rather than text-driven, with the text being primary and grammar deriving from it. Again, the concept of text-based approach to grammar presentation was re-interpreted through teachers' beliefs.

In summary, three important points emerge from the data analysis regarding teachers' grammar presentation strategies. Firstly, while a majority preferred presenting grammar through sentence-based exemplars, the two most experienced teachers supported a text-based approach though the rationales and the way they used texts to present grammar varied between them. Secondly, what they did in the classroom confirms what they stated in the interviews, even in the case of the male teacher, who seemed to avoid presenting grammar by letting himself be directed by the textbook. Thirdly, teachers' beliefs are shaped largely by their own teaching experience, and partly by the ELT materials published in English-speaking countries. One common important factor is that three teachers mentioned that they learned a great deal from their colleagues' teaching strategies by observing them. The observational data also supports the notion of a collective pedagogy among this group of teachers, which is evidenced by the dominant similarities across cases and across lessons.

Another most noticeable feature of the observed lessons is that grammar presentation tends to be followed by teachers' explicit explanation of rules, and this will be discussed in the subsequent section.

5. 3. 2. Focus on Explicit Teaching of Grammatical Rules and Terminology

As presented in sections 5.2.3. and 5.3.1 above, teachers in this study hold strong beliefs about the role of grammar and the Presentation-Practice-Production model of grammar pedagogy. Therefore, it is quite logical that they place much weighting on the role of explicit grammar knowledge. Observational data reflect a common trend across all cases of this study which is that teachers tended to integrate the explicit instruction of rules into their presentation by eliciting the pupils' knowledge about the grammar item being presented – as shown above in Observational Extract #3. Most of the teachers did not believe that pupils could be able to achieve their goal of learning English, i.e., to pass the accuracy-focused examinations, without good explicit knowledge of grammar. Therefore, they viewed memorization of grammar rules as

necessary and important for effective language use. Specifically, six teachers shared the view that the foreign language environment, unlike the second language environment where implicit knowledge is more important because learners can learn the language in a natural environment, requires learners to have good explicit grammar knowledge to be both effective users of the language and successful test-takers. Below is what Teacher 6 said in the interview:

We have to explain carefully in a traditional way. I cannot use the new approach [communicative approach] because it's time-consuming. I have to go straight to the point, telling them this is the structural pattern, this is the use, then let them do the exercises to see what happens. ... If time allows I provide a situation and ask the pupils to work out the rules, the structure. ... I know that if the pupils work out the rules by themselves, they will remember them better. It's my feeling. (T6.I1.72)

When I observed her, I saw that she was so keen to prompt the pupils to formulate the structural pattern of the target structure before she herself formulated the rules. For example, one of her lessons I observed was about the "Relative Clauses Replaced with the Present Participle." The following observation extract depicts what she did after she had finished a warm-up activity to begin the lesson and handed the pupils a worksheet containing six pairs of simple sentences. She then called upon three pupils to go to the front and each had to combine two pairs of those sentences into one relative clause on the board. Seven minutes later, after the three pupils had done their work, she called upon one pupil to stand up to identify the relative clause as well as the function of the relative pronoun in the sentences the pupils had written on the board.

Observational Extract # 6

01 T: <reads aloud> Sentence 3 : The book which was published last week was written for children.

02 T: What is the relative clause, Nga <nominates one female pupil>?

03 Nga: The relative clause is “which was published last week”/
04 T: functions as ...?/// The relative pronoun functions as ... ?/////

05 Nga: the subject

06 T: Is sentence 4 OK? // The sports game... Does this clause need a comma?///

07 Ps: <in chorus> No

08 T: A comma is not needed. Is this a proper noun?

09 Ps: <in chorus> No

10 T: which was held...What is the relative clause? The relative clause functions as ...?/////

11 Ps: <in chorus> Object

(T6. O2., Unit 11, Grade 11)

The rationale she gave for this kind of grammatical analysis was to refresh the pupils’ knowledge about sentence elements, which she believed could facilitate their doing the exercises that followed.

This part is related to the subject and if we did not mention it, if we did not use the term ‘subject’ it would be difficult for the students later when they had to do the other exercise because the pupils would not know what the subject is. If I had just told them ‘this is a relative clause,’ the pupils would have been able to do the exercise but they would feel confused later without being able to distinguish which is the subject, which is the object. When I was teaching another class I myself had not recognized the pupils’ problem until one of them asked me why, in this case, the sentence was used like this. She asked how to make a distinction between a subject and an object. So the problem was identified by the students themselves. (T6.SR2.33)

In another lesson, while she was teaching the grammar item “Reported Speech with Infinitives,” she wrote one sentence on the chalkboard and then elicited from the pupils the structural pattern of the sentence.

Observational Extract # 7

- 01 T: <writes on board> You promised to go to the Halloween party
- 02 T: Cấu trúc của các câu trên là gì nhỉ ? *What is the structure of the above sentences?*
- 03 P: V+O+to V
- 04 T: <writes the structure on board>
- 05 T: Với 'to promise' thì thế nào? *What about 'to promise'/////*
- 06 Ps: V+toV
- 07 T: <writes the structure on board>
- 08 T: Đây là dạng khẳng định còn dạng phủ định thì sao? Ta có nói: She didn't ask us to keep quiet không? *This is the structure for the affirmative sentences. What about the negative one? Can we say: She didn't ask us to keep quiet?//*
- 09 Ps: Không. *No*
- 10 T: Vậy dạng phủ định ta nói thế nào? *So what is the negative structure?/////*
- 11 Ps: V+O not to V
- 12 T: Good. Very good
- 13 T: <writes on board: V+O not to V ; V + not to V and boxed these structures>.

(T6. O1,Unit 5, Gra de 11)

When asked for the reason why she emphasised the structural pattern, she said that her purpose for providing the structural pattern was two-fold. It both helped to motivate the pupils and served as a source of reference for doing grammatical exercises.

I provided them with the structural pattern so that I did not have to tell them that 'promise' is followed by to verb, or 'want' is followed by somebody + to verb. They [the pupils] would feel more motivated because they are able to remember the pattern and to do the exercises. While doing the exercises, if they cannot do them, they just refer to the formulaic pattern. (T6.SR2.28)

Using the structural pattern as a motivating strategy is evidently her own principle of grammar pedagogy. And she said that she learned this technique from a friend of hers who was a lower secondary school English language teacher. Teacher 4 also agreed that conscious knowledge was more important than unconscious knowledge but she did not believe it was the pupils' needs [of learning for exams] as Teacher 6 thought. For her, the pupils needed conscious knowledge to perform satisfactorily in the exams, which was the important goal of learning English. "In fact, what matters to the pupils is to study for the exams" (T4.I2.92). Then, in the follow-up interview, she elaborated her view that:

From my experience, I think that without memorising rules means knowing nothing. There are pupils of mine who told me that they were empty-minded in terms of rules. They are unable to do exercises because they understand nothing. (T4.I3.61)

She explained that, after providing the example sentences, she always elicited the rules and the formulaic structure from the pupils to encourage their thinking before she provided them with her final formulaic structure for the pupils to copy down on their notebooks. She believed this helped the pupils learn grammar more easily and remember rules better. When I observed her, I found that she taught exactly the way she described in the interviews. Observational Extract # 8 below exemplifies how the teacher used elicitation of this type to diagnose the gap in the pupils' knowledge of the target grammar item.

Observational Extract # 8

01 T: Now today we're going to review the relative clause and the omission of relative pronouns.

02 T: <writes the lesson title on the board>.

03 T: Now look at the board please. Do you know that sometimes relative pronouns can be omitted and sometimes it cannot be omitted. 'omit' do you know omit?

04 T: 'omit' là gì các em? Có thể bỏ đại từ tính ngữ đó. Các em suy nghĩ một chút rồi trả lời câu hỏi của cô. *What does 'omit' mean? It means 'bỏ' the adjectival pronoun can be omitted. Now think for a second and answer my question /////*

05 T: When can the relative pronoun be omitted and when can't it be omitted?

06 T: Chúng ta nhìn lần lượt từng câu một *We look at sentence by sentence*

07 T: Now the first sentence

08 T: <reads aloud the sentence on board>.

09 T: Do you know the woman who is coming toward us? 'Who' is ... can be omitted or can't be omitted?

10 T: Truong Son <nominates one pupil>

11 Truong Son: it can be omitted <he mispronounced the word 'cannot'.

12 T: cannot or can?

13 Truong Son: can't

14 T: OK <writes on the board: can't be omitted>

15 T: Theo ý bạn Sơn là như vậy. Có bạn nào đồng ý với bạn không? Đúng không nhỉ? *That's Son's idea. Anybody agrees? It is correct?*

(T4. O3., Unit 12, Grade 11)

The lesson revises the 'Omission of Relative Pronouns', and the extract above followed a warm-up activity in which the pupils were told to combine the teachers' pairs of simple sentences into relative clauses. She explained her purpose for using this error correction strategy in the stimulated recall session:

First of all, I wanted to listen to them before I corrected them. I always use this strategy. It is necessary to know what the pupils have known in order to decide what should be corrected. (T4.SR3.27)

Interestingly, the principle underlying this diagnostic behaviour is exactly the same as the rationale Teacher 2 gave for her use of error analysis to identify the pupils' knowledge gap so as to decide how to present the target grammar (see 5.3.1. above). These teachers seemed to believe that good teaching should start with what the pupils know rather than what they should know. This is evidenced in the way they acknowledged the need to identify the gap in pupils' formal knowledge of the target language before they made remedial decisions.

What I noticed when I observed the teachers in this study was that they emphasised the pupils' memorisation of not only grammatical rules but also the formulaic or structural pattern of the target grammar item. In all lessons I observed, they tended to write the formulaic pattern either in big letters in coloured chalk or put them in a box, then they requested the pupils to write down the rules in their notebooks. For example, Teacher 2, who believed that "grammar rules are like laws" that make pupils' use of the language principled and standardised (T2.I1.54), said that after eliciting the pupils' identification of relevant grammatical rules from the examples given, she always asked the pupils to write down the rules she formulated on their notebooks carefully for reference at home. "From my teaching experience, I've realised that pupils are likely to forget [what they are taught], so I even ask them to box the structural pattern in red in their notebook" (T2.I1.96), and "we always take this seriously, so the pupils note down [rules] very carefully" (T2.I3.70). The following Observational Extract is an episode of her lesson on the defining and non-defining relative clauses, which describes her explicit explanation which follows pupils' prompted articulation of the rules. She was formulating rules for the pupils to write down on their note-books. It is worth noting that she was one of the three teachers who used English extensively in the classroom.

Observational Extract # 9

01 T: Now. The main thing I would like you to remember is the use defining and non-defining clauses. In this case, the man is a very unclear word. There

are a lot of men in the world, but this is the man who taught me at the university so the man here makes – sorry – needs to be made clear, but here this is a proper name. Yes, a certain person, so we can – we do not need to make clear which man he is. So in this case, if the noun is already clear, you use non-defining clause. If the noun is not clear you use defining. OK.

(T2. O3., Unit 9, Grade 11)

She explained that the rules articulated by the pupils were derived from their personal understanding, so she had to establish the correct rules for the whole class to remember. She believed that “Pupils must memorise rules because grammar consists of rules. Learning English at the school is not just learning individual words, but what needs to be achieved is accuracy in use” (T2.SR3.40).

Disagreeing with the view of most teachers in the group, Teacher 3, thought that unconscious knowledge was more important than conscious knowledge, and that pupils should be given the opportunity to practice doing grammar exercises before they were told rules explicitly. In his opinion, people speak English unconscious of grammar, therefore in the classroom:

Explicit explanation of rules is not unnecessary, but it should be the next step after pupils’ unconscious use of the language. Then explicit explanation just focuses on pupils’ deviant uses. This will help them remember rules better.
(T3.I1.20)

Again, he used error analysis as a starting point for his instructional decision like other teachers. In the classroom, after the pupils had finished doing the exercises in the textbook, he asked one pupil to articulate the rules on how the English articles ‘a’ and ‘the’ were used. When the pupil finished, he wrapped up the rules for them.

Observational Extract # 10

01 T: Khi nào dùng ‘a’, khi nào dùng ‘the’? Ai có thể nhắc lại được? *When is ‘a’ used and when ‘the’? Who can tell the rules?/////*

02 P: ‘the’ đứng trước danh từ xác định, ‘a’ đứng trước danh từ đếm được *‘the’ precedes the defined noun and ‘a’ stands before a countable noun*

03 T: ‘the’ đứng trước danh từ xác định đúng rồi, ‘a’ và ‘an’ đứng trước danh từ đếm được. ‘a’ đứng trước từ bắt đầu bằng âm phụ âm còn ‘an’ đứng trước danh từ bắt đầu bằng âm nguyên âm. Ví dụ ‘a house’ nhưng ‘an hour’. Tên đất nước có đuôi số nhiều thì dùng ‘the’ ví dụ the Philippines’, tên người không có ‘the’. Lưu ý cụm danh từ có số thứ tự bao giờ cũng có ‘the’, tên đại dương phải có ‘the’, the Atlantic Ocean. <the teacher explains the rule like this for every case> *‘the’ is used before the defined noun, right, ‘a’ and ‘an’ before a countable noun. ‘a’ stands before a noun with a consonant as the initial sound, ‘an’ before a noun with an initial vowel sound. E.g. ‘a house’ but ‘an hour’. Country names with a plural form is followed by ‘the’, e.g. the Philippines. Bear in mind the noun phrase with the ordinal number always goes with ‘the’, name of oceans is preceded by ‘the’*

(T3.O1., Unit 8, Grade 12)

He claimed that “it was hard to say whether explicit knowledge was more important than implicit knowledge or the other way round. But I think what I did was more effective because a majority of pupils found it useful” (T3.SR1.72). However, just like the way he understood communication (see 5.3.1.), he seemed to re-interpret the concept of ‘unconscious knowledge’ as the explicit knowledge retrieved from the pupils’ long-term memory. The evidence lies in the way he asked the pupil to recall the rules of the English articles as indicated in the Observational Extract above, and the way he summarised rules by the end of the lesson. Then, one question that cannot be answered in this study is whether this teacher would use the same strategy in a case where he taught new grammar items rather than recycled ones, as is the case of this syllabus. In fact, other teachers acknowledged that they focused on eliciting the rules from the pupils or asking them to articulate the rules because they knew that they all had learned these grammar items previously. Otherwise, they would start with

explaining rules explicitly before getting the pupils to practice doing the grammar exercises (Teacher 4, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, Teacher 7).

To summarise the findings of this section, teachers in this study, in general, valued explicit knowledge more than implicit knowledge. Across all cases, a common strategy employed by all teachers is an attempt to get the pupils to retrieve such knowledge from their long-term memory before the teachers had the final say about the rules which they were expected to write down on their notes books for reference at home when they need to consult a particular grammar rule while doing grammar exercises. It appeared that they disagreed with the ‘non-interface’ view between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge.

5. 3. 3. Proceduralising Explicit Knowledge through Practice

All teachers in this study emphasised the role of practice. For them practice helps to proceduralise pupils’ explicit knowledge. Although they valued explicit knowledge of grammar and emphasised the importance of memorisation, they did not think that explicit knowledge alone would enable their pupils to use the language accurately and effectively. Memorisation of rules, they believed, was necessary but not sufficient. Pupils “still need practice” (T5.SR3.38). They were aware that memorisation was just rote-learning, not deep learning, and practice would help to transfer rules that pupils had just stored in their short-term memory in their long-term memory knowledge. Teacher 7 said that:

Memorisation of rules is actually rote-learning. They [the pupils] are likely to forget rules when they need them. So I think, by doing exercises using a particular grammatical structure again and again, they will remember it with ease. (T7.I2. 06)

Similarly, Teacher 3 believed that practice played the role of transforming implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge through reflection on practice. He said:

Practice helps to consolidate the grammar point taught. For example, they do the exercises unconsciously, then they will reflect on how they do them and they will remember and understand rules better. (T3.I1.34)

It is noteworthy that, although, they considered practice as a necessary step towards effective use of grammar, they all equated practice with doing grammar exercises plus little free practice. Teacher 2, the Department chair, defined practice as meaning:

...learners' application of their existing knowledge and the newly acquired knowledge to various types of exercises. These exercises include controlled and guided exercises. Free practice is the higher level of application of knowledge to specific situations. Free practice is more personal and motivating. (T2.SR2.97)

Following are some lesson extracts that illustrate the ways teachers got the pupils to practise the target grammar item. Observational extract # 11 below is from a lesson taught by Teacher 8, one of the teachers who tended to use English quite often in her teaching.

Observational Extract # 11

01 T: So now we do exercise on page 119 [in the textbook]. Open your book page 119 and do exercise 1. Complete the following sentences using the correct form of verbs <reads aloud the instruction in the textbook>. And certainly you have to use conditional sentence to complete these sentences. Pay attention to the form of the past participle, use the verb in the past participle. Change the form of the verb into past participle. You have to do this exercise in 5 minutes, so after 5 minutes you go to the board and write down your answers.

02 Ps: <do the exercises silently with few working in pairs>

(T8.O2.Unit 11, Grade 10)

Another teacher, Teacher 4, handed out a worksheet with six pairs of simple sentences to the pupils. She asked them to combine each pair into one complex sentence using the relative pronoun ‘who’ or ‘which.’ These are the sentences in the worksheet:

1. The lady is my aunt. She came here yesterday.
2. I want you to meet the man. He taught me how to drive.
3. I live in a house. It was built a hundred years ago.
4. The book was really interesting. It was written by my teacher.
5. Kathy is the only student in my class. She speaks three languages.
6. This man is the second person. He was killed in that way.

(T4.O2.Unit 11, Grade 11)

Viewing grammar practice that way, all these teachers considered finishing the exercises in the textbook as their number one priority in teaching grammar. In addition to the perception that “Textbooks are the law” (T2.I3.48), they thought that by doing all the exercises in the textbook, the pupils would gain sufficient knowledge for their high-stakes examinations (T3.I1.38). This was because they took it for granted that those exercises were designed by textbook writers, so they were naturally appropriate to their pupils (T7.I1.52). This is further evidenced by what Teacher 6 said in a stimulated recall interview:

The exercises in the textbook are for the pupils to practice the knowledge they have just been taught. ...In my view, all the exercises in the textbook must be done. You cannot say that these exercises are easy and they should be replaced by other exercises. Nothing can guarantee that external exercises are better than those in the textbook. (T6.SR3.70)

In fact, when I observed these teachers I noticed that all of them got the pupils to do the decontextualized and mechanical grammar exercises in the textbook right after

either retrieving the declarative knowledge from the pupils' long-term memory or providing that knowledge themselves. In some cases, the exercises in the textbook were supplemented with exercises from external sources, usually from internationally published ELT materials. Below is a detailed description of the practice procedures by Teacher 1, the most experienced in the group:

I get the pupils to do the exercises in pairs, in groups, or independently, then they compare the result with their peers. Then I ask them to read out the answers or to write them on the chalkboard. Exercise types include substitution, gap-filling, etc. I think by doing the exercises the pupils can apply what they have been taught, thereby consolidating and memorising the knowledge. If they memorise the knowledge, they will be able to apply it to their real-life. (T1.I2.32)

Since all the grammar exercises in the textbook are discrete-point, and presented in isolation and decontextualized, the pupils' answers were quite minimal, usually merely one- or two-word responses. Therefore, one of the common teaching strategies that the teachers in this study used during the practice stage was to call upon either one individual pupil at a time to stand up and read out his or her answer or two or three pupils to go to the front and write their answers on the chalkboard. Then the teacher always checked the answers and requested the pupil to give the reason why she or he answered the way she or he had done. Teacher 3 said he had to do this just as a testing strategy, i.e., to keep the pupils from cheating. Yet, Teacher 2 said in the interview that the verbal rationalisation of their answers helped the pupils to avoid confusion when they came across a variety of different grammatical items in real-life. The extract below describes what happened after the pupils had completed an exercise in which they were expected to choose an appropriate relative pronoun, 'who,' 'which,' 'that,' and 'whom' for each sentence.

Observational Extract # 12

01 T: Now Tram please, could you please answer sentence B

- 02 Tram: that
03 T: that. Can it be 'whom'
04 Tram: No.
05 T: Why not?
06 Tram: It's the thing
07 T: The thing. Computer program that ... OK.

(T2. O3., Unit 9, Grade 11)

In the stimulated recall, she said that she was keen to know about the cognitive process that led the pupil to the answer she provided:

I wanted to check how they thought, not their memory. If their answer was correct, it was good, but if it was wrong, how they got it wrong - what they were thinking in their mind that made them get it wrong. (T2. SR3.54).

Teacher 1 also got the pupil to articulate the reason for her or his answer. In one lesson, she provided some pairs of simple sentences on the chalkboard, then asked the pupils to join each pair together using 'so' or 'but.'

Observational Extract # 13

- 01 T: Why you put 'but' here?Linh?
02 Linh: (xxx).....
03 T: Why you put 'but' here?
04 Linh: nhưng mà trời không lạnh lắm. *but it is not very cold*
05 T: Why you put 'but' not 'and'?
06 Linh: vì nó tương phản *because it contrasts.*

(T1. O3., Unit 9, Grade 12)

She explained that such articulation of rules made the pupils answer consciously, not intuitively, thereby getting the rules etched deeper in the pupils' mind. She said:

I wanted the pupil to be conscious of how ‘but’ was used. If she just said ‘but’ or ‘so’, then I agreed, she would not consciously know when this word was used, when that word was used. She needed to be conscious of why she did that, not just answered intuitively. If she failed, I would tell her explicitly the rule. (T1.SR3.27)

Another commonly observed strategy was after the pupils had done all the exercises and the teacher had finished giving feedback, the teacher tended to summarise, in Vietnamese, the major rules of the grammar point taught for the pupils to copy down in their notebooks. She believed that this was useful in the sense that it helped the pupils to do their homework more easily.

I wanted to repeat the rules once more in order to consolidate the knowledge taught. At home, the pupils have to do their homework and this helps them with their homework. It also helps them to remember the knowledge better. (T7.SR1.84)

Regarding the production stage, this would occur once the pupils had completed all the grammar exercises in the textbook, and the teacher had completed her corrective feedback as well as wrapping up the rules. However, this rarely happened as the teachers stated in the interviews that they did not have enough time for the production phase. Out of 24 lessons I observed, there were only eight lessons (one-third) in which the teacher spent between two-four minutes on pupils’ personal use of the target grammar point. And in three of these eight lessons, the pupils had very little time to display their ‘free’ sentences. What follows are some Observational Extracts that exemplify how teachers conducted the production. Observation extract # 14 is from the lesson which focuses on ‘the future time,’ and the teacher was one of the three teachers who used English most of the time in the classroom.

Observational Extract # 14

01 T: Now what I want you to do now. Work in groups of 6 discuss and write in here (shows the pupils a worksheet) everybody must offer using 'I'll...', then you suggest using "Shall I, Shall we....?" Or you make arrangement for future using "be going to".

02 T: <Hands out the worksheet to groups of pupils>

03 Ps: <Work in groups actively>

04 T: <5 minutes later> At home write the sentences [in the worksheet] again and next week I'll check.

(T1.O1., Unit 9, Grade 11 English stream)

She said in the stimulated recall that the purpose of this activity was to change from 'shall/ will' into 'be going to.' Even with this purpose in mind, she was unable to complete it before the lesson was over.

Another free practice the teachers used was getting the pupils to write one or more than one single sentences using the grammar item taught. Observational extract # 15 illustrates the activity Teacher 2 used in the last five minutes of her lesson about "Question Forms" for English stream pupils after she had spent the preceding 40 minutes eliciting and explaining the rules and meanings of some Wh-questions in English:

Observational Extract # 15

01 T: Now you work in groups. This group you write questions about the university you like to enter, this group you write questions about the place you like to visit. State exactly what university, what place, and this group you write as many questions as possible about the job you want to do. OK? Three minutes. Write down questions.

02 Ps: <Work in groups as they are told. They ask questions in the groups and one writes down the asked questions>.

03 T: <three minutes later asks each pupil to read out their question and the teacher herself answers the question>.

04 <The bell goes>

05 T: Thank you very much for working hard.

(T2. O2., Unit 9, Grade 12 English stream)

She thought this was to integrate skills work into a grammar lesson, and by dividing the pupils into two groups, she created an information gap for natural communication.

I wanted to integrate writing skills into this lesson. It was impossible to have 'a serious writing work' [her original English words] in this lesson. This was to create an 'information gap' [her original English words], that is the pupils write down what they want to ask. This lesson is about question forms, so when the pupils are able to form a question, the lesson objective has been achieved. (T2.SR2.130)

That teachers skipped the production stage is quite understandable because of the time constraints, as they stated in the interviews (see 5.2.3). It seemed that they thought that formal instruction and completion of the grammar exercises prescribed in the syllabus were the main goal, not the opportunity for the pupils to transfer their explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge through extensive practice. Observational transcripts showed that 95 percent of the classroom time was devoted to the teacher's formal explanation, eliciting rules, pupils doing the grammar exercises, and the teacher's summary of rules. Teacher 4 said in an interview that she felt quite satisfied if the pupils were able to do all the grammar exercises. "If they are able to do the grammar exercises, it means that they understand the lesson. There are difficult exercises that they cannot do, and I have to explain [rules] again" (T4.I3. 29). In the stimulated recall interviews, I asked each teacher if she was satisfied with her lesson, none mentioned that she wished she could have had more time for her pupils' free practice of the target grammar points. The only complaint they made was about the pupils' limited English, which made them spend much of the time explaining rules and guiding them to do the grammar exercises.

Interestingly, although the teachers referred to what they did before the lesson finished as ‘free practice,’ it was only one single simple activity which required the individual pupils to produce a single sentence containing the grammar item taught according to the teacher’s instruction. Teacher 1 described her free practice activities like this:

Free practice aims at enabling the pupils to internalise the teacher transmitted knowledge for communicative purposes. Depending on the lesson, I may give them something to discuss or to write about, or role play so that they can use the knowledge related to the structure taught. These are to develop their communicative skills. (T1.I2.44)

It appears from what is presented in this section that the teachers really valued explicit grammar knowledge, believing that by doing many grammar exercises and a little ‘disguised’ free practice, the pupils’ explicit knowledge would be proceduralised. The free practice, if organised, is not the time when pupils are given more open activities where they can use the taught grammar item more freely and internalise it for future use. The teachers in this study seemed to agree with this value of free practice, but they thought that the pupils’ use of the taught language point in one or two simple sentences was enough. When free practice was not available, teachers explained that there was no time left. Although time constraints are an obvious challenge, observational transcripts showed that the teachers spent a large amount of time explaining or having the pupils articulate explicit knowledge because of their strong beliefs about the value of explicit grammar knowledge. “Teaching grammar is to help the learners to master the grammatical rules and the formulaic structure so that they can put it into use. No memorisation, no use” (T6.SR.1.90).

Further evidence of this is presented in the following section about their beliefs and practices about corrective feedback.

5. 3. 4. Corrective Feedback

Interview data show that teachers had a positive attitude towards pupils' errors. Although they emphasised greatly grammatical accuracy (see 5. 2. 1; 5. 2. 2 & 5. 3. 2), they did not view pupils' errors as failures or particularly negative. They all considered errors as "being natural and inevitable" (T7.I1.76), and "unavoidable" (T4.I1.44) in the language learning process. Teacher 2 even saw pupils' errors as being significant in the sense that they inform teachers of the gap in pupils' knowledge so that teachers know how to prevent pupils' errors. She also believed that pupils' errors were caused by pupils' confusion of different grammatical items due to their inadequate explicit knowledge. Therefore, once their explicit knowledge of grammar is expanded, their errors can be minimised. She claimed that:

Errors are inevitable in the learning process. If the pupils don't make errors, there's no way of preventing errors. The teacher has to help them to minimise their errors by allowing them the opportunities to compare one grammatical point with another so that they can create for themselves a barrier to errors. (T2.I1.90)

Although the teachers were positive about pupils' errors, they all shared the view that errors, especially grammatical errors in the grammar lessons, should be corrected. They believed strongly in the impact of error correction on their pupils' grammatical accuracy, and error correction helped to avoid pupils' repeating errors. Teacher 3 was frank:

I have to correct all their grammatical errors so that the pupils know why they are wrong. When they know why they are wrong in applying rules, they will remember them better. (T3.I1.62)

In a similar vein, Teacher 8 stated that if pupils were not corrected, "they will not know they are wrong, and they fail to do the grammar exercises" (T8.I2.59).

The teachers' strict attitude towards grammatical errors is not surprising since they all highly valued grammatical accuracy and explicit knowledge of grammar as presented in the early sections (see 5.2.1; 5.2.2). However, such a strict attitude seems to be applied to grammar and writing lessons only. They believed that in the other skills lessons, i.e., speaking, listening, and reading, it was unnecessary to take pupils' errors seriously, simply because accuracy was not the goal of those lessons. Teacher 5 admitted that:

Error correction depends on the objective of the lesson. I mean I focus on correcting the errors that are related to the teaching content. In a grammar lesson, I don't pay much attention to errors other than grammatical errors. (T5.SR3.128)

This view was echoed by Teacher 2, who suggested that:

Each lesson has its own objectives. For example, in a speaking lesson, error correction is of least importance because the goal is pupils' speaking. Error correction will limit their fluency and it may lead to reticence. When the objective is accuracy, error correction must be frequent, especially when errors are related to the grammar structure being taught. (T2.I1.112)

This is quite consistent with what they said in the interviews, that they focused very little on grammar in skills lessons except for writing. However, these teachers did not seem to value peer-correction very much. Teacher 3 said that he did not have a high opinion of peer-correction though he did not reject it completely. He argued that his pupils did not like being corrected by other for fear of losing face (T3.I1.70), although he admitted that he occasionally used peer-correction. Other teachers thought that their pupils were not linguistically competent enough to do peer correction. For example, Teacher 2 said that "peer correction could be applicable to simple errors only. For more sophisticated errors pupils are not able to correct their

peers. ... Teachers' correction is the most reliable (T3. I1.20). Nevertheless, these teachers apparently developed a kind of peer-correction, which I call 'collective corrective feedback,' or a kind of peer-correction under the teacher's guidance, which is illustrated in the approach adopted by all teachers in this study. The procedure started with challenging the whole class about a particular pupil's oral errors or errors written on the chalkboard. In the words of Teacher 2, error correction was a chance for vicarious learning.

The purpose of error correction is not just for the pupil who makes the error. It must be a chance for the whole class so that others can learn from their peer's error and their own errors. (T2.I1.114)

Observational data show that most teachers asked two or three pupils at a time to go the front and write their answers to the exercises on the chalkboard. After these pupils had done their job, the teacher asked the whole class to look at what their classmates had written on the board and find errors, if any. In case errors were identified, the teacher asked one pupil in the class to correct them. Once the pupil's correction was accepted, the teacher referred back to the relevant rules. Teacher 6 described her error correction strategy as follows:

If a pupil makes an error, the first thing I do is to let others recognise the error before I correct it. If the teacher corrects it immediately, it is passive. Giving the pupils time to recognise their errors and why they are errors is more effective than the teacher's giving the correct version. (T6.I1.93)

The extract below describes the way she corrected a pupil who wrote, on the chalkboard, the sentence "The beef we had it for lunch was really delicious," which was sentence No. 6 in the exercise. She asked the whole class to look at the sentence on board and nominated one pupil to say whether the sentence was grammatically right or wrong:

Observational Extract # 16

01 T: No. 6. Is it correct?

02 Ps: Incorrect.

03 T: Good. Incorrect. Can you correct it? Tung?

04 T: <nominates one pupil>

05 Tung: Bỏ đại từ 'it' đi ạ *omit 'it'*

06 T: Vì sao ta lại bỏ đại từ 'it' đi nhỉ? *why omit 'it'?*

07 Tung: Vì 'it' ... *because 'it'*

08 T: Thay thế cho từ nào? *Substitutes for which word?*

09 Tung: the beef

10 T: the beef. Good

11 T: Chúng ta chú ý này khi chúng ta sử dụng đại từ quan hệ đôi khi chúng ta nhầm đại từ và câu vì vậy khi chúng ta làm chúng ta nhớ khi đại từ quan hệ làm tân ngữ thay cho từ nào ta bỏ từ ấy đi. Rõ chưa? *Mind you when using the relative pronoun sometimes we mistake the pronoun for the sentence so when doing the exercise remember to omit the word the relative pronoun refers to.*

(T6.O3., Unit 12, Grade 11)

She explained that she wanted to draw all pupils' attention on the error, and she believed that when the pupils identified errors they would remember them and avoid them next time. It was like when someone was aware of her wrongdoings, she would not repeat the same wrongdoings any more. Then the teacher's explanation would pre-empt similar errors.

Once the pupils have recognised the error, and I have corrected it, and they have agreed with my correction, it is necessary to repeat the rules once more, or they will repeat the error. (T6.SR3.103)

Teacher 1 used the same strategy, but instead of asking the whole class to look at the deviant sentence written on the board, she asked one pupil to read aloud her sentence while the whole class listened and identified if it was erroneous.

Observational Extract # 17

01 T: Now Binh <another pupil> One of your sentences.

02 Binh: It rains however I always go to school.

03 T: Thank you. The whole class listen: it rains however I always go to school. Please comment. Nhận xét xem. *Comment* It rains? It rains?

04 Ps: It was raining

05 T: It was raining however I went to school. Is that Okay?

06 Ps: No

07 T: Why not? However.. có sự tương phản không nhỉ? *Is there a contrast?*

08 Ps: Không *No*

09 T: Việc mưa thì vẫn đi học không có sự tương phản phải không? Nó không diễn tả sự tương phản và cái thì nữa, nó thường xuyên à? Phải để trong một tình huống cụ thể. Cái thì của em ấy thứ nhất, thứ hai về ý nghĩa của nó mưa thì vẫn phải đi học chứ ví dụ như trời mưa em không mang ô hay không có ô [mà vẫn đi học] nó còn có sự tương phản. em dùng chữ 'however' việc đi học với trời mưa không có sự tương phản, chưa thích hợp lắm. *No contrast in going to school in rain, isn't there? It does not express the contrast and the tense, is it regular?. Thank you and don't forget the exercise in your textbook. It must be in a specific situation. First it is your tense, second in terms of meaning going to school despite the rain, for example, it rains but you do not bring an umbrella or have an umbrella.*

(T1. O3., Unit 9, Grade 12)

The reason why she asked the pupil to read her sentence aloud, instead of writing it on the board, was that after the pupil had written her own sentence, the teacher wanted to check her pronunciation, and also she wanted the whole class to practice

listening in addition to identifying the error. She believed that once the pupil could identify others' errors, she or he would be able to avoid a similar error (T1.SR3.94).

5. 3. 5. Use of the First Language

As is amply shown in the observational extracts above, these teachers made considerable use of their, and their students', first language. In this regard, teachers were divided into two groups in their opinions. Teachers 1 and 2, the two most senior teachers in the school, supported extensive use of English, and Vietnamese was used only when either the teacher or the pupils had serious problems with English. Teacher 2 claimed that:

I think the more English the teacher uses, the better, on account that the pupils learn English as a foreign language with very limited exposure to the target language. When the teacher uses English in the classroom, it helps to develop the pupils' language skills and it is useful to the teacher herself, too. Of course, the advantage of using Vietnamese is to avoid misunderstandings on the part of the pupils due to their limited English proficiency. (T2.I2.39)

Both of them, in fact, used English most of the classroom time for a variety of pedagogical purposes. For example, below is how Teacher 2 presented the grammar point to the pupils at the beginning of her lesson:

Observational Extract # 18

01 T: The lesson today is on Questions, Yes/ No questions and Wh-questions. Tell me what question words you know?

02 Ps: What, when, why, who, which, how

03 T: anything else?

04 Ps: whom

05 T: Now can you tell me the difference between 'what' and 'which', 'who' and 'whom'? Who knows?

05 Ps: silence

06 T: Now listen to my examples? OK? Now.

(T2.O2, Unit 11, Grade 12 English stream)

Agreeing with her more senior colleagues' view that teachers' classroom English is beneficial to the pupils, Teacher 8, the youngest in the group, said that:

I think English is really difficult to learn. If the teacher uses English a lot in the classroom it may be difficult for the pupils, but that difficulty is just temporary in the initial stage. Once the pupils have become used to their teacher's use of English, they will feel all right. Then they will have the habit of using English for communication. (T8.I2.80)

While observing her lessons, I recognised that she used English most of the time in the classroom. Observational Extract #25 below, in which she was presenting the "Conditional sentence type 3," is one example illustrating the way she used English to explain grammar.

Observational Extract # 19

01 T: Do you understand? So I have another situation.

02 T: <writes the sentences on the board: He did not call me. I did not know what happened.>

03T: I have another situation he did not call me and I did not know what happened. This is the fact the fact is that I didn't know what happened and the fact is that he didn't call me. Right. It's a fact in the past because we use past verbs in these sentences.

04 T: <underlines to didn't call and didn't know>

05 T: Now I want to make imagination about the event because I want to know what happened so I make a sentence like this...

06 T: <Writes on board: If he had called me I would have known what happened.>

07 T: So I stayed at home and make a sentence like this: If he had called me I would have known what happened - but in fact, did I know what happened?

08 Ps: No.

(T8. O2., Unit 11, Grade 10)

She believed that if she used English extensively in the classroom, it would “help the pupils to practise listening comprehension” (T8. SR2.81). However, there was no consistence in her pattern of code-mixing. Sometimes, she used English first, then translated what she had said into Vietnamese. But at other times she just used Vietnamese as shown in the subsequent Observational Extract.

Observational Extract # 20

01T: Bây giờ ta ghi một số lý thuyết liên quan đến bài . Hôm nay cô muốn giới thiệu cho các em mệnh đề quan hệ xác định và mệnh đề quan hệ không xác định. Trong tiếng Anh trong câu đầu tiên (trên bảng) được gọi là mệnh đề quan hệ xác định và thông tin chúng ta dùng trong mệnh đề xác định là thông tin quan trọng vì khi ta không sử dụng thông tin này ta không phân biệt được chúng ta đang nói tới đối tượng hay nhân vật nào và chúng ta không bỏ được mệnh đề quan hệ này đi còn trong câu thứ hai trên bảng chúng ta gọi là mệnh đề quan hệ không xác định và cái thông tin trong mệnh đề có quan trọng không các em và nó chỉ là thông tin bổ sung và chúng ta có thể bỏ được mệnh đề quan hệ này đi bởi vì khi mà bỏ đi câu vẫn đầy đủ về nghĩa ta vẫn hiểu được đối tượng hay nhân vật chúng ta đang nói tới là ai là đối tượng nào các em nhờ đó là phần các em ghi lại cho cô về hai mệnh đề này. *Now you write down the rules of today's grammar. Today I would like to introduce the defining and non-defining relative clauses. In English, the first sentence on the board is called the defining relative clause. The information in the defining relative clause is important because without it we cannot tell which object or character we are talking about. Whereas the second sentence on the board we call it a non-defining relative clause. The information in the clause*

is not important, just additional information. We can omit this but still understand the object or character we are talking about.

(T8. O3.,Unit 15, Grade 10)

She explained in the stimulated recall session that she did not believe her pupils would be able to understand what she was explaining to them in English.

At first I explained everything in English, then I explained some knowledge that I thought is important to the pupils in Vietnamese. This is because not all the pupils in the class were good at listening [understanding spoken English]. Probably, some of them could not understand the rules. I used Vietnamese to help these pupils understand better what I was teaching. (T8.SR3.37)

Those who disagreed with extensive use of English in the classroom argued that the pupils' level of proficiency was too low to understand their teacher teaching in English. For example, Teacher 3 said that when the teacher used English extensively in the classroom, he or she in fact was just showing off, but "the pupils did not understand anything at all" (T3.I1.46). But he said that if the pupils' English was good enough, the teacher should use English more so as "to give the pupils as much exposure to English as possible" (T3.I1.48). The observational transcripts of his lessons showed that he rarely used English in the classroom.

Echoing Teacher 3, Teacher 4 said:

I know that the teacher should speak English as much as possible in the classroom, but when I speak English, the pupils understand nothing. That's why I have to explain in Vietnamese to make life easier for them. (T4.I1.12)

However, she admitted that her pupils did enjoy listening to their teacher speaking English despite her negative attitude towards the use of English:

In fact, when I speak English a great deal, they [the pupils] don't understand, and they request me to use Vietnamese. However, on many occasions, they do understand, they listen. They enjoy it. (T4.I2.31)

Then she acknowledged that in many cases she found it challenging herself to use English, so she had to “resort to Vietnamese” (T4.I2.31). She further stated that “I find it hard to express myself in English; it's really hard to explain thoroughly [in English]” (T4.I3.39). She also added that “there are many things which are difficult to explain in English” (T4.I2.31). For Teacher 7, her pupils' limited ability to understand spoken English discouraged her from using English in the classroom. She explained that “When I first started teaching, I used English extensively but then I realised that pupils didn't understand. So I minimised the use of English” (T7.1.68). She reiterated this view in one stimulated recall session:

I know, if I use English frequently as the teaching methodology says, the lesson would be more interesting. For example, whenever I am observed for evaluation, I speak English all the time in the classroom without caring whether the pupils understand what I am saying or not. But here, pupils' understanding is my ultimate goal, so I think I'd better not follow the methodology as my primary concern is that my pupils understand and know how to use [the grammar point taught]. (T7.SR3.22)

It is interesting to note that this teacher – and others – speak English more in the classroom when they are observed for evaluative purposes to satisfy the expectation of the observers/evaluators who “require the teacher to use English when teaching the new textbook” (T5.SR3.11). But, in their regular teaching, they tend to resort to Vietnamese. Teacher 5 went on to explain that her pupils:

... prefer the teacher to use Vietnamese simply because if the teacher uses English, they don't understand at all. So we use English to convey simple messages otherwise they would not understand. (T5. SR3. 13)

In the classes I observed, I noted that those who supported extensive use of English, did so, but I am not sure whether this was because I was observing them or it was their frequent practice. Meanwhile, those who did not like the idea of teacher's frequent use of English used mainly Vietnamese, and in many of their lessons that I observed, Vietnamese was the dominant language in the classroom. Below are the most dominant functions of their use of L1 in the classroom.

Presenting the target grammar items

In the following Observational Extract, Teacher 7 was presenting a modal verb in English. She used metalanguage (in Vietnamese) to present the target grammar point.

Observational Extract # 21

01 T: Hầu hết các em vừa nói là 'could' là quá khứ của 'can' tuy nhiên 'can' và 'could' chúng đều là những động từ khuyết thiếu và trong một số trường hợp thì nó là dạng quá khứ của 'can' tuy nhiên cả 'can' và 'could' chúng đều có những dạng sử dụng khác nữa thế và tất nhiên chúng có rất nhiều cách sử dụng nhưng trong bài hôm nay chúng ta chỉ đề cập đến một cách sử dụng của 'could' và ta so sánh với 'be able to' xem thế nào thôi. *Most of you have said that 'could' is the past tense of 'can', however 'can' and 'could' are both modal verbs and in some cases, it is the past tense of 'can', however, both have different usages, of course there are many usages but in today's lesson we just deal with the usage of 'could' and compare it with 'be able to'.*

(T7.O3., Unit 15, Grade 11)

Like Teachers, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Teacher 7 believed that her use of L1 was more useful to her pupils, who were not good at understanding spoken English:

Because pupils in this class are weak in listening. Even if I speak [English] very slowly, only five or six of them can understand. I want both the strong

and the weak pupils to understand or they will complain that they understand nothing. (T7.SR3.31)

Eliciting or Explaining Rules

In the Observational Extract # 7 above (Section 6.3.2), Teacher 6 was explaining the formulaic structure of some English verbs which are followed by either the direct object plus the to-infinitive (V+O+to-V) or by a to-infinitive (V+to-V). She used Vietnamese to elicit the structures from the pupils by prompting them, while the pupils responded to her prompts minimally in chorus. In the stimulated recall session immediately following the lesson, she said that she did not believe that the pupils were able to understand the lesson if she used English.

The disadvantage of teacher speaking English is after I have spoken English I have to say it again in Vietnamese, which is a waste of time. And the pupils do not concentrate. I mean their ears are now on; now off. For today's lesson, I think the pupils had to retrieve their learnt knowledge of [the structure] Verb plus Object plus Verb.... If the teacher spoke English so much they would not understand anything. The pupils would feel uncertain while the teacher did not have enough time [to explain again in Vietnamese]. That's why I decided to use Vietnamese with this group of pupils. (T6.SR1.12)

Summarising rules

The following extract happened after the pupils had finished the last exercises in the textbook, and the teacher was going to move them onto the free practice stage before the lesson finished. She was summarising the rules that she had just taught in the lesson, which was the "Double Comparison."

Observational Extract # 22

01 T: Về nhà các em viết lại bài tập này vào trong vở. Hôm nay chúng ta học lại các công thức của so sánh kép. Chúng ta có mấy công thức ở đây? *At home you write the exercise again in your note books. Today we have reviewed the structures of double comparison. How many structures we have learnt?*

02 Ps: Hai *two*

03 T: Công thức thứ nhất chúng ta lặp lại sự so sánh và nối với nhau bằng từ ‘and’. Công thức thứ nhất diễn tả sự thay đổi dần dần. Công thức thứ hai cũng là so sánh kép nhưng chúng ta dùng mạo từ ‘the’ sau đó đến so sánh kép. Công thức thứ hai này diễn đạt sự thay đổi sự việc này thay đổi sự việc khác cũng thay đổi theo. Và các em chú ý ở công thức thứ hai nếu chủ ngữ là danh từ động từ chính là ‘be’ thì có thể bỏ động từ ‘be’. Về nhà chúng ta làm bài tập trong sách bài tập trang 86. *The first structure we use to repeat the comparison and use the link word ‘and’. The first structure expresses a gradual change. The second structure is also a double comparison but we use the article ‘the’ which is followed by double comparison. The second structure expresses one thing changes the other thing changes too. Mind you in the second structure if the subject is a noun and the main verb is ‘be’, we can omit ‘be’. At home do the exercise on page 86 of your workbook.*

(T7. O1., Unit 13, Grade 12)

Observational Extract # 23

01 T: Trong những câu hai mệnh đề ta dùng những từ này “however, therefore” trong cùng một câu. Khi đứng riêng một mình ở đầu câu, however vẫn diễn đạt sự trái ngược, therefore vẫn diễn đạt kết quả nhưng mà nó có thể đứng đầu câu một mệnh đề hoàn toàn riêng biệt nhé. Và chúng ta lưu ý however và therefore có thể đứng sau chủ ngữ, trong câu vẫn có thể đứng sau chủ ngữ ngoài việc nó đứng đầu trong một mệnh đề nối câu vẫn để diễn đạt trái ngược và kết quả. Therefore có thể đứng sau chủ ngữ. However có thể đứng ở cuối câu nữa. *In two-clause sentences we use these words “however, therefore” in the same sentence. When standing alone at the beginning of the*

sentence, 'however' expresses the contrast, 'therefore' expresses the result, but it can stand at the beginning of an independent sentence. Mind you 'however' and 'therefore' can follow the subject in the sentence in addition to its initial position to link two sentences of contrast and result. 'Therefore' can follow the subject. 'However' can be at the end of the sentence.

(T5. O2. , Unit 9, Grade 12)

In addition to these pedagogical purposes, Vietnamese was observed to be used for other purposes such as giving instructions, giving corrective feedback, and checking the pupils' understanding.

5. 4. Factors that Shape Teachers' Beliefs

As is revealed from the interview and stimulated recall data, teachers' beliefs are shaped by multiple factors such as their formal knowledge gained from pre-service and in-service training, their everyday knowledge including their norms and values, their experiential knowledge, their experience as language learners, and their concerns about their own teaching context including contextual factors such as the learning environment, the students, the course book, the educational goals, the innovative ELT materials, and their own professional community.

5.4.1. Professional Training

It seems that formal training did not influence teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices very much. Rarely did the teachers mention the impact of pre-service training on their teaching practices, except for the two youngest teachers. For example, Teacher 7, who had been in her teaching career for less than five years, said that she was taught at the university that learner-centred teaching was the best teaching approach. This prompted her to write the pupils' errors on the board and let the whole class correct the errors before she did the work for them.

Self-correction and peer-correction are more learner-centred. When I was learning the methodology course, I was told that the best teaching approach is the learner-centred approach. So I try to allow the pupils to work independently as much as possible. I let them do whatever they can. (T7.SR2.85)

In a similar way, Teacher 8, who was a new graduate, was the only one who mentioned the concept of task-based language learning, which she claimed to have learned from the university course. It is interesting that she was the only one who used the term ‘task-based language learning’, and one of the only two teachers using the term ‘learner-centred,’ which are the constructs of the current ELT methodology. These constructs are also cited as guidance for the delivery of the new English curriculum at the upper secondary school (MOET, 2006). This is true of in-service training as well. Although a couple of teachers acknowledged that they learned the PPP model of grammar pedagogy from an in-service workshop in the mid 1990s (Teachers 1 & 2), the way they adapted this model to their classroom teaching is really interesting. As indicated in this chapter, most of them overemphasised sentence-based grammar presentation, elicitation of explicit knowledge, and doing discrete-point grammar exercises at the expense of pupils’ opportunities to use the target language in a more meaningful way in order to internalise the language point taught. With this evidence, it is probable that the impact of formal professional training did not have a lasting impact on teachers’ beliefs and practice.

5.4.2. Experiential Knowledge

Teachers’ experiential knowledge appeared to be the most influential on their beliefs and practices. Most of them explained in the preliminary interviews and stimulated recall interviews that they skipped the free practice because they thought the pupils were either not interested or not proficient enough to carry out free practice. For example, Teacher 7 said in a stimulated recall interview:

By the end of today's lesson, I wanted the pupils to do a communicative activity, but it was not a success because pupils' knowledge was poor, they didn't know how to ask questions. (T7.SR2.67)

Learner variables, in addition to the pressure of completing more than one grammar point within a 45-minute lesson, were believed to be a good reason for either superficial free practice or complete neglect of it. Teacher 3, the only one who did not believe in the role of explicit grammar knowledge in the development of communicative competence, stated:

The focus on communication is limited because after many years' teaching them, I've realized that the pupils in this school are reluctant to learn to communicate for fear of grammatical errors. (T3.I1.10).

Teacher 7, in the stimulated recall, explained why she used Vietnamese extensively in the classroom:

In fact, when I first started teaching this class, I spoke English frequently, but just in the second lesson, I realised that they [the pupils] looked quite vague. When I asked them, they told me to write everything on the board so that they could copy down on their notebooks. If I spoke English, they would not understand, and they became bored. (T7.SR3. 31)

In a similar vein, Teacher 6 believed that the use of Vietnamese for form-focused instruction was more effective because:

From my teaching experience, I see that some teachers like using English to explain [grammatical rules] to the pupils. The consequence is that the pupils do not understand the lesson. In my private classes at home, the pupils keep complaining that the teachers speak English too much and they don't understand the lesson at all. Thus, teaching is a waste of energy. (T6.I2.14)

Teacher 2 also acknowledged that she valued the idea of letting the pupils work out rules from the example sentences she provided because this was in line with her teaching experience.

From my teaching experience, I've come to realise the benefits of giving the pupils a chance to have their voices heard. They may be wrong, but when they speak out what they are thinking, they have a chance to exchange their ideas with others, and they learn from others. This is an active approach to learning. This motivates them really. (T2.I1.100).

5. 4. 3. Experience as Language Learners

The learning strategies teachers used as language students also affect their beliefs. Teachers 4 and 6 explained that they had to make the pupils learn rules by heart, the formulaic structure as well as doing as many grammar exercises as possible because it was the way they learned while as language students and they found it useful. For example, Teacher 6 believed that it was important for the pupils to learn and memorise grammatical rules because this learning strategy had worked well with her.

While I was a student, I learned rules by heart. I thought once I had memorised rules, I applied them to doing exercises extensively. When I forgot the rules, I failed to do the exercises. (T6.SR3.121)

It is likely that the impact of the personal learning strategies the teachers employed for their own language learning is more powerful than that of how they were taught. Most of them, except for the three youngest, said that the way their teachers taught them English did not leave any clear impression on them. This could be that their student life has been in a distant past, and those teachers were learning English at the time when English had no status in the country. Both their teachers and they themselves may not have been so motivated.

5. 4. 4. Institutional Factors

Institutional factors such as educational goals also influence teachers' beliefs. Assessment is the most obvious one. The information from the interviews shows that all eight teachers shared the view that formal grammar instruction was necessary because the pupils preferred grammar to communication in order to perform well in the examinations. This is not surprising in a country where pupils' proficiency in English is measured only by multiple-choice tests which focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension, and teachers' performance is assessed against the pupils' test scores (see 2.2.). Teacher 2, who was the chair of the Foreign Language Department in the school, was very frank about this point:

Our teaching is targeted at in-depth knowledge and exams. Down-to-earth as I might sound, but it is true of our goal and of the pupils' goal. Those exams are many: graduation exams, university entrance exams, provincial and national competitions, and exams for scholarship to study overseas. This fact makes grammar extremely important. (T2.I1.10)

Teacher 4 added that, in addition to the motivation to learn English for exams, the lack of communicative opportunities was the reason for the pupils' and teachers' favour of grammar. She said:

The pupils are just concerned about successful performance at the examination. They never think of the importance of [communicative] English to their future life. ... In this environment, there are no opportunities for communication [in English]. Thus, communication is not necessary. (T4.I2.226-228)

5. 4. 5. Teaching Materials

One contextual factor that emerged from the data, but has rarely been documented in the literature on teacher cognition, is the teaching materials. Both interview and observational data show that teachers in this study relied heavily on the textbook though they strongly criticised the way grammar was presented in the textbook. According to them, the two most obvious drawbacks of the new textbook are the introduction of crowded grammatical items in one lesson and the decontextualisation of grammar items, i.e., grammar is not related to other skills lessons or even embedded within texts in these lessons. Such a criticism has some justification. For example, Teacher 6 explained why they did not use an integrated approach to grammar, and why they presented grammar explicitly:

Each lesson prescribes some grammar items to which the skills lessons of reading, speaking are not related. There are as many as three grammar items to be taught within 45 minutes. This is not to say the pronunciation practice. Thus, our only choice is to teach grammar separately and explicitly. (T6.I1.16)

Meanwhile, some of them used the internationally published ELT materials and they learned how to deal with grammatical issues from them. For example, Teacher 1, the most experienced in the group, said that because the new textbook did not present grammar appropriately, she had to rely on commercial materials.

In the textbooks written by westerners they also follow the presentation-practice– free practice procedure. ...Our textbook is not quite good. We rely on other sources written by westerners, the grammar materials and skills materials, to learn the way they present grammar and design practice exercises. (T1. I2.76)

Teacher 2 admitted that she learned the recognition-analysis-comparison-confirmation model of grammar pedagogy from ELT materials published in the UK.

Interestingly, the Department chair (Teacher 2) justified her argument for early formal grammar instruction by citing an example from textbooks published in the UK. She also referred to these materials to support her view of an early focus on form:

In the textbook published in the UK, the first lesson begins with ‘I am; He is.’
‘Am’ and ‘is’ are very grammatical. (T2.I1.28)

Similarly, Teacher 6 referred to the *Let’s Go* series to confirm her view that even young learners need formal grammar teaching (though this could be her own interpretation).

I look at *Let’s Go*, and I see that they present grammatical structures or sentence models. Children use those sentence models to learn to speak.
(T6.I1.76)

5. 4. 6. *Socialisation within Professional Community*

Teaching English as a foreign language in an under-resourced context, these teachers had to rely on another resource, perhaps the most important of learning resources: their colleagues. For example, below is what Teacher 1 said about how she learned the way to present grammar:

I learned from the training workshops [organised either by MOET or DoET] and from the colleagues when they observed me that these are the steps of a grammar lesson. When I first started teaching, I used to present the target grammar directly, i.e., to present the grammar item immediately. Then, from the comments made by my colleagues who observed me, and from the suggestions by trainers at the training workshop, I changed my way of teaching, presenting grammar through situations. (T1.I1.64)

Teacher 4, the retrained Russian teacher, said that she learned the structure of a grammar lesson and the need to give pupils time to think and induce the formulaic structure of the target grammar point from the examples given, from other teachers in the school.

I learned these from my own teaching experience and from my colleagues. In fact, I've learned a great deal from my colleagues. In my school, there are good teachers who I often observe and learn from. (T 4.I3.47)

During the preliminary interviews and the stimulated recall interviews, this teacher repeatedly said that all her beliefs and ideas about grammar teaching were rooted in her own experiences and her colleagues' experiences. Even the two youngest teachers also said that they learned much from their colleagues. Teacher 8, the youngest, said that her approach to grammar was partly affected by the way she was taught at the university and partly by her "observations of other teachers in the department" (T8.I1.70). This is echoed by Teacher 5, who acknowledged that:

I partly learned the approach to grammar from other teachers in my school. They are very good teachers (T5.I1.47). Many teachers use this I just follow them. (T5.SR.3.44).

Teacher 6 said in the preliminary interview that she learned the contextualisation of grammar presentation from her friends who were teaching at the lower secondary school.

At the lower secondary school, teachers presented grammar in situations, i.e. in dialogues [which they used] as contexts for presenting grammatical structures. (T6.I1.32)

It is likely that where teachers do not have an easy access to expert theories of practice, their experiential knowledge, the teaching materials available to them, and

especially the experiences they learn from other teachers in their community of practice are significant factors that shape their beliefs and personal theories for practice. These experiences are extremely important in a context where help from professionals outside the immediate community such as university professionals, teacher educators is not available while inspectors just come, observe the teachers and make unwelcome ‘suggestions’ for change, then have the last word on whether the teaching is good or bad, right or wrong. As noted in 6.2., all teachers are mandated to observe other teachers in the school for experience-sharing purposes and this seems to have some impact on their beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, these factors remained under-researched.

5. 5. Summary

This chapter presents the findings as they emerged from the data. These findings show the beliefs teachers in this study held about grammar as well as other aspects related to form-focused instruction. These include their beliefs about approaches to the teaching of grammar, corrective feedback, and the use of first language, i.e. Vietnamese, in form-focused instruction. Also, the chapter indicates how those beliefs were transferred into classroom practices as well as factors affecting that transfer.

Table 5.1 below summarises the beliefs the teachers in this study held about the importance of grammar in foreign language learning, and Table 6.2 shows the relationships between their stated beliefs and their actual practices regarding the teaching of grammar.

Table 5. 1.***Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Grammar***

<i>Beliefs</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>T4</i>	<i>T5</i>	<i>T6</i>	<i>T7</i>	<i>T8</i>
1. Grammar is the foundation for communicative competence to build on.	√(2)	√(3)	X	√(2)	√	√	√	√
2. Explicit knowledge helps the pupils to use language accurately.	√(2)	√(2)	X	√(2)	√	√	√	√
3. Implicit knowledge of the grammatical system is more useful to language acquisition.	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
4. Grammar helps to understand reading and listening texts, writing, and speaking better.	√	√	∅	√	√(2)	√	√	∅
5. Grammar is especially useful to monitor the pupil's formal writing.	√	√	√	∅	∅	√	√	∅
6. Grammar enables the pupils to communicate with greater confidence.	√	√	X	√	√	√	∅	∅
7. Grammar is especially for the pupils to succeed in the examinations.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	∅
8. Grammar is not important if the								

purpose of language teaching is communication.	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
9. Memorization of grammar rules is necessary and important to effective language use.	√	√(2)	X	√(2)	√	√	√	∅
10. Formal grammar teaching should be started right in the early stage of second language proficiency.	√	√	∅	√	√	√(2)	√	∅
11. PPP is a good model of grammar pedagogy.	√(2)	√	∅	√	√(2)	√	√	√
12. Planned focus on form is a common practice while incidental focus on form is rare.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(Note: (√) agreed; (√(2)) mentioned twice in the interviews; (X) disagreed (∅) did not say)

Table 5. 2

Relationships between teachers' beliefs about grammar pedagogy and their actual practices

<i>Belief about Grammar Pedagogy</i>	<i>Actual Practice</i>	<i>Underlying Rationale</i>
Adoption of the PPP model of grammar pedagogy	Grammar presentation followed by grammar exercises doing with little or no free practice.	Time constraints; Pupils' low level of proficiency
Presenting grammar items through sentence-based 'situations'	Use single sentences to illustrate the target grammar points.	Sentence examples enables the pupils to think and to work out rules; Easier for pupils to remember rules; Less time-consuming; Difficult to find appropriate texts to present the planned grammar point.
Emphasis on explicit grammar knowledge	Eliciting rules from examples given; Having pupils write down rules on their note books; Retrieving pupils' explicit knowledge from their long-term memory.	Pupils can memorise rules better when given opportunities to work out rules; Active learning; Pupils need to write down rules for reference purposes when they need to consult it regarding a specific item. Identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge to focus on;

Emphasis on controlled practice	Getting the pupils to finish grammar exercises in the textbook, sometimes providing additional exercises from external sources.	Doing grammar exercises is a good way to remember rules; Preparing for the exams; Ability to do exercises correctly means mastery of the taught grammar point.
The importance of correction of grammatical errors; Avoidance of immediate error correction;	Correcting explicitly all grammar exercises on the board; Whole-class error correction or collective corrective feedback.	Whole-class error correction benefits all not just the pupil who made the error; It is a chance to consolidate rules/ explicit knowledge; Pupils are active because they have to recognise the other's errors and correct them. Correcting others' errors helps pupils to avoid those errors.
The effectiveness of L1 use in explaining grammar	In many lessons L1 is dominant for various functions. Occasional codeswitching	Pupils' ability to understand spoken English is limited; Pupils' expectations; L1 use guarantees pupils' correct understanding of rules.

As indicated in Table 5.1, the teachers in this study showed a strong collective agreement that grammar played the role as the corner stone for communicative competence in foreign language learning. They believed that the acquisition of discrete-point grammar items would enable learners to build a cognitive framework for further learning and give them the confidence to use the language in communication. It appeared that they were more positive about the instruction-then-communication sequence because for them self-confidence and the ability to communicate in English accurately were conditioned by a good knowledge of grammar. This could explain why they believed that formal grammar instruction is an indispensable part of a foreign language programme. In other words, they believed that explicit grammar knowledge was useful to their pupils in that it influences the development of the implicit knowledge that underpins communication. Furthermore, there is rather more disagreement among these teachers about the integration of grammar into skills work though they verbally acknowledged that they did some incidental focus-on-form if they thought that was necessary to facilitate their pupils' performance of communicative tasks. The final issue that emerged from the data was that despite the collective beliefs about the impact of pupils' grammar on their communication, there was one teacher in the group who did not share this idea. This teacher thought that grammar was important only in case where learning English was for standardised exams. Despite a little disagreement in this regard, all teachers were strongly in favour of a planned focus-on-form rather than incidental focus-on-form. The latter is implemented only in cases where pupils' unfamiliarity with a particular grammatical structure affects their performance of the task.

Standardised or high-stakes examinations are another factor that shapes their strong beliefs about focus-on-form activities. This is understandable given the pupils' immediate needs of learning English as a school subject in a context where opportunities to use the target language for daily communication are barely available.

Observational data show that teachers' beliefs are consistent with their teaching practices in the classroom. Table 5.2 summarises the main points regarding teachers'

beliefs about grammar pedagogy, their actual instructional practices, and the rationales underlying their practices.

As shown in Table 5.1, all the teachers in this study preferred a deductive approach to grammar. This is quite logical because they greatly valued explicit knowledge. There is consistency between their beliefs and their practices across all lessons. In cases where there seemed to be inconsistency it is just because they may hold the same belief but practice in a different way or they may hold different beliefs, but practice in the same way. On the whole, there is a 'shared practical discourse' or a 'collectively normative pedagogy' in this group of teachers.

Also as revealed in the chapter, the teachers' beliefs are shaped by many factors, but the two most influential factors, as shown in the data, seem to be their experiential knowledge and the socialisation within their community of practice.

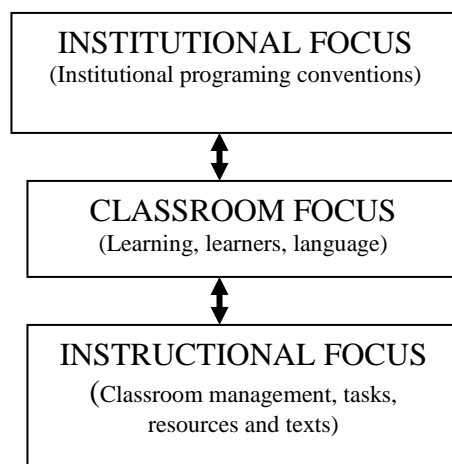
These findings will be discussed with reference to the literature in the next chapter, Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter V presents the findings related to the research questions. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of key research findings with reference to each of the research questions. The results of the study are also discussed in relation to previous research studies. The first section (Section 6.1) discusses the teachers' beliefs about form-focused instruction. The extent to which these beliefs are reflected in their classroom teaching of grammar and factors that affect teachers' beliefs and practices of grammar teaching in the context of a Vietnamese upper secondary school are presented in Sections 6.2 and 6.3, which is followed by a discussion of the contributions of this study to a theoretical understanding of teacher cognition. The last section is a brief summary of the chapter.

As mentioned in Section 4.11, the findings of this study were discussed within Burns's (1996, p. 162) intercontextuality framework, which is presented diagraphically as follows:



The adoption of this conceptual model is a recognition of the social reality of language teaching and learning as it “is *experienced and created by* teachers and learners” (Breen, 1985, p. 141, emphasis in original). This view is also in line with Leontiev’s (1981) concept of activity, which views human activity as only having

meaning when understood in relation to its broader social context: “*The human individual’s activity is a system of social relations*. It does not exist without those social relations” (pp. 46-47, emphasis added). Thus, the notion of intercontextuality allows “our understandings of the relationships between what teachers think and what teachers do when they teach in terms of what is ‘thinkable’ and ‘do-able’ within institutional constraints (Burns, 1996, p. 162). After all, teachers’ beliefs and practices do not exist in a ‘social vacuum’. Instead, “the activity of teaching and the thought and practices associated with it are defined (mediated and even constructed) in relation to the context within which that activity exists.” (Cross, 2010, p. 440).

6. 1. Teachers’ Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction

With regard to teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar teaching in second and/ or foreign language teaching, there have been several studies which surveyed teachers’ beliefs about this issue (see Chapter III for a literature review). However, as stated in the literature review, there has not been any empirical investigation into the beliefs about the importance of grammar and grammar learning held by Vietnamese teachers working in a state secondary school. As in many other EFL contexts, English in Vietnam is taught as a compulsory school subject with a prescribed syllabus and textbook (see Chapter II for the context of the study). Therefore, findings from this study will add to the common knowledge of teacher cognition of grammar and grammar learning and teaching.

As presented in Chapter V, findings from this case study support the findings of previous studies (Andrews, 2003; Borg, 2003c; Borg & Burns, 2008; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997; Farrell, 1999; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Schulz, 1996, 2001) that teachers highly value grammar, grammar learning and teaching, and grammatical accuracy. They also viewed consciously learning grammar as a part of the language education experience for everyone. By using such metaphors such as ‘the foundation of language,’ ‘one of the three pillars of language’ or ‘the cement used to stick bricks together,’ (Teacher 2, see 5.2.1) the teachers in this study in fact viewed grammar “as

the backbone of the language” (Folse, 2009, p. 57). This supports the results of Burgess and Etherington’s (2002) study, which show that most teachers viewed grammar as a framework for the rest of the language, and grammar and grammar teaching as a must for their pupils. Like the Hong Kong teachers in Andrews’ (2003) study, seven out of eight teachers involved in the study believed that grammar was the foundation on which communicative competence was built on. In these teachers’ view, direct grammar teaching would enable the pupils to communicate in English with greater accuracy (Borg, 2003c; Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001) and confidence. Even the only male teacher in the study, who disagreed with the facilitative role of grammar in the learners’ communicative ability, admitted that his pupils were unwilling to communicate English in the classroom because their limited grammar knowledge led them to the fear of social sanctions, i.e., causing anxiety about making errors. Specifically, they thought that grammar underpinned all four language skills, especially writing skills where grammatical accuracy and the ability to use complicated grammatical structures were most required (Farrell & Lim, 2005), and that grammar would facilitate reading comprehension and reduce writing errors (Borg & Burns, 2008). It can be inferred from what the teachers said in the interview that these teachers “view grammatical accuracy as integral to language and communication” (Burgess & Etherington, 2002, p. 440). The British EAP teachers in the study by Burgess and Etherington did not believe that formal knowledge could lead to accurate communicative use of the language, although feeling that such knowledge was important, they thought that the key reason for pupils’ errors was their lack of formal knowledge of the language. In addition to the role grammar played in the development of communicative competence, the teachers also believed that explicit grammar knowledge would allow learners to build a cognitive framework for further learning as mentioned by Teacher 5 in this study (see 5. 2. 2.). This view was quite similar to the view of the teachers in Schulz’s (1996) study that grammar helps in learning a foreign language and therefore it is essential to eventual mastery of the language. As a result, they put very little value on a ‘naturalistic’ approach to foreign language learning, believing that such an approach would lead to pupils’ ungrammatical utterances. This view is in line with what Borg (2003c) found

in his study where teachers did not accept 'naturalistic' language teaching with formal attention to language being eschewed.

Highly valuing the direct teaching of grammar, the teachers in the study also shared the view of the teachers in Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers's (1997) study that formal study of grammar should start right from the beginning of learners' language learning career. They argued that if beginners were not taught grammar consciously, learning was just parrot-learning, and their limited explicit grammar knowledge would hamper their continued language learning. Teachers' disagreement with delayed grammar teaching is not a surprising result, given that they consider formal instruction as a pre-requisite of communicative competence, rather than an optional add-on after basic communication has been achieved. This is evidenced by what Teacher 4 said about her daughter's learning English (see 5. 2. 1). Put another way, this group of teachers believed strongly in the possible transfer of explicit grammar knowledge into actual use of that knowledge in communication. As revealed in Teacher 7's story about her pupil's aunt (see 5. 2. 1) , who had lived in an English-speaking environment with her husband for many years but could not speak English grammatically, the teachers did not seem to believe that learners' implicit knowledge could be converted into explicit knowledge, as claimed by advocates of the Natural Approach (e.g. Krashen & Terrell 1983; Terrell, 1977). It is very likely that these teachers rejected the idea that learning of grammar could take place simply through exposure to input since such learning, at best, could help learners to utter some formulaic expressions in English as in the case of children selling postcards to tourists on the street (Teacher 2, see 5. 2. 2.).

There are two major reasons for teachers' strong beliefs about consciously learning grammar and explicit grammar knowledge. First, the limited access to the target language outside the classroom did not lend itself to the support of the naturalistic acquisition of the target language. Although Vietnamese students now can access the internet or satellite TV or the English language radio programmes, "they have to learn other subjects" (T2. II. 72), which are certainly more important to those who are not

going to take English as a university entrance examination subject. It is true that they are very likely to forget what they have learned about the language through their skills work when they have only three 45-minute lessons a week, which are spread out through the whole week. Consequently, English language teaching in Vietnamese secondary school is like “gardening in the gale,” where teachers plant seeds but these are constantly blown away between lessons (Hawkins, 1987, pp. 97-98). That is why Teacher 2 in the interview pointed out that even when the pupils were taught conscientiously, and both teachers and the pupils were sufficiently motivated, the course objectives could not be completely achieved (see 5. 3. 2). The problem is that pupils did not remember anything they had learned from the lower grades, which made them almost illiterate in English when they moved up to the upper secondary grades. This was the common complaint made by all teachers during the period of the study. Secondly, teachers’ strong inclination towards conscious grammar learning was influenced by their awareness of the need to meet the pupils’ expectations to learn grammar for the multiple-choice examinations, which are intended to measure their grammatical and lexical knowledge, reading and writing, as well as to cater for the pupils’ limited ability in English. Interview data indicated that teachers believed their pupils enjoyed learning grammar more than skills work. This is similar to the findings of previous studies in EFL contexts (e.g. Andrews, 2003; Borg, 2003c; Polat, 2009). As has been documented in the literature, Vietnamese learners view grammar as an indispensable component of their language course (Bernat, 2004; Tomlinson & Bao Dat, 2004). It can be inferred that when the pupils’ ability to use English for communication is limited, learning grammar seems to be more secure to deal with their linguistic limitation and to reduce their performance anxiety.

It is interesting to point out that while these teachers held a strong view of grammar as the foundation for communicative ability, they, unlike teachers in the studies by Burgess and Etherington (2002) and Borg and Burns’ (2008), disagreed that grammar should be integrated into skills work. This is evidenced by their self-report of little incidental focus on form during skills lessons. Although I managed to observe only two reading comprehension lessons while collecting the data for this study, and this

issue needs further investigation, I think the more convincing reason is that grammar is prescribed as a separate lesson (the Language Focus following skills lessons) in the textbook. With this design of the instructional material, the teachers may believe that grammar should be taught separately from other language skills. Apparently, the teachers in this study did not have the privilege of having complete control over their choice of the materials as the teachers in Borg and Burns' (2008) study did. This supports Ellis's (1995) claim that a distinction should be made between the presentation of grammar items to the second [and foreign] language classes as an inherent part of the curriculum versus attention to grammatical needs of specific learners as they arise.

The belief in the possible conversion of explicit grammar knowledge or declarative knowledge into the actual use of that knowledge for communicative purposes or procedural knowledge led these teachers to embrace a focused-on-forms approach to grammar teaching reflected in the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model of grammar pedagogy. Even though Teacher 2 described the structure of her grammar lessons as following the recognition-analysis-comparison-finalisation sequence, and Teacher 8 referred to task-based language learning (TBLL), they were both keen on the PPP model. It is possible that these teachers adopted this model simply because they were not aware of alternative approaches to the teaching of grammar (Farrell, 1999). But from what Teacher 2 and Teacher 7 said about this approach (see 5. 2. 3), I believe it is more likely that they believed the model would help them to satisfy their pupils' expectation of being taught grammar explicitly. Furthermore, like the Georgian teacher in Polat's (2009) study, Teacher 2 and Teacher 5 (see 5. 3. 2) did not believe that communication was realistic unless the pupils had a basic knowledge of grammar. Thus, their adoption of PPP seemed to be determined by their personal pedagogical preferences (i.e., the beliefs about how grammar should be taught) as well as by their perception of students' needs. It is worth noting that the new syllabus advises teachers to follow "a communicative, learner-centred, and task-based approach" (MOET, 2006, p. 12), though it does not give any guidance on how to implement the approach in the classroom. Surprisingly, only Teacher 8, who was a

new graduate, mentioned the term ‘Task-based Learning’ in the interview with her own configuration. What she described is, in fact, a modified version of PPP, rather than TBLL (see 5. 3. 3).

In brief, there is a common belief among all the teachers that students need grammar primarily for their examinations then for communicative purposes, and that such grammar knowledge should be delivered through the PPP model which is believed to embrace both form/usage and meaning/use (Andrews, 2003). The following section will discuss how such a belief is transferred into the practice of grammar teaching.

6. 2. Teachers’ Beliefs as Reflected in the Practice of Grammar Teaching.

According to Edge and Garton (2009), teachers who believe in the importance of explicit grammar knowledge may make more use of focused-on-forms activities and PPP is one way of implementing such an approach. According to the PPP model, the target grammatical item is first presented explicitly and then practised until it is fully proceduralised (Ellis, 2006, p. 97), i.e., it starts with conscious learning and shifts to subconscious learning. What follows is a discussion of what the teachers in this study believed in this approach and how they implemented it according to their beliefs in their practices of grammar teaching.

6. 2. 1. Grammar Presentation

According to the analysis of the observational data (see 5.4.1), although the majority of the teachers in this study admitted that they followed the PPP approach, the way they presented grammar was somehow different. This is similar to what Borg (2003c) found with his teachers. In general, the teachers presented the grammar point in three different ways. The first way, which is the most common presentation strategy across most of the teachers in the study, is that the teacher provided context-free sentence-level examples, then elicited rules from the sentence examples given by using metalanguage, and finally finalised the structural formula and rules. It is worth noting

again that all the grammar items prescribed in the upper secondary textbook are recycled because they have been dealt with in the lower grades. This fact is important in the sense that it looks as if the teachers adopting this approach to grammar presentation were using an inductive approach where they try to elicit grammar rules from the sentence examples. This means that the purpose of eliciting rules is just to help pupils to recall their explicit knowledge, and in case they have forgotten, the teacher would remind them of the relevant explicit knowledge to make sure that the pupils can do the subsequent grammar exercises successfully. This point was clarified by Teacher 4, Teacher 3, and Teacher 6 in both the preliminary interviews and the stimulated recall interviews (see 5.4.2). Those who adopted this approach to grammar presentation believed that it was best for the pupils to recognise the target grammar item through sentence examples and to induce the structural formula of the grammar point.

While the British teachers in the study of Burgess and Etherington (2002) seemed to be enthusiastic about presenting grammar within authentic texts, the teachers in this study thought that it was time-consuming to find relevant texts and time-consuming for the pupils to recognise the grammar point to be taught. Although the sentence examples they provided to illustrate the to-be-taught grammar item were context-free, they believed that these sentence examples themselves were the situation or the context which highlighted the grammar point to the pupils (see 5.3). Instead of explaining rules deductively, the teachers attempted to retrieve the explicit knowledge from the pupils' long-term memory first. If a particular pupil failed, they would prompt him or her or nominate another pupil in the class to help until the correct rules were articulated. Before the lesson finished, the teacher finalised or generalised by making statements that covered the structural and semantic features of the grammar point taught. This approach to grammar presentation was to some extent different from the approach the Malta and Hong Kong teachers in Borg's (2003c) and Andrews's (2003) studies employed. However, this difference is only superficial. In reality, both the teachers in this study and in Borg's and Andrews' study espoused a deductive style of grammar teaching.

The second presentation strategy, which was used by the two most seasoned teachers in this study, was 'text-based'. The target grammar point was presented by means of a grammar text copied from some grammar books or test-preparation books for the purpose of self-study published by British publishers. Put another way, it was the grammar that determined the choice of text (Borg & Burns, 2008), not the other way round. In the case of Teacher 1, she used the grammar text to raise the pupils' consciousness of how the to-be-taught grammar point (English articles) was used in the text before the pupils were asked to refer to the rules to gain a deeper understanding of the grammar point in use (see 5. 3.1). She explained in the stimulated recall interview that she believed this way of presenting grammar helped her pupils to remember how the English articles are used. By contrast, Teacher 2 also used a grammar text which provided the pupils with exercises practicing the use of the indefinite pronouns in English. After checking the pupils' responses, she asked them to refer to the rule-text to correct themselves. The rationale behind her use of this grammar text was to diagnose the pupils' implicit knowledge of the target grammar point in order to find out the 'gap' in her pupils' explicit knowledge before she decided to intervene by explaining the rules. Thus, she seemed to believe that the explicit knowledge was converted into implicit knowledge, not the other way round. This strategy is similar to the strategy used by the teacher in Borg's (1998a) study, who made decisions on grammar teaching on the basis of an analysis of the learners' grammatical errors. It is also necessary to note that both these teachers still focused on de-contextualised sentences containing the target grammar points and used these to establish the respective rules for the forms. This behaviour was similar to that of the female teacher in Phipps and Borg's (2009) study, but the rationale they provided for their behaviour was not the same. The teacher in Phipps and Borg's study did not like the way she presented grammar, but she had to use that way because she felt it was what her higher level students expected, which reflected a tension between her beliefs and practice. The two teachers in this study believed this was a way of encouraging pupils' active learning, which they really valued.

The third presentation strategy, which was employed by the only male teacher in the study, was more deductive, though he stated in the preliminary interview that he favoured an inductive approach. He began his grammar teaching by asking the pupils to articulate the rules about the hypothetical sentence in English, then he let them do the de-contextualised grammar exercises in the textbook before checking them. He explained that he believed it was necessary to ask the pupils to state the rules (which he assumed from his teaching experience that they had forgotten) to help them to recall the relevant rules to support their subsequent exercise completion.

It is evident that all these teachers believed that explicit grammar knowledge was helpful to the pupils' use of grammar, and explicit knowledge would be converted into implicit knowledge once it was proceduralised through doing grammar exercises (Ellis, 2006). However, this underlying principle was operationalised differently by different teachers in the classroom (Breen et al., 2001). Also, teachers' strong endorsement of the grammar presentation through decontextualised examples correlates very well with their strong beliefs in a more analytical and explicit approach to language teaching. In general, the results of this study lend support to the findings of the study by Brumfit, Mitchell, & Hooper, 1996) that foreign language teachers viewed knowledge about language (KAL) largely in terms of sentence-based explicit grammar work, something they felt made a "direct contribution ... to the development of pupils' target language proficiency" (p. 77).

6. 2. 2. Grammar Practice

Teachers in the present study placed a great emphasis on grammar practice. Getting the pupils to complete all the exercises in the textbook, then giving corrective feedback, and finalising rules of the target grammar point are the common strategies among all the teachers. They believed that practice helped the pupils to transfer the explicit grammar knowledge into communicative use, and that practice prepared the pupils better for their examinations. Although they believed that they should lead their pupils from controlled practice, i.e., doing the grammar exercises in the textbook,

to free practice because free practice was “the higher level of application of knowledge” and “more motivating” as Teacher 2 said in a stimulated recall interview (see 5.3.3), they acknowledged that free practice was very rare due to time constraints. This reflects a tension between beliefs and practice (Phipps & Borg, 2009). However, where they managed to spare a couple of minutes before the bell rang for free practice, the common activity they used was let the pupils produce one or two single, context-free sentences containing the taught grammar point in their own way or by answering the teacher’s questions. In the stimulated recall interviews, the teachers believed that these were real-life tasks. This, again, is the evidence that they believed that the acquisition of individual grammatical structures would lead to overall communicative competence in the target language. Grammar learning is, thus, just a process of “accumulating entities,” to use Rutherford’s (1987) words. Also, it confirms Burgess and Etherington’s (2002) suggestion that free practice, in the teachers’ view, is real communication.

For controlled practice, all teachers in the study adopted the same strategies. After finishing up with the elicitation of explicit grammar knowledge, they got the pupils to do all the exercises in the textbook, one by one. While the whole class were doing the exercises at their desks, two or three, sometimes four pupils were nominated to go to the front and write their own answers on the chalkboard. The pupils’ written answers on the chalkboard were used as materials for corrective feedback. Unlike the male teacher in Phipps and Borg’s (2009) study, who viewed doing controlled grammar exercises simply as a classroom management tool, the teachers in this study believed in doing controlled grammar exercises as a cognitive strategy for consolidating explicit grammar knowledge and bridging explicit grammar knowledge with real-life communicative use through later free practice (see 5.4.3). This is evidenced by the way they requested the pupils to articulate relevant rules to validate their answers to the discrete-point grammar exercises, and the way they rated the success of teaching against the pupils’ performance of the grammar exercises by using metalanguage. Once all these exercises, checking, corrective feedback and articulation of explicit knowledge had been completed, the teacher finalised the rules of the target grammar

point either orally or in writing on the board, and the pupils copied down those rules on their notebooks. This confirms what Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) found as a common practice among the Puerto Rican and New York teachers in their study.

The beliefs and practices of the teachers in this study regarding grammar practice are, in many ways, similar to the beliefs of the Maltese teachers in Borg's (2003c) study. They believed grammar practice was a chance to provide repetition of the target grammar, to challenge the pupils in terms of their explicit grammar knowledge, to draw the pupils' attention to the form, rather than meaning, of the grammar, and to provide evidence of pupils' understanding of the grammar. In other words, practice was believed to be an activity where pupils used grammar previously focused on. According to Ur's (1988) criteria of grammar practice, which include validity, pre-learning, volume and repetition, success-orientation, heterogeneity, teacher assistance, and interest, the way the teachers in this study got the pupils to practice grammar overlaps with Ur's validity, pre-learning, success-oriented, and teacher assistance categories. Specifically, the grammar exercises the pupils were supposed to do activate the explicit grammar knowledge of the grammar to be practised, and they focus on the grammar items pupils had already been introduced to. The pupils were also likely to succeed in doing those grammar exercises, and the teacher assisted them to produce acceptable answers.

There are three points to note here. First, as it is presented in Chapter II, the context of the study, a big issue for Vietnamese secondary school teachers of all subjects is to complete the mandated syllabus. This has been considered as a minimal demand for several years, and it has become a rule of thumb among teachers, administrators and inspectors. Therefore, with a syllabus which prescribes two or three grammar items to be covered within a 45-minute lesson, the teachers had to be preoccupied with the formal instruction and completion of the grammar exercises in the syllabus. Although they believed that only through free practice were the pupils able to internalise the grammar item for future use, they did not manage to do this in most cases. This is

another tension between their beliefs and practice (Phipps & Borg, 2009). Second, memorization, in Vietnamese learning culture, is viewed by both teachers and students as a learning strategy that helps students to gain accuracy, fluency and self-confidence (Oanh & Hien, 2006). This explains why the teachers considered having students keep their own grammar notebooks as a valuable approach, along with the use of a grammar text for reference purposes when the pupils need to consult it regarding a specific item or issue they find problematic. Finally, since the motivation to learn English in an input-poor environment is largely to pass the non-communicative examination, doing grammar exercises seems to be the only possible learning strategy. The result of the preliminary study showed that the majority of the school pupils preferred grammar exercises to communicative activities (see Appendix A).

6. 2. 3. Corrective Feedback

While the impact of corrective feedback on L2 acquisition remains inconclusive, studies on learners' beliefs show a strong preference for corrective feedback (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Schulz, 1996, 2001). The result of the preliminary study confirms this with regard to Vietnamese school pupils (see Appendix A). While teachers in this study had positive attitudes towards learners' errors, they placed a great emphasis on the correction of grammatical errors, especially errors in the pupils' writing. They, in general, believed that corrective feedback would be helpful to their pupils to improve their grammatical performance. This result lends support to the findings of Burgess and Etherington (2002) with the British EAP teachers.

Observational data indicated that all the teachers adopted a common strategy for corrective feedback, i.e. explicit corrective feedback which is operationalised as metalinguistic information (Ellis, et al. 2009), and elicitation (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). They stated in the preliminary interview that corrective feedback was not just for the pupil who committed the error. Instead, it was a chance for the whole class to reconsolidate their explicit grammar knowledge. As discussed above in 6. 2. 2., while

the pupils were practicing doing grammar exercises, the teachers tended to nominate a few pupils to go to the front and write their answers on the chalkboard. The teachers used these pupils' grammatical performance as materials for checking and corrective feedback.

Whenever an error was identified in the pupils' grammatical performance, the teacher would elicit the metalinguistic information from the whole class or one pupil before she reconfirmed the correct form. It is likely that they felt they were generally expected by their pupils to adopt a more directive role in error correction (Borg, 2003c; Schulz, 1996), and they also assumed that their role was to provide error correction, as Teacher 2 said that teacher-correction was the most reliable (see 5. 3. 4).

Apart from this commonly shared strategy for corrective feedback, observational data did not show any other type of corrective feedback. The literature on corrective feedback introduces a number of instructional strategies such as recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, prompts, repetition, etc. (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). None of these terms, except for 'recasts,' were mentioned by any of the teachers in the study. Yet, although in the interview, Teacher 2, who had just completed her Master's Degree in TESOL, did mention that she used 'recasts' to correct the pupils' errors, this was not at all observed in her lessons. Probably, she had recently picked up this concept and had not had enough time to use it in her instructional repertoire. This supports my argument for the need to examine teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback (see 3.1.4) to address the research difficulty under the circumstance where teachers limit their feedback to a single type in a real classroom (Ellis, 2009).

Interestingly, Teacher 2 believed that whole-class corrective feedback helped to preempt pupils' errors because she claimed that whole-class corrective feedback created an opportunities for the pupils to compare their responses, thereby setting a barrier of errors (see 5. 3. 4). Furthermore, despite their preference for teacher-correction over peer-correction or self-correction, they seemed to implicitly think that whole-class or

collective corrective feedback ending up with teacher-correction might be more appropriate, given the large class size and the time constraints. When they said that providing corrective feedback on the pupils' written answers on the board, other pupils could recognise their own errors and self-correct the errors, they probably implied that teacher-correction had some facilitative effect on pupils' self-repair (Ellis, 1994).

Given the limited literature on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding corrective feedback, the findings of this study can expand, provide contrasts with, as well as support claims about corrective feedback given the practical limitations of researching the impact of corrective feedback theories on L2 acquisition in actual classrooms (Ellis, 2009).

6.2.4. Use of the First Language

The use of the first language in the second language classroom has been back on the research agenda, and the role of the first language in learning another language has been viewed from a more positive perspective (see e.g., Butzkamm, 2003; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; V. Cook, 2001; G. Cook, 2010). Researchers have found that teachers are divided in their opinions of the use of the first language in grammar teaching (McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Mitchell, 1988; Song, 2009). Findings of this study coincide with such a result. While three of them supported extensive use of the target grammar (TG) to expose the pupils to the target language with a view to compensating for the disadvantages inherent in the foreign language context, the five other teachers thought first language use would be more effective, and less time-consuming. Observed lessons of the target language use supporters showed that these teachers either used English completely throughout their lessons or they just used the first language to recapitulate the grammar rules to the pupils at the end of the lesson. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether they behaved differently when they were not observed.

Those who supported the first language use tended to use the first language so extensively that even very short, simple, one-word phrases expressed in English were translated into Vietnamese. Their use of the first language in each lesson ranged from approximately 70 to 95 percent. The result is consistent with the previous studies in various contexts (e.g. Duff & Polio, 1990; Marcaro, 1997, 2009; Mitchell, 1988; Hobbs, Matsuo & Payne, 2010). Whenever they used English, they just read the English language instructions in the textbook. These teachers believed that their use of the first language helped the pupils understand the lesson more deeply and reduced their anxiety, given their limited English proficiency. If they explained grammar in English, they had to explain again in the first language at the pupils' request. Results of the preliminary study also revealed that pupils expected their teachers to use more Vietnamese than English in the classroom (see Appendix B). As they were aware of the pupils' expectations, they decided to use the pupils' own language as the key medium of instruction in their form-focused lessons.

In addition to the pupils' expectation, teachers' awareness of their limited proficiency probably influenced their preference for the first language, too. As Teacher 4 said in the interview, she herself found it challenging to get the meaning across in English while she was teaching grammar. As a result, she felt that her pupils liked her to use English, but she decided to use Vietnamese because she felt uncertain that she could make herself understood accurately. Even Teacher 2, who believed that teachers should use English as much as possible in the classroom to create the target language environment for the pupils, said that in case the pupils had to understand something accurately, but she was unable to help, she used Vietnamese. So, not only teachers' awareness of the pupils' expectations but their awareness of their own English proficiency influenced their preference for the language they used as a medium of instruction. During the period of data collection, I noticed that Teachers 1 and 2 were the most fluent English speakers of the eight teachers, and as a result they used more English than Vietnamese in their teaching. For Teacher 8, who was the youngest, she also used English quite often in the classroom (and this is consistent with what she stated in the interview), but the way she used English to explain grammar, as

indicated in her lesson extracts (see 5. 3. 5), was really complicated and confusing. It seems that she had difficulty getting the message across in English, and this gave me the impression that she used English so extensively simply because of my presence (an outsider) in the classroom.

Interestingly, while it is mandated in the syllabus that teachers should use English as much as possible in the classroom, not all teachers followed such a guideline. It seemed they felt it more secure to both their pupils and to themselves to use the first language. And, importantly, they only used English extensively in the classroom whenever they were observed for evaluation, even they knew the pupils did not understand, because observers and evaluators expected them to use English, as reported by Teacher 5 in one stimulated recall interview. This supports the studies by Kim and Elder (2005) and Liu et al. (2004) with Korean teachers in implementing the Teach- English-Through-English policy. Teachers' use of the first language is likely to be influenced by their beliefs about the first and target language use (Macaro, 2001), rather than by institutional policy.

Cook (2001) and Liu et al. (2004) suggest that the first language can be used for various functions in the classroom. Although these authors differ slightly in their recommendations for the use of the first language, they all agree that the first language can be used to explain grammar. Five teachers in this study used the first language for almost every classroom function in their grammar lesson, from presenting grammar and explaining rules to checking the pupils' answers and giving feedback.

Studies on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding form-focused instruction rarely examine the issue of teachers' beliefs about the medium of grammar instruction. Thus, it is necessary to gain insights into teachers' thinking about their choice of either the first language or the second language in form-focused lessons in order to identify whether there is a link between teachers' beliefs about grammar and their preference for the language of instruction.

6. 3. Factors that Influence Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

In general, the data analysis shows consistencies between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding various aspects of their form-focused instruction. Those beliefs and practices are influenced by a number of different factors. Firstly, professional training had some impact on their beliefs and practices. This is the case where Teacher 7 reported that she believed learner-centred instruction was the best approach because that was what she was taught at the university. Teacher 8 reported that she used the Task-based Language Learning approach to teach grammar since this approach was recommended by her university professor. Or Teacher 2, who said in a stimulated recall interview that when her professor in her Master's Degree class used the term 'boomerang' (see 5.3.1) to refer to the process of allowing learners to discover the grammar rules, this influenced her beliefs about grammar teaching. In addition, two teachers, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 mentioned that they had learned about the PPP approach to grammar from the in-service training workshop in the mid-1990s. It is interesting to note that Teacher 7 and Teacher 8 were the least experienced in the group. This means that they had graduated from the teacher training university not long ago, and they still remembered some of the formal training input. However, such acquired input did not seem to influence their teaching in any way. Their lessons were teacher-centred, rather than learner-centred, with teacher's talk being predominant, or the lessons started with teachers' explanation, rather than with task-oriented activities such as introducing the topic, setting the context for the task, providing relevant linguistic input for task completion, etc. Similarly, the observed lessons of Teacher 2 did not support her claimed self-discovery approach to grammar. This is evidenced in the way she requested the pupils to write down the grammatical rules she provided on their notebooks to learn them by heart. Her lessons, therefore, remained very much teacher-controlled. The five other teachers did not mention the impact of formal training on their beliefs and practices.

In fact, while articulating their beliefs and the rationales underlying their instructional behaviours regarding grammar teaching, the teachers almost never referred to any key

constructs in the SLA literature such as ‘focus on form’ or ‘consciousness-raising’ (Borg & Burns, 2008; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997). Formal training seemed to exert a very limited influence on teachers’ beliefs and practices.

What can be inferred from this is that input from formal training may take time to be converted into teachers’ practical knowledge, and that input must fit teachers’ existing beliefs to become personalised. The PPP approach was accepted by these teachers (see 5.2.3) probably because of two main reasons. First, it did not conflict with teachers’ existing beliefs as evidenced by Teacher 2 saying that she believed it could help to satisfy her students’ needs and it matched her beliefs about how grammar should be taught and learned. Second, except for the mid-1990s in-service workshop in which only two of the teachers in the group participated, teachers in this study did not have any opportunity for their continued formal learning, while access to SLA research remains unaffordable or a luxury, even to Vietnamese teacher educators working in major universities. Therefore, teachers embraced the PPP approach probably because they did not have access to alternative approaches to grammar. However, it is interesting to note that most of teachers did not seem to pay attention to the production stage. They either asked the students to perform few guided activities which required little beyond the minimal use of the target grammatical item taught in the lesson or just skipped it on account of time shortage. Thus, these teachers seemed to believe that once the grammar item had been taught explicitly and practised mechanically, the students would master it and they would be able to use it correctly. The production seemed to be just ‘a time filler’ before the bell went signalling the end of the prescribed lesson. These points support the recommendation made by scholars (e.g. Burns, 1992; Farrell, 1999; Farrell & Lim, 2005) that it is necessary to uncover teachers’ existing beliefs in teacher pre-service and in-service training programmes by offering them opportunities to “raise to consciousness the nature of personalised theories which inform their practice” (Burns, 1992, p. 64).

Secondly, experience as language learners has some impact on teachers' beliefs and practices as these appeared to have been influenced by their own learning strategies. For example, most of them said that while they were students, they learned grammar by memorising the rules and doing as many grammar exercises as possible in all the grammar exercises books that were available to them. While most of them said they had very vague ideas of how their teachers taught them English, the three youngest teachers admitted that the way they had been taught had some influence on the way they were teaching grammar to their pupils. For example, Teacher 5 was impressed by the way her university professor taught her grammar by asking them to memorise grammar rules through examples. This made her believe that learning grammar through sentence examples was the most effective, and sentence-based grammar presentation was the easiest way to understand grammar rules. For more experienced teachers, it might be the case that they learned English a long time ago when English was far less important than other foreign languages, and the teachers were not motivated to teach partly because the low status of their subject and partly because they had to live in conditions of poverty.

Institutional factors and learner variables also influence their beliefs and practices. Since assessment is still traditional and non-communicative, the pupils expected to learn as much grammar as possible in order to be successful at high-stakes examinations (in Vietnam, all examinations are standardised and high-stakes as they determined the learners' future career or study). In Vietnam, teachers are assessed in terms of learners' academic success measured by examination scores. Put another way, teacher effectiveness is assessed by learners' performance in examinations. Learners' examination scores are indicators of teachers' quality. Understandably, teachers have to teach to ensure the pupils' success in examinations. Furthermore, the centralised system of educational management requires that all teachers must follow the teaching norms defined by educational administrators and their communities of practice. All these have a considerable influence on the teachers' teaching approach.

The fourth factor, according to the data, is the instructional materials. Unlike the result of Borg and Burns's (2008) study, the practice of grammar teaching by the teachers in this study was considerably influenced by the instructional materials. As discussed in Chapters II and V, grammar is presented in a separate lesson, rather than integrated into skills lessons with a focus on the explicit knowledge of discrete grammar points. In other words, grammar is pre-determined, and does not emerge from communicative tasks. When teachers did not have the freedom of choosing their own instructional materials as their colleagues in Borg and Burns' study did, their practice was naturally textbook-based because the textbook is law, in Teacher 2's words. The influence of instructional materials on their beliefs and practices is also evidenced in the way they stated that they learned how grammar was presented in commercial ELT materials written by British authors, and in the way they used materials from self-study grammar books for the pupils to practice grammar.

Finally, teachers' personal experience and the experience of others in the professional community, seems to be the most influential on teachers' beliefs and practices, which supports Breen et al.(2001), Crookes and Arakaki (1999), Larcote (2005), Mok (1994), Nunan (1992) and Phipps and Borg (2009). The data analysis is indicative that teachers' beliefs and practices related to the importance of grammar to communicative competence, the way grammar should be taught, learned, and practiced, the way corrective feedback should be provided as well as the use of the first language to teach grammar, are all strongly influenced by teachers' experience and the community of practice of which they are members. In many cases, when they talked about the rationale of their practices, they all referred to their teaching experiences. For example, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher 7, and Teacher 2 all admitted that their teaching was informed by their experience (see 5.4.2). In other words, their perceptions of the learners' competence, motivation, expectation, and learning style preferences more greatly influenced their beliefs and practices than formal theory (Borg & Burns, 2008). And from these experiences, they developed a system of grammar pedagogy of their own (Borg, 1998a, 1999b; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Apart from their teaching experience, their beliefs and practices were also

derived from the experiences of other members in their communities of practice. There is evidence that their beliefs and practices were shaped by their experiences of observing other teachers in the community, by the contributions made by their colleagues to their teaching whenever they were observed, and by informal talk like the case of Teacher 6, who learned how to present grammar and get the pupils to practice grammar from teachers in other schools. Also, the criteria used by inspectors to evaluate their teaching seemed to have some implicit effect on the way they taught, though they did not articulate this. As discussed above, in a centralised education system, it is critical for teachers to behave professionally in conformity with the common norms, including the hidden and implicit norms. Additionally, these teachers worked in under-resourced circumstances, where access to SLA theories or research is almost unavailable, so they had to depend on other members in their community of practice to develop themselves professionally. Thus, their personal theories for practice are largely shaped by their own experience and the experience of others in their community of practice. This explains why all teachers in this study shared a set of core beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching and a shared system of grammar pedagogy, which could be labelled as ‘collectively normative pedagogy’. This collectively normative pedagogy was formed through the inspectors’ judgemental observations and their mandated peer-observations (see Chapter II). This raises the issue that teaching is very likely to be routinised if teachers are not stimulated to reflect on their experience critically in order to reconstruct their personal theories for practice.

In short, Burns’s (1996) concept of intercontextuality is useful in understanding what teachers believe, what they do, and why they do it in a particular way. In Vietnam, both the curriculum to be taught and the textbook to be used are prescribed by the central Ministry of Education and Training. Vietnamese secondary school teachers, as a result, have to follow the rules established by the Ministry and organise their behaviour accordingly (Saito et al, 2008), in order to achieve the conformity to a particular model of teaching. The institutional ideology or culture, which is examination-oriented and textbook-centred, framed the broad perceptions which

underlay teachers' individual thinking about their own classroom. This explains why this group of teachers shared very similar beliefs and practices regarding FFI within their school.

6. 4. Summary

This chapter has summarised the present study's findings, and discussed them with reference to each of the research questions. The results have also been considered in relation to relevant previous studies. The results of this study relate closely to what Andrews (2003) has found in the Hong Kong context, which is more or less similar to the context of this study in that teachers are constrained by the need to complete the syllabus, prepare students for examinations, and cater for their limited ability and interest. The study has confirmed that teachers' grammar pedagogy was shaped by their beliefs which were derived from their experiences as language learners and language teachers, their perceptions of the learner variables, the institutional culture (Borg, 2003b, 2006, 2009) and the communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in which they participate. It suggests that teachers' practical knowledge is socially constructed, and situated (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Results from this study also indicate that teachers' beliefs, in general, correlate with their practices, and where differences were recorded, these reflect what Breen et al. (2001) have suggested, that one principle can underline different practices, and one practice can be justified by different principles. This is evidenced in the case of Teacher 8, who stated that she did not see the value of presenting grammar in isolated sentences, but she actually did so while explaining that those sentences constitute the context or situation to illustrate grammar. Or Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, who believed in the value of presenting grammar through text, but they used a grammar text which presents grammar discretely in sentences. Also, the study shows that despite individual diversity, teachers, working in a collectivist, top-down and highly centralized culture, appear to share a collectively normative pedagogy, which is similar to what Breen et al. (2001) termed "collective language pedagogy" (p. 496). It also supports the claim that expert theories of practice and top-down educational policy have little impact on teachers'

beliefs and practices (Borg & Burns, 2008; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers,1997). However, the findings of this study indicate that communicative language teaching (CLT) did influence teachers' beliefs to some extent (they believed grammar was the foundation on which communicative competence rests), but there was very little evidence of CLT in their actual practice regarding grammar teaching (Richards & Pennington, 1998; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999b).

Methodologically, the study confirms the value of using a multi-method qualitative case study in studying teachers' beliefs and practices to avoid the methodological problem of the potential gap between teachers' beliefs "expresse[d] in relation to ideal instructional practices and, in contrast, in relation to instructional realities" (Borg, 2006, p. 279). Another advantage of using a multi-method case study is that it helps the researcher to gain insights into the nature of human thinking and human behaviours which are always context-bound.

The key findings and an in-depth discussion of the implications of the present study for theory, research and teacher education will be presented in the following chapter, the Conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of the present study is to uncover the beliefs and practices of a small group of teachers regarding form-focused instruction in the context of a Vietnamese state upper secondary school, where English is taught as a compulsory foreign language, as well as factors that influence their beliefs and practices. In order to seek answers to the research questions established for the present study, I employed a qualitative case study with multiple instruments including interviews, classroom observations and stimulated recalls being used to collect the data. The data were collected within a period of seven months, from October 2008 to April 2009, then analysed according to themes in order to throw light on the research questions.

Because teachers' beliefs are tacit, unobservable and context-bound, and teachers may have difficulties in articulating them, the use of appropriate research strategies to make those beliefs explicit is critical. These strategies include self-report instruments, verbal commentaries, observation, and reflective writing, and each has both advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, I determined that a case study using a multi-method strategy would be the most appropriate because it has helped me to achieve data triangulation of teachers' beliefs in relation to their instructional realities in the particular context under investigation.

In the previous chapter, Chapter VI, I discussed the findings of the study with reference to the research questions and in relation to previous research studies. This chapter first summarises the key findings which address the research questions of the present study. Then the limitations of the study will be acknowledged, and suggestions for future studies will be presented. This will be followed by some suggestions for teacher belief research methodology, and for teacher development in the context of Vietnamese secondary schools arising from the study.

7.1. Summary of Key Findings

7.1.1. Teachers' Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction

The findings of the study concur with other studies undertaken elsewhere (e.g. Andrews, 2003; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Schulz, 1996, 2001) that the teachers held a positive belief about the importance of explicit grammar instruction to the development of learners' communicative competence. The reasons underlying these beliefs were consistent across all individuals. They believed that explicit grammar instruction enabled learners to communicate in English with greater accuracy and confidence. Therefore, they rejected the idea that grammar instruction should be delayed until the later stage of learners' interlanguage development. The teachers also held a strong belief about the explicit knowledge of grammar. They felt that explicit knowledge was useful for their pupils to achieve grammatical accuracy, and the lack of explicit grammatical knowledge was viewed as a reason for their pupils' reticence or non-participation in communicative tasks. Therefore, learners were expected to learn and memorise grammatical rules and the structural formula. This is evidenced in the way they asked the pupils to articulate rules to justify their responses to grammar exercises and the way they summarised rules at the end of the lesson for the pupils to copy down on their notebooks. They seemed to believe that the gap in the pupils' explicit grammar knowledge accounted for their failures in doing grammar exercises accurately. In brief, teachers in the present study believed that grammar instruction was indispensable in a foreign language programme, and hence they strongly favoured form-focused instruction.

Findings of the present study adds to the common understanding that grammar teaching is a complex issue, which calls for a reconceptualization of expert theories of practice related to grammar which state, for example, that grammar instruction is unnecessary (Krashen, 1982, 1985; Terrell, 1977), and that grammar is acquired through the negotiation of meaning during communicative interaction (Long & Crookes, 1992; Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, 1987; Wenden, 1991). It is evident that all

the teachers in this study had a marked enthusiasm for grammar, and they followed the same pattern of the grammar lesson which is characterised by explanation followed by written grammar exercises. This indicates that teachers working in the same context of a state secondary school, where the teachers are non-native and the syllabus is absolutely prescribed, tend to share the same patterns of beliefs and practices which are developed largely through their accumulated experience. Thus, it is considered crucial for theorists, methodologists and curriculum designers to take teachers' cognitions into account in their attempts to introduce pedagogical innovations.

7. 1. 2. Sources of Teachers' Beliefs

Findings of the present study show the complexity of teachers' beliefs. There was a complex interaction between teachers' formal training, experiential knowledge, shared knowledge in their communities of practice and macro-contextual factors such as the syllabus, the textbook, the examination system, the pupils' language proficiency and expectations. However, three factors that exercise a powerful shaping influence on teachers' beliefs are their experiential knowledge and institutional factors such as the learning culture, the assessment tradition and the professional community in which teachers socialised. Expert theories of practice, which teachers received during the teacher training programme seems to have only a modest influence on teachers' beliefs. . In other words, the interaction between experiential knowledge and received knowledge is minimal while the beliefs and practices of other members of the professional community appear to be more influential. As described in Chapter II, Vietnamese secondary school teachers are mandated to observe other teachers and to let others observe them. Therefore, it is very likely that teachers, by observing and being observed by other teachers in the group as well as through interaction with teachers in other schools (as in the case of Teacher 6's socialisation with lower secondary school teachers), have managed to develop a collectively normative pedagogy . For example, they generally stated that because their pupils needed grammatical rules in order to do grammar exercises effectively in

their examinations, they had to teach grammar the way they had done. They also referred to their personal theories for practice that memorisation of grammatical rules and extensive practice of grammar exercises led to grammatical competence, which was the linguistic foundation of verbal communication. The experiences with the Vietnamese examination culture (see chapter II) which measures the students' explicit metalinguistic knowledge rather than the ability to use the target language for communication through discrete-point tests (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen (2002); Truscott, 1999) have therefore shaped their beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction. Also, in a collectivist culture like Vietnam (see chapter II), teachers are expected to teach according to prescribed norms, but they have little exposure to expert theories of practice related to their field. As a result, they tend to share common experiences and beliefs, which underpin their collectively normative pedagogy, as some studies appear to suggest (Breen et al., 2001; Phelan et al., 2006). The pattern of grammar presentation and practice activities, as well as their coinciding views from the individual interviews about the importance of grammar, are the most relevant evidence supporting this claim. Of the eight teachers in this study, teacher 8 was the youngest, but both her beliefs and practices regarding grammar teaching did not differ significantly from those of other more experienced teachers in the school. There are two reasons why expert knowledge is less powerful to the shaping of teachers' beliefs. First, working in under-resourced conditions like Vietnamese secondary schools, teachers have few or no opportunities to interact with the global community discourse. Therefore, second language acquisition (SLA) theories about grammar teaching and corrective feedback remain unknown to teachers working in such a context. Second, the collectivist, hierarchical and top-down culture of Vietnam influences both the way teachers think about teaching and learning and the way they teach according to a common standard. Again, this highlights the need for theorists, methodologists and curriculum designers to take account of the complexity of contextual constraints and opportunities.

7. 1. 3. The Relationship Between Beliefs and Practices

Regarding the second research question concerning the extent to which teachers' stated beliefs are reflected in their classroom teaching of grammar, the triangulated data from three sources, interviews, observed lessons, and stimulated recalls, showed a strong connection between beliefs and practices. Evidently, the teachers in the present study were strongly inclined towards the PPP approach to grammar. However, they did not implement the PPP approach fully. For example, their practice activities were solely mechanical and forms-focused, which they believed would help the pupils memorise rules in order to do decontextualised, discrete-point grammar exercises, rather than meaningful practice which is aimed at helping students to develop what they know about the language into an ability to use the language. Especially, the production stage in which students are given the opportunities for communicative use of the language being learned and practiced was either skipped due to time constraints or remained manipulated if it was implemented at all. They felt, on the one hand, that this approach matched their subjective conceptualisation of grammar teaching, and on the other hand, it corresponded to, and catered for, their pupils' needs. Observed grammar lessons demonstrated that the teachers first presented the grammar point to be taught in either decontextualised sentence-based exemplars or through grammar texts before getting the pupils to practice the grammar point by completing the discrete-point grammar exercises in the textbook. There is only one exception, Teacher 3, who got the pupils to do the grammar exercises right from the beginning of the lesson because he believed explicit grammar knowledge or rules were not so important. Interestingly, he asked the pupils to state the rules and corrected them before they were instructed to do the exercises for practice. He explained in a stimulated recall session that the pupils had forgotten everything [grammar rules] at the lower secondary school, and now it was necessary that they had to be reminded of the rules so that they could be able to do the grammar exercises (T3-SR2.6-8). It is likely that he interpreted implicit knowledge as the knowledge retrieved from the pupils' long-term memory, rather than the knowledge discovered through the process of using the language for natural communication.

Except for Teacher 3, the remaining teachers did not appear to accept an absolute deductive approach to grammar. Instead, they combined few elements of both deductive and inductive approaches. This is indicated in the way they encouraged the pupils to induce rules from the exemplars provided while presenting grammar, and in the way they problematised pupils' correct responses to grammar exercises, or elicited peer contributions (see 5. 3. 4) while giving corrective feedback.

Another pattern of practice among this group of teachers is the sole reliance on decontextualised grammar exercises as a means of grammar practice and the absence of or superficial free practice, which is intended to allow learners to use the taught grammar items in meaningful contexts. Observed lessons indicate that free practice, if there was any at all, was just a very brief add-on activity before the bell went, which again focused on decontextualised use of the discrete grammar point that had been taught. This was reflected in the way pupils were asked to produce one or two single sentences containing the taught grammar point according to the teachers' hypothetical 'situations' of language use. Teachers viewed the pupils' correct responses to the decontextualised, discrete-point grammar exercises as evidence of their understanding of rules and ability to use the taught grammar point after school.

Regarding the medium of instruction, teachers differed in terms of whether the first language, Vietnamese, or the target language should be used. Three teachers supported the idea of using the target language as much as possible to expose the pupils to the target language, and they did so in their teaching. The remaining five teachers preferred extensive use of the first language believing that their pupils' comprehension was too poor, and their use of the first language in the classroom ranged between 70% and 95% of the teacher talking time.

In short, there is a correspondence, across individuals, between their beliefs and classroom practices of grammar teaching, which were characterised as teacher-centred and involved rule-memorisation. Observational data showed that Vietnamese

was used dominantly in approximately two-thirds of the observed lessons while English was used frequently in the remaining one-third taught by the supporters of the use of only the target language during language classes (see 5.3.5). The contribution of this study is that where access to expert knowledge is limited or unavailable, teachers' stated beliefs seem to correspond to their actual instructional practices because their beliefs are formed and embedded in their professional experiences, thereby being more practically-oriented.

Thus, it is possible to claim that where theories of practice are accessible, teachers refer to them to describe their theoretically-oriented beliefs and may or may not use them for their instructional decisions. However, where those theories are inaccessible, teachers' practically-oriented beliefs about teaching constitute the sole powerful influence on their instructional decisions. This reinforces the necessity that teachers' beliefs must be uncovered and taken into consideration when new theories, new instructional approaches or curricular innovations are introduced. Then teachers should be provided with the opportunity to challenge and reconstruct their existing beliefs in order to make their own reflective judgements on the relevance of new practices derived from explicit theories and approaches, i.e. expert theories of practice, to their own context.

7. 1. 4. Theoretical Relationship Between Experience, Knowledge, Beliefs and Practice

As discussed above, distinguishing between beliefs and knowledge is problematic because teachers' beliefs, knowledge and experience are inextricably intertwined (Verloop, Van & Meijer, 2001), and these constitute teachers' personal (implicit) theories for practice (Burns, 1996), which guide their pedagogical action. It is also revealed from this study that the teachers' theories for practice or practical knowledge grew largely out of their own experiences and the experiences of other teachers in their professional community. During the interviews and the stimulated recall sessions, all teachers in the study justified their practice by their experience, not by

reference to SLA theories. Even teacher 2, who had just completed her Master's Degree in TESOL, and teacher 8, who had just graduated from her teacher training programme, rarely mentioned the expert knowledge that they had received from the training programmes. Thus, these teachers' theories for practice are largely developed from their experiential knowledge and their socialisation with others' experiential knowledge. This accounts for the correspondence between their stated beliefs and their observed practices, hence the findings of this study do not support those of other studies on teachers' beliefs and practices such as those of Bright & Yore (2002), Karavas-Doukas (1996), Mahurt(1993) and Wilcox-Herzog (2002).

Put another way, in under-resourced teaching contexts where teachers are less exposed to expert knowledge, teachers' personal theories for practice are largely formed through the interaction between their own professional experiences and those of their colleagues, creating common pedagogical principles (for example, beliefs about the primary role of grammatical knowledge and the importance of memorising grammatical rules) or teaching culture which guide their practices. Those experiences constitute their personal theories for practice which play a substantial role in influencing their behaviours, actions and interactions in the classroom (Borg, 2006; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burns, 1996). The question is if experience is not appropriately reflected upon, it may lead the teachers into adopting approaches which do not help their students' learning because experience is not synonymous with expertise. In effect, when experience is not critically reflected on, it is very likely to lead to routinisation of practices. Therefore, it is so critical that teachers working in contexts like Vietnamese secondary schools are provided with opportunities to develop their theories for practice in line with expert theories of practice.

7. 2. Limitations of the Study

While the present case study sheds light on some important issues in relation to the understandings of Vietnamese upper secondary school teachers' practices, it has some obvious limitations. First, this is a case study with a small group of eight teachers.

The case chosen for the study is by no means representative of the Vietnamese upper secondary schools. In contrast, the school has many advantages over other upper secondary schools in the country. As indicated in chapter II, the context of the study, the case in this study is a specialising school with English being one of the streams. The English stream pupils are given more instructional hours of English, and their English proficiency is better than those on other streams. (Of course, observations for this study were not limited to English stream groups.) The school is located in an urban area of one of the more economically prosperous provinces in Vietnam, and it is ranked among the top five upper secondary schools in the whole country in terms of pupils' achievements in examinations. The teaching and learning conditions of the school are quite good due to prioritised investment from the local government. For example, the class size is limited to 35 pupils, and classrooms have enough space for teaching and learning activities with internet access being available to both the teachers and the pupils. All pupils and teachers are carefully selected through a highly competitive exam. Teachers, according to the national policy, enjoy preferential treatment in terms of salary. They are paid 1.5 times more than those on the same salary line working in ordinary schools. However, they are under greater pressures for the pupils' successes in examinations from the parents, school managers and local administrators. Therefore, any generalisation of the results from this study should be made with caution, and such generalisation is not intended, though the findings may be similar in other contexts with similar characteristics. For the purpose of generalisation, multiple case-study designs are needed for future studies.

Regarding the technical limitations,, while recording the observed lessons, I had to use the hand-held video recorder with optical zoom, because the school principal and teachers did not allow the use of more sophisticated equipment and I myself could not afford to purchase such equipment. This meant that I was able to take just minimal notes while observing the lessons since I was busy operating the video recorder. Both the preliminary interviews and stimulated recall interviews had to be conducted during the 45-minute intermissions when the teacher had just finished her first two lessons and was waiting for the last two lessons. There was an advantage of this for

the stimulated recalls since the teacher's memory was still fresh, but I did not have time to review the recorded lessons to identify significant classroom episodes. So I had to rely on my memory to fast-forward the video and to encourage the teachers to reflect on the classroom events I had predetermined and to articulate their underlying beliefs, as demonstrated by their classroom practices. Neither did I have enough time for careful probing to gain deeper insights into those classroom events. Furthermore, stimulated recall techniques were unfamiliar to both the teachers and myself while I had to be careful not to give the teacher the impression that she was being evaluated or criticised by asking sensitive questions such as "Do you think it's possible to present grammar in another way?" or "Why did you do X or Y while ...?". All these constraints affected the quality of the data to some extent. Another limitation of the study is that all the preliminary interviews and stimulated recall interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, then I myself translated the transcripts. Although I had tried to be as faithful to teachers' original words as possible, translation inaccuracies inevitably occur. To compensate for this, the teachers felt really comfortable speaking their mind in the first language. The issue of language choice for interviews is an unresolved issue in research data collection methodology: there is a strong case for using the shared L1, in this instance Vietnamese, on grounds of empathy, shared cultural values and norms, shared professional understanding and experience, and membership of the same community of practice. Conversely, if the interviews were in English, a foreign language to both the interviewer and interviewees, all participants may feel less able to express themselves fully and accurately, and the quality of data would suffer. I believe that for this study, in all the data collection procedures used, the choice of Vietnamese was appropriate and resulted in more accurate and in-depth statements by the teachers. This methodological language-choice strategy, as I have argued in 7.2 above, is applicable to all research conducted in Vietnamese high school contexts.

Despite all these limitations, I believe the study has some significant contributions to add to an understanding of teachers' beliefs in terms of research methodology and theoretical understanding with reference to teacher professional development.

Although this is a case study and as such it is not valid to make generalizations, interviews with and observations of other teachers in other Vietnamese upper secondary schools might provide comparable data. It is revealed in Borg's (2003, 2006) reviews that much research has been conducted on native English teachers teaching at private schools and universities. He concludes that there is a need for research on teachers' beliefs and practices in "secondary schools in state sector education" (2006, p. 274), "taught by non-native teachers, and where syllabuses are to various degrees prescribed" (2003, p. 98). This case study, which is the first ever done in a Vietnamese setting, thus could be considered as an attempt to contribute modestly to filling this research gap because it has been conducted on the English language teachers' beliefs and practices regarding form-focused instruction in a state upper secondary school, taught by Vietnamese teachers, and where the syllabus is prescribed.

7. 3. Implications for Teacher Beliefs Research and Teacher Education

7. 3 .1. Implications for Theory

The most significant finding from this study is that where teachers have very limited or almost no access to theories of practice coded in SLA theories, they tend to rely on their own experiential knowledge and the experiential knowledge of others in their community of practice to develop themselves professionally. Evidence from this study is indicative of a "collective language pedagogy" (Breen et al. 2001, p. 496) or the 'culture of sameness' of the teaching profession (Phelan et al., 2006). The pattern of beliefs and practices regarding grammar and grammar teaching among the teachers in this study supports the socio-cultural perspective on teacher learning, according to which teacher learning is social and interpersonal, not just cognitive and intrapersonal. It seemed that the beliefs and practices of these teachers were socially constructed and distributed across individuals. Their beliefs and practices were situated within the social and cultural conditions of their own school which are embedded within the wider sociopolitical milieu. The pressure of preparing the pupils for standardised and high-stakes examinations, the expectations of the parents and the pupils as well as of

the school principal and inspectors, all contributed, in varying degrees, to the formation and development of their beliefs about language and language teaching. The evaluation of teaching against the same mandated criteria by inspectors and evaluative observers, which is a common practice in Vietnam, is likely to create common normative ways of doing the teaching, thereby constructing teachers' beliefs and practical knowledge with the knowledge of the communities of practice. Evidently, teachers' beliefs are situated and contextually bound; so are their pedagogical practices.

Findings of this case study also support Woods' (1996, p. 195) view that teachers' knowledge is conventionally accepted facts while beliefs are the acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, and that the distinction between teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs is blurred. In fact, there is a dynamic interaction between beliefs and practice. In the contexts like Vietnamese secondary schools where expert knowledge is limited or not accessible, teachers' beliefs derive from practice and their practice derives from beliefs. Thus, the interaction between beliefs and practice results in teachers' personal theories for practice (Burns, 1996). In addition, the study shows that the beliefs that the teachers held were largely shaped by the experiences they accumulated (Breen et al, 2001) through their own language learning, language teaching and their socialisation into their community of practice. It is evident in this study that accumulated experience was the source cited most often by the teachers to justify their practices. The point is experience is not synonymous with expertise, and overreliance on experience can lead to routinised practices, thereby minimising the opportunity for professional growth. This is because experience is likely to make teachers complacent with their existing practice and allows their skills to become out-of-date (Eraut, 1994; Ericsson, 2002). According to Tsui (2005), experience is educative only when teachers "re-invest their mental resources freed up by the use of routines to tackle more difficult problems and problematize what appears to be routine or unproblematic" (p. 179).

In a similar vein, Widdowson (2003) points out that “experience itself teaches you nothing directly; you have to learn from it, indirectly” (p. 13). This means teachers need to develop their expertise by reflecting upon their own practice and that of others in their community of practice. By reflecting on practice in this way, teachers will be able to theorise their practical knowledge and practicalise theoretical knowledge (Tsui, 2003, p. 257). While teachers’ experience, intuition and insights play a significant role to their professional growth, these are not sufficient to develop their sound personal theories for practice. There need to be a dynamic interaction between their personal theories for practice and the published scholarship and research, or theories of practice. After all, “there is no reason why teachers should be deprived of the opportunity to develop their cognition with reference to other ideas, and it is surely the purpose of teacher education to provide such an opportunity” (Widdowson, 2003, p. 13). This calls for the need to create conditions for the dynamic interplay of expert theories of practice and experiential knowledge so that teachers can renew their personal theories for practice constantly.

7. 3. 2. Implications for Teacher Beliefs Research

The study provides empirical evidence that it is necessary to uncover teachers’ beliefs underlying their instructional practices in order to understand properly how teachers teach in the classroom and why they teach the way they do (Borg, 2009; Borg & Burns, 2008; Farrell, 1999; Farrell & Lim, 2005). Without adequate understanding of what shapes their teaching practices, any coercive intervention to change teachers, including formal training, would be of limited impact. As indicated in the study, teachers hardly ever used technical language to articulate their beliefs and the rationales underpinning their teaching. Neither do they seem to be aware of the dichotomies such as ‘focus on form’ vs. ‘focus on forms’; ‘explicit knowledge’ vs. ‘implicit knowledge’; ‘planned focus on form’ vs. ‘incidental focus on form’, etc., which are frequently used in the literature on second and/or foreign language education. This reflects a huge gap between expert theories of practice and teachers’ personal theories for practice. This is especially true in under-resourced contexts like

Vietnam, where even many teacher educators may not be aware of the recent developments in the global community discourse of second language educators. Therefore, if teachers do not have the opportunities to articulate their beliefs to be challenged, those beliefs will automatically be routinised into taken-for-granted instructional behaviours and personal theories for practice. Given the currently limited number of studies on EFL teachers' beliefs and practice, longitudinal enquiries of how their beliefs and practices are changed through their engagement in reflection, problematisation and theorisation is an important addition to the existing literature on teacher cognition.

With regard to the methodology for researching teacher beliefs and practices, this study confirms the validity of using a qualitative case-study approach with data being triangulated by multiple sources. Since teachers' beliefs embody teachers' personal theories for practice, which are situated and socially constructed, and human behaviour is context-bound, a qualitative case study allows researchers to have deep understanding of what teachers think and behave as well as why they behave in the way they do within their own teaching context. This advantage is impossible to obtain using other self-report instruments such as questionnaires or interviews alone, because these instruments can, at best, "generate data which reflect teachers' ideals" (Borg, 2006, p. 279). In addition, a qualitative case study allows for the triangulation of perspectives and behaviours from different participants (Duff, 2008). Such an approach allows the researcher to investigate teachers' beliefs and implicit theories for practice, routines and agendas through semi-structured interviews. It also allows the researcher to examine the extent to which teachers' stated theories for practice are used when teaching through observations. Then the stimulated recall enables the researcher to elicit clues to the teachers' thinking behind certain actions or decisions while teaching so as to understand why they teach the way they do. This research approach is superior to the questionnaire, which can only focus on teachers' theoretically-oriented beliefs, while the relationship between beliefs and context, beliefs and experience cannot be investigated solely through questionnaire survey methods.

However, while researching teachers' beliefs and their influence on teachers' practice, researchers should be aware of the positionality and the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. Vietnamese culture, due to the Confucian heritage, is characterised as socially hierarchical. This is linguistically reflected in the way personal pronouns and terms of address are used (see 4.10). Vietnamese people must always situate themselves in terms of age and status in relation to others.

In Vietnam, each educational establishment is an enclosed territory in which strangers are not always welcomed. Both teachers and school managers dislike the idea of letting their work become known to outsiders for fear of criticisms. The formalities and bureaucracy of authorising field research always require the high-level official permission. Therefore, personal relationships and mutual trust are key to successful field research in Vietnam. While in-depth interviews, participant observation and stimulated recall are helpful in gaining insights into teachers' beliefs and practices, there are challenges to using these methods in Vietnam. Salaries for Vietnamese teachers are very low; a typical teacher earns less than US\$ 150 per month. This means that all teachers, in addition to their busy teaching schedule at the school, must teach extra classes at home or elsewhere outside the school for extra income to support their family. In addition, the overwhelming majority of teachers are female, and they have to take care of housework and childcare after work. Asking for these teachers' time for an interview is an extra imposition. In Vietnamese schools, teachers are often observed by inspectors who tend to look for the weaknesses or 'unsatisfactory practices' in the observed teacher' teaching. This creates an observation phobia among teachers when they are observed by outsiders. Researchers should try to avoid giving comments including the positive ones on teachers' teaching even when they are asked to do so by the observed themselves. The stimulated recall tasks, which must be completed right after the teaching activity, make data collection in Vietnamese educational contexts really challenging for two reasons. First, bringing the recording and playback equipment for both the stimulus and the stimulated data into the classroom may distract the students' attention and causes teachers' discomfort while the acoustics of the classroom, which is large and crowded, is not

satisfactory. Second, it is really a big issue to have enough time for the stimulated recall sessions as teachers can be free only during the 45-minute intervals between lessons. The methodological choice of language for both the interviews and the stimulated recall tasks should also be considered carefully, simply because most of secondary school teachers are not sufficiently confident and proficient in using spoken English.

Given the aforementioned challenges of researching Vietnamese teachers' beliefs, it is critical to the researcher to build positive personal relationships with the researched teachers. This can be achieved through informal chats about personal life (while talking about personal life is a taboo in many western cultures, it is always appreciated in Vietnam) and the researcher's sense of humour. Also, the researcher can do something in return, for example, teaching the students a couple of hours, giving the researched teachers some English coursebooks, especially test books, as gifts. In addition, there is a need for a negotiated, adaptive, and flexible approach and personal arrangements with the researched teachers. It is most efficient if Vietnamese is used as the research language. In case, the researcher cannot speak Vietnamese, an interpreter is highly recommended.

7. 3. 3. Implications for Teacher Education

This is a qualitative case study of a small group of Vietnamese EFL teachers in a particular context of a specialising upper secondary school, using triangulated information collected over a limited period of time. The study shows that language teaching is a complex social activity which is guided largely by teachers' practical knowledge. This knowledge grows out of experiences and constitutes teachers' beliefs about language and language teaching. Thus, teacher beliefs embody all that a teacher has experienced, and are embedded in the teacher's practical knowledge, which is at the heart of teacher cognitive identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Teachers' practical knowledge and teacher cognitive identity are therefore closely connected. As a result, if teacher professional development is to bring about teacher

change, examination of teachers' beliefs in order to gain insights into their teaching should be the first step. The result of the study confirms the need to give teachers opportunities to articulate their beliefs, then to challenge their own beliefs through reflection (Farrell, 2006) in light of the theoretical information which is accessible to them. This means that finding out about teachers' beliefs is not aimed at falsifying them or criticising them but at helping teachers replace old inefficient beliefs with more useful and valid ones, which are in alignment with practical thinking and theories of practice promoted in the global community discourse. For example, they should be challenged to replace the beliefs about grammar learning by memorising rules by a belief that learners learn grammar best when they are able to recognise the properties of the target structures in context and develop accuracy in their use (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; Fotos, 1994). This can be achieved if conditions for the dynamic interplay between published scholarship and research – expert theories of practice- and the experience, intuition and insights of practitioners – personal theories for practice – are created. In a top-down, power-coercive system like Vietnam, it is vital that teachers are viewed as full participants in research – as knowledge makers in their own right rather than as consumers of other people's ideas or followers of other people's research agendas (Allwright, 2006). Attempts to provide teachers with new technical skills without understanding their beliefs and allowing them to make sense of to what extent new technical skills match their beliefs of language and language learning, thereby theorising their own practice would hardly bring about desired outcome. Thus, what is involved in teacher education is not only the attempt to influence mastery of new technical skills and technical knowledge by teachers, but, rather, the development of teachers' new beliefs and concepts.

The study also indicates that teachers mainly used experiences to support their knowledge claims. Working in Vietnam, teachers cannot afford the opportunity to expand their 'received knowledge' except for few occasions to participate in brief one-shot workshops during the summer. As presented in Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) only three out of eight teachers in this study had participated in one or two training

workshops of that type around 10 years ago, their absolute reliance on their experiences to develop their practical knowledge is understandable and justifiable. The point is, while experience is valued in teaching, experience alone is not enough for professional growth, which requires a continuously reconstructive process with experience and knowledge building on each other (Dewey, 1938). This necessitates a shift of focus away from the traditional in-service teacher training which overemphasises the “received knowledge” at the expense of “experiential knowledge” (Wallace, 1991), to the support for the interaction between ‘theories of practice’ (received knowledge) and ‘theories for practice’ (practical/ experiential knowledge). Such interaction is to encourage teachers to challenge their own beliefs in order to reconstruct their “praxis’ through a reflection on the beliefs that underpin their practices and evaluate their beliefs themselves.

Access to expert theories of practice published in professional journals remains limited to Vietnamese EFL teachers for many years to come because of financial constraints to both the schools and the teachers. However, teachers need to be encouraged to download free materials on the internet. For example, there are professional journals which allow free access such as the Journal of Asia TEFL, the TESL-EJ, and other sources. The Asia TEFL Association has also encouraged free membership for free access to its journal, the Journal of Asia TEFL.

The current regulations on mandated peer-observations can be turned into an advantage for the establishment of the “study group” (Burns, 1999; Farrell, 2001), in which teachers are encouraged to participate in problem-solving activities initiated by the professional community within their school. The idea of a teachers’ study group recognizes that “participation and context are essential to teacher learning, and therefore that classrooms where teachers spend the majority of their time represent legitimate sites for teacher learning.” (Johnson, 2006, p. 244). Recently Vo and Nguyen (2010) reported the result of their study on the Critical Friends Group with four Vietnamese beginner teachers that teachers seemed to be positive about this professional development technique. They believed the Critical Friends Group helped

them to “learn about each other’s teaching and reflect on their own” (p. 211) , thereby improving their teaching performance considerably, and their attitudes towards peer-feedback changed positively.

The next step could be the implementation of collaborative action research (Burns, 1999) in which every teacher will

be able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, and exercise power over the conditions of more human life. (Giroux & McLaren, 1989, p. xxiii).

However, given the current limited research skills of Vietnamese school teachers as well as their time constraints, it is essential that the university-school partnership be established so that teachers educators based in universities can provide teachers with guidance and instant support through the use of information technology.

Although this study is limited in scope, its findings suggest a practical idea for teacher development, which can take advantage of Vietnamese collectivism. This model can be used to improve the currently mandated peer-observation in the school and expanded into a collective reflective model and/ or collaborative action research model. Given the fact that teaching is a long term, complex, socially constructed, developmental process that is acquired by participating in the social practices associated with teaching and learning, the development of a cooperative learning model for Vietnamese secondary school teachers is an urgent need.

7.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

In order to gain a better picture of Vietnamese secondary school teachers’ beliefs and practice regarding form-focused instruction, there is a need for a multiple-case study, which should be conducted in different schools located in various geographical areas.

Or a cross-case study of one specialising school and one ‘ordinary’ would be another valid research design. Evidence from a multiple-case or cross-case study will be more compelling, and therefore more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). This is because both beliefs and teaching are situated and contextually bound, and conclusions from cases situated in different contexts will expand the external generalisability of the findings regarding the issue of Vietnamese secondary school teachers’ beliefs about form-focused instruction.

Longitudinal studies on how teachers’ beliefs and practices change through their participation in critical study groups and collaborative action research would be also an important addition to the existing research on teachers’ beliefs. A qualitative case study design with the support and fundings from the Ministry of Education and Training would provide useful information about this model of teacher development for Vietnamese secondary schools.

In conclusion, the findings of this study have concurred with those from other, less-in-depth, studies of teachers’ beliefs conducted elsewhere which have revealed the disparity between what teachers do and believe and currently promoted theories of language acquisition and appropriate methodology. These substantial findings would not have been possible without adopting a longitudinal, multi-method approach to data collection and grounded analysis within a qualitative paradigm. It has been emphasised that further such research into teacher cognition is necessary both in Vietnam and elsewhere, and it is hoped that the approach adopted in this study will be relatable to other contexts.

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APPENDIX A
PRELIMINARY STUDY ON TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS'
BELIEFS ABOUT GRAMMAR

(With reference to 4.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.3)

Participants

In order to gain preliminary information for the study reported in this dissertation, I conducted this preliminary study in December 2007. Participants in this preliminary study were secondary school teachers (N=39) and students (N=516) of Grade 10 (N=189; 36.6%), Grade 11 (N= 159; 30.8%), and Grade 12 (N= 168; 32.6%). The teachers were chosen from 39 secondary schools in a variety of different provinces in Vietnam, who agreed to participate in this study after I sent them an email expressing my purpose of the study. Most of these teachers had less than 10 years' teaching experience. The students were from 4 secondary schools located in both the northern part and southern part of the country. These school had some major common characteristics with the school where I would conduct my case study later such as rural location and closeness to the provincial town. I asked their headmaster teachers to invite them to respond to a questionnaire, which was sent to them electronically via the headmaster teachers.

Two research instruments were employed for this preliminary study: a questionnaire for both teachers and students and teachers' narratives. The questionnaire were analysed quantitatively whereas the teachers' narratives were analysed qualitatively.

The 10-item questionnaire, which was designed to capture basic issues related to teachers' and students' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching, was written in Vietnamese to make sure that the respondents understood the statements in the questionnaire accurately. Then it was distributed to the students who were simply asked to agree or disagree with a statement on methodological preferences related to grammar instruction and error correction as an instinctive reaction. The first three

items were statements on the role of grammar in English language learning, and the remaining 7 items reflected various methods of teaching grammar and error correction in the classroom.

The teachers were asked to respond to a parallel questionnaire, but four more statements were added to elicit teachers' beliefs about the use of grammatical terminologies, the order of grammar instruction, the model of teaching grammar, and the relationship between grammar teaching and the prescribed textbook.

All the teachers responding to the questionnaire were invited via email to write a narrative about their beliefs about the role of grammar, the role of explicit grammar instruction, the teaching model they used for teaching grammar and their beliefs about error correction. A narrative frame in the form of guiding questions was designed to provide guidance and support in terms of both the structure and content of what is to be written. These guiding questions are:

1. How important do you believe grammar is in learning English as a foreign language? Is it possible not to teach grammar? Why do you think that way? Where does such beliefs come from?
2. How important do you believe the explanation of grammar rules is to your students? Why do you think that way? How do you explain rules to your students in your teaching?
3. Describe as specifically as possible the way you teach grammar to your students? Why do you teach that way? Where does your idea of grammar teaching come from? Give examples of your activities/ steps in a grammar lesson?
4. In your teaching how do you correct your students' grammatical errors? Do you correct oral errors and written errors in the same way or differently? Why do you correct errors that way?

Although in the email I sent to the teachers I informed them that they could use either English or Vietnamese to write the narratives, all them wrote in English, and they sent their narratives to me electronically. Twenty-six out of thirty-nine teachers who responded to the questionnaire returned their narratives, which were then analysed qualitatively.

Belows are the findings of the study presented in terms of various themes related to form-focus instruction.

Role of Grammar in Foreign Language Learning

Table 1 presents a percentage compilation of student responses (N= 516) concerning the role of grammar in learning English as a foreign language. The Table also presents comparative teacher response rates for the total teacher sample (N=39).

Table 1:

Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about the Role of Grammar in Learning English as a Foreign Language.

		Disagree (%)		Agree (%)	
		Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
1	<i>S& T*: Grammar knowledge is the most important to the success of learning English.</i>	59.0	27.3	41.0	72.3
2	<i>S&T*: It is impossible to use English without mastering grammar rules.</i>	61.5	20.5	35.9	78.9
3	<i>S*: I find it necessary to learn grammar in order to do well at exams.</i> <i>T*: The teaching of grammar is</i>	0.0	13.0	100.0	86.6

*necessary to help students to do well
at exams.*

*Note : In cases where percentages do not add up to 100, not all respondents
addressed the particular item.*

S&T : Question on both student and teacher questionnaire*

S : Question on student questionnaire*

T : Question on teacher questionnaire*

In their narratives twenty-six teachers stated that they believed that grammar played an important role in English language learning. Some of them wrote that grammar was necessary for the development of communicative competence. For example (all names are pseudonyms):

In my opinion, we cannot learn English well if there is not definite knowledge for sentences. It [Grammar] allows us to build a sentence correctly, communicate ideas and thoughts to others, use the correct tense of a verb, and the correct pronoun[ciation]. ... The fact is we cannot speak frequently, accurately and confidently if we do not know the right order of grammar structure (Chanh- Narrative 4).

Grammar provides students an understanding how words are combined. Moreover, grammar is the mean[s] that links four skills together and help[s] students to develop their English proficiency (Kim – Narrative 5).

Grammar is very important in learning languages as it enables learners to get the message across easily or communicate more successfully... Therefore it would be irrational not to teach grammar (Thanh – Narrative 7).

It is English grammar that will allow you to be a better communicator, listener, thinker, reader, and writer... The more grammar rules you understand, the clearer your communication is (Ha – Narrative 10).

[Grammar] is the railway through which your messages will be transported. Without it, in the same way as a train cannot move without railways, you won't be able to convey your ideas to their full extension without a good command of the underlying grammar patterns and structures of the language (Quyết – Narrative 12).

I think grammar teaching is the most important part in teaching a foreign language. When students learn grammar, they can get communicative competence and they are confident in taking part in national examinations including a lot of grammatical elements (Thanh Bac – Narrative 13).

To my opinion ... to develop learners' communicative competence, teachers need to provide learners with basic knowledge about grammar rules in order to help learners feel more confident and comfortable to communicate with other people fluently and accurately. From both my learning and teaching experiences as well as the reasons given above, I notice that grammar is a very important part of the learning and teaching of any language not only for requirements of the recent evaluating [assessment] methods but developing learners' communicative skills as well (Danh – Narrative 21).

My beliefs about the place of grammar in English language learning originated from my own experience as a student and a teacher that emerged as a particularly powerful influence on my views about grammar teaching. According to me teaching grammar is crucial in order to enable students to use English accurately and fluently. ... Grammar helps the learners develop their four language skills. If we want to say, to write, or to read anything, we have to understand the structures of the words groups, the sentences and the

paragraphs Effective use of syntax is important to show different attitudes and express power and identity. Some incorrect forms of grammar may even be interpreted by the listener/ reader as being rude or impolite (Lai – Narrative 23).

As an English teacher for 3 years, I personally think that grammar is very important in learning English as a foreign language. In effect, it is considered as a glue that holds the language together. ... If you don't know the rules of grammar, then you will never be able to communicate clearly and effectively in the English language. Grammar helps students practice the language through situation and interaction efficiently. Grammar is considered as a constant base for building a house while bricks, cement are vocabulary and pronunciation (Hoi – Narrative 24).

In addition to the role grammar plays to the development of the students' ability to use English in terms of speaking, listening, reading , and writing, many teachers agreed that grammar was so crucial for the students to pass the exams. For example, they wrote,

In my opinion, learners of English have to acquire grammar in order to use the language... Without intelligible use of grammar people might find it chaotic to use English. Therefore, grammar should be considered an important element in English teaching and learning.... Moreover, the grammar knowledge is one of the main content to test students in schools, so students have to learn a lot of grammar in order to get good marks in English. This is my learning experience at the university and my teaching experience in the real situation of teaching and learning English (Thu – Narrative 19).

Grammar is an important part of any language. In many cases, if you speak ungrammatical language, you cannot make your ideas understood.... More important is that high school exam system requires students not only use the

language but to use it correctly. Students cannot do the tests, exams well without knowing grammatical rules. (Hồng – Narrative 1).

As an English teacher, I think that it is impossible not to teach grammar for Vietnamese students in general and my students in particular because of some reasons. Firstly, students in Vietnam in general and in my school in particular need grammar knowledge to pass many national examinations which still focus on grammatical structures and rules. Secondly, with my teaching experience, I realize that my students also want to learn grammar in English classes. Thirdly, grammar is the focus of the syllabus. Finally, I think that grammar is essential factor to support the students/ progress of acquiring four English skills.(Han – Narrative 9).

It is worthwhile to note that teachers' strong favour of grammar was, in addition to the requirement to help the students to pass the grammar-focused examinations, due partly to their lack of communicative competence in English. For teachers who are not confident to use English communicatively to teach communicative English, a resort to grammar-based instruction seems to be more secure. This was mentioned by two teachers in their narratives.

I think teachers have to teach pupils grammar for three main reasons. First, we have to teach the basic grammar in order to help pupils to use the language (read or write). Second, we teach pupils grammar because English tests and exams are designed to check pupils' grammar. Third, teachers at secondary schools in mountainous and remote areas don't meet the standard. They are not confident in using English except for using grammar (Xuân- Narrative 15).

From my point of view, in Vietnam, grammar teaching is necessary mainly because learners need grammar knowledge to pass national examinations still focusing on grammatical structures and rules. ... Furthermore, teachers confess to feel inadequate to implement CLT. ... As for learners, they feel

safer in practising carefully-explained grammar rules and confident when making correct sentences (Hồng – Narrative 16).

Role of Explicit Grammar Instruction

Table 2 indicates students' and teachers' beliefs about the role of explicit grammar instruction and the medium of grammar instruction.

Table 2:

Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about Explicit Grammar Instruction and the Medium of Instruction

		Disagree (%)		Agree (%)	
		Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
4.	<i>S*: I like the teacher to explain grammar rules carefully. T*: The teacher needs to explain grammar rules carefully to help students learn grammar well.</i>	30.8	16.7	69.2	81.6
5.	<i>S*: I like the teacher to explain grammar rules in English. T*: Teachers should explain grammar rules in English.</i>	94.9	84.3	5.1	15.1
10.	<i>S*: I like the teacher to provide examples illustrating the target grammar point , then let the students work out the rule rather than explain the rule unless the students fail to work out the rule. T*: In teaching grammar, the teacher should provide examples to</i>	7.7	51.7	89.7	48.1

*illustrate the target grammar point
then let the students work out the
rule rather than explain the rule
unless the students fail to work out
the rule.*

Teachers' inclination to a deductive approach to grammar was also justified by their narratives, which indicated that they all paid great attention to the explanation of rules. Below are some samples from teachers' narratives.

It is necessary to explain the grammar rules to the students because this is the easiest way for students to acquire the grammar knowledge. ... In other words, the clearer rules are explained, the better understanding students can get (Kim Narrative 5).

I believe that the explanation of grammar rules to my students is important. With my careful explanation of grammar rules, I think my students can feel safer in practicing the rules and confident when making grammatical correct sentences. It is the way to help them to express what they want to say without nervousness. (Hồng – Narrative 7).

Rules are important to learners simply because knowing them students can produce the correct sentences. ...I tell students the explicit grammatical rules. Sometimes depending on the level of difficulty of a particular grammatical construction, students may be asked to open the book to a certain page and with me go through the rule. It is important to make connection between the examples and the explicit rules. After the explanation of the explicit rules, I again give students meaningful examples of how and in what situations the tense can be used (Ngọc- Narrative 10).

They seemed to believe that explicit grammar instruction was part of a communicative lesson. For example, one teacher wrote that,

In my opinion, grammar explanation is extremely important. Without it, the students may not understand anything. In theory, we are applying the communicative approach,... in which the teacher does not need to explain much. However, how many students can understand a grammar point exactly after the lesson finishes without the teacher's explanation? ... Many people seem to understand that grammar rule explanation is a traditional approach. But for me, they misunderstand (Huyền – Narrative 11).

However, just one teacher did not agree that explicit grammar instruction would be used just as a remedy for the students' failure to work out the rules by themselves. She stated that,

It is not a good idea to explain the grammar rules from the start of the grammatical lesson. It is much better to give learners authentic tasks which can help them work out the rules themselves. In case they cannot guess, then the teacher can explain the rules (Thu – Narrative 12).

With regard to the medium of grammar instruction, more teachers (94.9 percent) than students (84.3 percent) disagreed that English should be the medium of grammar instruction.

Role of Practice

Questions 6 and 7 asked the students and teachers about the beliefs in practising grammar. Again, as indicated in Table 3, as many as 72.1 percent of the students versus 61.5 percent of the teachers agreed on the need of doing as many grammar exercises in the classroom as possible.

Table 3:***Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about the Role of Grammar Exercises***

		Disagree (%)		Agree (%)	
		Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
6.	<i>S*: I like the teacher to give as many grammar exercises as possible in the classroom. T*: Teachers should give students as many grammar exercises to do in the classroom as possible.</i>	33.3	26.0	61.5	72.1
7.	<i>S*: I like the teacher to have us practice using English through communicative tasks without teaching grammatical structures. T*: Teachers should have students practice using English through communicative tasks without teaching grammatical structures.</i>	74.4	70.3	25.6	29.1

*Error Correction***Table 4:*****Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about Error Correction***

		Disagree (%)		Agree (%)	
		Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
8.	<i>S*: When I speak or write English I am always concerned about how to speak or write English accurately. T*: Teachers should pay attention</i>	15.4	25.2	84.6	73.8

to helping students to speak and write English accurately.

9. *S*: I like the teacher to correct my oral errors immediately.* 20.5 13.6 79.5 86.0

T: If the teacher doesn't correct students' oral errors immediately they will be in the habit of using English ungrammatically.*

From teachers' narratives, teachers appeared to be divided in their beliefs about error correction. While they all agreed that students' errors should be corrected so that students did not fall into the habit of using inaccurate English, their beliefs about how and when to correct were different. Analysing teachers' narratives, teachers could be categorised into two groups: the anti-oral correction and the pro-oral error correction. Those belonging to the first group were unwilling to correct students' oral errors for fear of demotivating the students. For example, they stated that,

When they make written errors, I correct them by using red pens to mark the place where there is an error. Then I give it back to students and let them correct themselves. ... As far as oral errors are concerned, I do not correct them very often because if I correct students' errors when they make [them] they will feel shy and it is sure that they will not dare to express their opinions the next time. (Na – Narrative 2)

There is no need to concentrate much on correcting oral errors because students should be encouraged to speak as much fluently as they can. [But] There should be more correction on written errors to raise students awareness about not making mistakes (Kim – Narrative 5).

Teachers belong to the second group believed that error correction was really helpful to the students. If students' errors are not corrected, the errors will be repeated, and this is not good to the students at all.

Many people say that teacher should not correct students' grammatical errors. I don't agree with that idea because if we don't correct their errors, time over time it will become their habits of using incorrect structures. Whether it is oral or written errors, teachers should give students chances to recognise and self-correct them (Tra- Narrative 14).

Correcting errors is very essential because if a student makes the same error continually, he may develop a bad habit and it will be difficult to break, especially errors with language already learned in class (Tu- Narrative 3).

In conclusion, the preliminary study indicates that

- a. Both teachers and students showed a strong favour for grammar, and the students had a stronger favour for grammar than the teachers.
- b. More students than teachers attached great importance to the explanation of rules but an overwhelming majority of teachers and students believed that grammatical rules should be explained in Vietnamese rather than in English. However, more teachers than students believed that the target grammar point should be presented in sentence examples, then the students should be encouraged to work out rules from the illustrating examples.
- c. Most of teachers and students believed that it was better to practice the target grammar point by doing written grammar exercises than by doing communicative tasks.
- d. Most of teachers and students were strongly inclined to accuracy and error correction.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED LETTER OF CONSENT
(With reference to 4.4)

Dear the School Principal,

I am undertaking a research project for my PhD degree about teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and learning in the present context of a high school in Vietnam, and should be grateful for your participation.

I should like to involve a number of English language teachers at your school, and very much hope that you will agree to allow me to come to your school to collect data.

I anticipate the following will be the procedures I will adopt with each participating teacher:

- a) a preliminary interview (approx 45 minutes)
- b) classroom observation (3 lessons)
- c) shortly after each observation, a post-lesson discussion (approx 30 minutes)

I plan to audio-record interviews and video-tape all observed lessons, and transcribe all the relevant data. The tapes and transcripts will be securely stored in a locked cupboard in my office, and no one other than myself will have access to these materials. The data will be seen only by me and my supervisors, the names of all participants (teachers, pupils, and the school) will be pseudonyms and care will be taken to ensure that no individual can be identified from the eventual thesis, or from any resulting publication. The audio and transcript data will be destroyed within two years of the completion of the thesis. The teachers will be invited to participate in this project on the basis of their willingness, and they can draw out of the project any time if they are no longer interested provided that they notify me of their withdrawal 4 weeks in advance.

I hope you will cooperate in this project and – if you are willing – I should be grateful if you would complete the consent form below, retaining a copy of this letter and the form for your personal records. Please note that you may withdraw participation in the project at any time, with no need to give any reason for so doing provided that you inform me of your withdrawal four weeks in advance in case I have started interviewing the teachers .

With my thanks,

Yours sincerely

Le Van Canh

I agree to participate in the research project as outline above, and am willing to permit my teachers to be interviewed before and after their lessons are observed by Le Van Canh if they are willing to participate. I understand that the privacy and confidentiality of my school and my teachers will be respected at all time, and that I may withdraw my consent to participate at any time, and no reason for such withdrawal is necessary.

Signed : Date:

Letter of Consent

Dear Ms/ Mr.,

My name is Le Van Canh from Hanoi National University, College of Foreign Languages.I am undertaking a research project for my PhD, and should be grateful for your participation.

I am interested in identifying and exploring teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar teaching in the present context of high schools in Vietnam.

I should like to invite you to participate in this research project as an informant, and very much hope that you will agree to participate.

I anticipate the following will be the procedures I will adopt with each participating teacher, including you:

- a) a preliminary interview (approx 45 minutes)
- b) classroom observation (3 lessons)
- c) shortly after each observation, a post-lesson discussion (approx 30 minutes)

I plan to audio-record interviews and lesson observations, and transcribe all the relevant data. The tapes and transcripts will be securely stored in a locked cupboard in my office, and no one other than myself will have access to these materials. The data will be seen only by me and my supervisors, the names of all participants will be pseudonyms and care will be taken to ensure that no individual can be identified from the eventual thesis, or from any resulting publication. The audio and transcript data will be destroyed within two years of the completion of the thesis.

I hope you will cooperate in this project and – if you are willing – I should be grateful if you would complete the consent form below, retaining a copy of this letter and the form for your personal records. Please note that you may withdraw participation in the project at any time, with no need to give any reason for so doing. However, to make sure that your withdrawal will not affect my data analysis in any way, you are kindly requested to inform me of your withdrawal at least four weeks in advance once you have started participating in the interview.

In case you need a copy of my complete thesis, I will be happy to provide you one. Please contact me at levancanhvnu@gmail.com or at my mobile number : 0913563126. Also, you can contact my supervisors if you wish to obtain further

information about my study. For Dr. Roger Barnard, you can contact him at rbarnard@waikato.ac.nz, and for Dr. James McLellan at mclellan@waikato.ac.nz

With my thanks,
Yours sincerely

Le Van Canh

I agree to participate in the research project as outline above, and am willing to be interviewed before and after three of my lessons are observed by Le Van Canh. I understand that my privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all time, and that I may withdraw my consent to participate at any time, and no reason for such withdrawal is necessary.

Signed

Date.....

APPENDIX C
DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE
(With reference to 4.13)

When	What	Why
September 2008-Mid October 2008	Preliminary study	To obtain baseline information about teachers' and pupils' beliefs about grammar and teachers' practices regarding grammar teaching
Mid-October 2008	First meeting with the teacher	To debrief them the purpose and the nature of the study and to get their signatures on the letter of informed consent. To conduct demonstration interviews, observations, and stimulated recalls.
End October 2008 – Mid April 2009	Interviews Classroom observations Stimulated Recalls	To inquire teachers' beliefs about form-focused instruction, to identify the matches and mismatches between their stated beliefs and practices.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEWS GUIDELINES
(With reference to 4.7)

1. Could you tell when and where you learned English?
2. Did you like learning grammar while you were learning English? Why or Why not?
3. How can you describe the way your teacher taught you grammar at the school and at the university? How did you like those ways of teaching grammar?
4. What did you believe were the effective ways of learning grammar? Have your beliefs about effective ways of grammar learning changed now or do they remain the same? What has made you change or not change your beliefs about effective ways of grammar learning?
5. How important do you think grammar is in learning English? Why do you think that?
6. Do you think students should be taught grammar? Why do you think that?
7. If students should be taught grammar, should they be taught the rules? Why or Why not? If yes, how should the rules be taught?
8. When teaching grammar, do you change your lesson plans? What makes you change or not change your lesson plan?
9. What are your ideas about effective ways of teaching grammar? Where do those ideas come from?
10. How do you choose grammar items to teach? What factors affecting your choice of grammar items to teach? Why do you choose them that way?
11. How do you structure your grammar lessons, i.e. into what stages do you divide your grammar lessons? Why do you structure your grammar

lessons that way? What are the aims of each stage? What are your common activities in each stage? Why do you think students should do those activities?

12. How do you often present grammar items in the classroom? Where do those ideas of presenting grammar come from? How do you know the way you present grammar is effective?
13. When teaching grammar, do you analyse grammatical structures? Why and why not? If yes, how do you analyse grammar to your students? Where did learn that way of analyzing grammar? How do you know the way you analyse grammar is effective?
14. How do you have the students practise grammar in the classroom? Why do you have them practice that way? Where do those ideas come from? How do you know it is effective to your students?
15. Do you correct your students grammatical errors in the classroom? Why and why not? If yes, how do you often correct them? Where do your ideas of error correction come from?
16. In general, what do you believe are the main characteristics of effective grammar practice? Why do you think that way?

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW SAMPLE
(With reference to 4.16)

Teacher 2

Date: 22 Oct. 2008

(I: Interviewer; T: Teacher)

01 **I:** The first words I want to say is a big thank you to you for arranging for this interview. As I have told you before, in this interview I want to listen to you telling your ideas about grammar teaching, which is a central issue in language teaching to some people, but not important to others. First of all, I want you to share your opinion of the role of grammar in learning English.

02 **T:** I think such a view that grammar is a central issue in foreign language learning and teaching was correct but it isn't now. All textbooks written by British or American authors, even the textbooks written by Vietnamese authors emphasise language skills not grammar. Take our textbook for example. The Language Focus takes only one out of 5 lesson periods. In that Language Focus, it is require to cover two aspects: pronunciation and grammar. Within grammar, there are many small grammar items, which is a challenge to us in teaching grammar. In my opinion, in foreign language teaching, grammar is as important as other language skills. It is impossible to teach skills without teaching grammar. If so it is pidginized English. Just putting words together like children selling postcards on the Hon Kiem Lake or the ones serving on Nha Trang beach. I think grammar is one of the pillars: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary that create language. There's no way of downplaying the role of grammar teaching and learning.

03 **I:** I wonder what makes you think grammar and language skills are equally important?

04 **T:** Just because I read a research paper in an English book that in order to make sense of the grammatical meaning of a language, grammatical knowledge is needed, otherwise it is just a combination of individual words. Grammar is needed to link those elements together to make language in the real sense of the word.

05 **I:** I see your point that grammar is as important as language skills. If so, in teaching do you teach grammar separately or do you integrate them into other skills?

06 **T:** Here we have two different syllabi: one for English specialising pupils and the other for non-English specialising pupils. The latter is mandated by the Ministry. According to this syllabus, one lesson period or three-quarters of a lesson period is spent on grammar and our job is to cover all the prescribed grammatical items in the prescribed time. If it is just recycling the grammar taught at the lower secondary school and the beginning year of the upper secondary school, the way grammar is presented [in the textbook] is not appropriate. In order to teach grammar, it is necessary to have a context which can be used to teach so that the pupils can acquire grammar naturally. Yet, here [in the textbook] grammar is presented in the bullet form and we are required to cover the number of grammatical items provided, for example, who, which, present perfect passive. Thus, we teach the way we think is appropriate.

07 **I:** You say the word 'context' which has different meanings. What do you mean by 'context'?

08 **T:** By context, I mean a natural situation in life. To exemplify this, it could be a reading text or a conversation for the pupils to listen to. It is something like that. Through such a context, the pupils come across a communication situation in a naturally manner and through it they have the so-called recognition of the target grammatical item, which will be ingrained in their cognition. Thus, it is easy for them to use [that grammatical item] in communication, otherwise grammar teaching would be rigid and fragmented. The purpose of teaching grammar is to get the knowledge

about the language established in the pupils' mind, and the ultimate goal is their ability to use [that grammatical item] in their communication. Otherwise, listening is taught today, writing tomorrow, they are not related to grammar. The consequence of this is the pupils fail to use it. However, I must acknowledge that the current curriculum has its own merits as compared with the previous one, but the Language Focus section, i.e., the Grammar section needs to be changed.

09 I: Yes, there may be more issues about the curriculum, but I want to listen more to your view about grammar as the foundation for language skills.

10 T: Yes, it is the foundation. It is not just the foundation on which language skills rested but it also forms a solid knowledge for the pupils. But that knowledge must be formed naturally. As regards our second syllabus, the English-specializing syllabus, is different from the other syllabus to some extent because we have our own aims. From a pragmatic perspective, the goal [of our teaching] is for the examinations. I may sound pragmatic, but it is the fact. It is the pupils' goal [of learning English]. They learn to pass the exams which give them opportunity to go to university or to get the scholarship to study abroad. These exams emphasize grammar, reading and writing. For example, in the IELTS there is a writing component. Without a good knowledge of grammar, nothing can be done. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that grammatical structures determine the meaning. For example, this structure expresses this meaning, that structure expresses that meaning. It determines the pupils' ability to get meaning across. Therefore, we teach grammar separately from skills lessons. For instance, this period is for speaking, then most of the activities are centred around speaking, or the reading period is for reading. Yet, if in that reading period there are important grammar points we separate them to introduce them to the pupils. Particularly, the writing skills are closely associated with grammar. When giving feedback on pupils' writings, we emphasise grammar, expressions. For grammar periods we spend more time on pupils' exchanges, for example, we spend the whole afternoon focusing on just one grammatical item. Often, we teach grammar carefully in Grade 10 and Grade 11. For Grade 12, we mainly

recycle and expand. Regarding the approach to grammar, as I said before, we rely on some current textbooks from which we select texts. [In those textbooks] they have interesting ways of presenting grammar, which is practical and naturally. We use those texts to introduce grammar in those contexts. However, there are occasions when it is hard to find a relevant context for example when teaching ‘Inversion’ it is hard to find contexts where only ‘inversions’ are used. But for the present perfect, there are obviously contexts. But some grammatical items do not have those contexts. In those cases we have to introduce grammar in the form of a specialised topic.

11 **I:** Another thing I want to know your view is the relationship between grammatical knowledge and the ability to use the language?

12 **T:** Language competence is reflected in language skills, language ability. Knowledge of grammar has more impact on reading and writing than on listening and speaking. This is because the listening texts tend to contain simple (grammar) structures and when the pupils speak they tend to use simple utterances. But for reading comprehension, knowledge of grammar structure is necessary for comprehension. This is especially true to writing. Therefore grammar knowledge influences most their writing, then reading because they need to have knowledge of the grammatical structures in order to comprehend the text and for writing, that knowledge must be more solid.

13 **I:** You have just mentioned the importance of helping the pupils to have solid knowledge. What do you mean by ‘knowledge’?

14 **T:** By knowledge, I mean issues related to English grammar. I just take the simplest example, the present simple. They should know how to use it and how it is formed. Then for the more complicated structures such as collocations. Collocation is more related to vocabulary, but for us it is important and we integrate it into grammar lessons because it determines most their language ability.

15 **I:** So you mean language knowledge is knowledge of grammar or including knowledge of other things?

16 **T:** You are talking about language knowledge or language skills?

17 **I:** I'm sorry. I mean language knowledge.

18 **T:** Yes, There are more than grammar regarding language knowledge. Grammar is just one component. Grammar is like cement which is used to stick bricks together in order to make a house.

19 **I:** A nice metaphor. So what are the bricks?

20 **T:** Bricks are vocabulary. First of all, vocabulary. Second, it is the so-called communication skills. There are pupils who have very good grammar in their mind, but cannot express themselves. There are other factors , for example, inspeaking, there are reaction skills, listening skills, and strategies. Writing skills require logical thinking.

21 **I:** You mean grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation?

22 **T:** Yes, pronunciation included.

23 **I:** In your opinion how are these three components linked together?

24 **T:** I think they are inseparable. Yes, inseparable. You have the vocabulary, but you need to know how to link them together, that is you need grammar as glue.

25 **I:** If so, is it necessary to focus on the relationship among the three in teaching?

26 **T:** It is impossible to teach any separate skill because all language components are closely related. Take for instance, when teaching grammar, teachers cannot pronounce carelessly. Or if the pupils commit serious lexical and pronunciation errors, those errors cannot be ignored.

27 **I:** There are people who argue that grammar should not be taught when pupils just started to learn English. Do you agree with them?

28 **T:** For me, I don't agree simply because if it is an important component of language, like other language components such as lexis or pronunciation or communication skills, it must be introduced right from the beginning, no matter at what level it might be, I mean the difficulty level. We can start with simple things. For example, in the textbooks written by native English speakers, they start with " I am, He is". 'Am' and 'is' are truly grammar. It is necessary to introduce right from the beginning or the pupils just rote-learn. If so, the knowledge they are introduced can be stored in the long-term memory.

29 **I:** Let's say grammar, lexis, and pronunciation are the three language components plus communication skills. The point is which should be taught first is a question. In your opinion should language knowledge be taught before communication skills or the other way round?

30 **T:** I think they should be taught in parallel.

31 **I:** You know why in parallel?

32 **T:** Because teaching language knowledge without communication skills makes that knowledge a closed box. Asking the pupils to open that box is to teach communication skills. On the one hand they can apply [the language knowledge] to communication in order to achieve the ultimate aim of language teaching, which is

communication. On the other hand, communication, in its turn, helps them with the language knowledge.

33 I: That's an interesting idea. Where does your idea come from?

34 T: I think it is partly from my teaching experience and I learned some ideas from my Master's course. My teaching experience shows that knowledge about language when taught without being used in communication situations will be soon forgotten.

35 I: When you first started to learn English either at the secondary school or at the university, how did you learn grammar?

36 T: It was so boring.

37 I: I mean the way you learn English grammar.

38 T: You want to know my way of learning or my teachers' way of teaching?

39 I: That's right. Your way of learning

40 T: It was a long time ago and I don't remember much. But in general, I really enjoyed learning English. The teacher didn't teach much inside the classroom. At home, I often read books and asked myself questions why it was this, why it was that. For example, today, I was learning the present continuous I asked in what way it differed from the present simple. I mean I often asked why and how questions. In fact, it was self-learning, you see. Then I looked at the exercises. At that time, the textbook was the only resource available, again and again, it was still that structure. The textbooks focused just on grammar, but decontextualized grammar. The teacher just imposed what to be learned and then asked us to do the exercises. Honestly speaking, I didn't learn much at the secondary school. Luckily, English examinations were not

so demanding as they are now. At the university, teachers just taught skills, not much grammar.

41 **I:** You mean you taught yourself by asking why and how questions? How interesting! Did you find it effective? Did that way of learning help you in any way?

42 **T:** I thought it was relatively effective because if I had just looked at the 'what' it was OK with that lesson, but when different grammatical items came together, I would not have been able to differentiate them, I would have been confused. I think the why and the how are so critical toward solid knowledge.

43 **I:** With that learning experience, do you ever transmit it to your pupils?

44 **T:** Yes.

45 **I:** I see. How do you do that?

46 **T:** For example, when introducing a new grammatical item, I always refer back to the previously learned item. Usually, I do not tell, just ask the pupils to recognise the difference. For example, for the present perfect and past simple, I introduced a conversation to create a context. For example: Have you ever been to ...? When did you do there? Who did you go with? It creates a natural context. Then I ask the pupils to compare. They have learned the past simple before. I ask them to compare why in this case the present perfect is used, in that case the past simple is used. I think the way of asking the why and the how is a (inaudible because of traffic horns).

47 **I:** It seems that how you teach is influenced by how you learned. Am I correct?

48 **T:** I think so.

49 **I:** While teaching grammar, lexis and pronunciation, do you explain grammatical rules to the pupils?

50 **T:** You mean when I teach pronunciation and lexis?

51 **I:** I mean pronunciation, lexis, and grammar in general. Do you explain rules to the pupils?

52 **T:** I think it is necessary. The question is when. I start with recognition, raising the pupils' consciousness first. That is, I ask the pupils to analyse first, then I confirm, rather than telling them explicitly right from the beginning [of the lesson]. I always let the pupils recognise, then analyse, then compare, if necessary. Finally I confirm [the rules] to help the pupils to understand to so-called 'norms'.

53 **I:** What about rules. Do pupils need to learn rules in your opinion?

54 **T:** Rules are like laws (laugh). Everything has their own norms otherwise the pupils' use would be deviant.

55 **I:** What makes you think that way? Where is your idea from?

56 **T:** I just think that. First I respect the pupils' individuality. I present (grammar) the way I do is because I respect the pupils' creative ability, their 'analysis ability'. Then my experience tells me that different pupils have different ideas. It is crucial to follow the norms. I think so. In reality, if the teacher doesn't give the norms, the pupils just use (the target structure) the way they think it should be.

57 **I:** Just return to your approach to grammar, which I find interesting. It comprises three steps: first pupils' recognition, then pupils' analysis, then pupils'

comparison, and finally teacher's confirmation. Where did you learn this model from?

58 T: First I learn from textbooks published in the UK. Grammar is often presented in that way. Moreover, from my teaching experience, I believe this is necessary. Probably, in the first year of my teaching life I didn't follow this model, but I learned from the pupils' attitudes through chats with them and from my teaching experience that pupils had that expectation. They find it necessary to acquire knowledge through active learning. I think this model is more appropriate.

59 I: I've heard people say that there are two approaches to grammar. Grammar in this case may include lexis and pronunciation under the common word 'form'. The first approach is formal, in the classroom under the teacher's supervision. The second approach is natural, through the exposure to the target language and learners' self-learning. In your opinion, which approach do you think is more effective?

60 T: It's hard to say which is more effective because teacher's formal instruction without communication opportunities results in pupils' ineffective use, thereby not achieving the ultimate goal of foreign language learning. On the other hand, mere exposure to the target language, I don't know how students learn in the UK, America or Australia, but in Vietnam where the [target language] environment is not available, without a language environment which is sufficient for pupils to acquire grammar naturally, certainly not. This is because, the pupils are exposed to English only in the classroom, not beyond the classroom while learning at school is just limited to such lessons, uh uh, I think it is not adequate. So we need to combine both of them.

61 I: You said the ultimate goal is to enable the pupils to use the language, to speak English, to write English accurately in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. How do you think teachers can help the pupils achieve this goal?

62 **T:** It's a big question, isn't it? (laughs).

63 **I:** It is. I believe so. What is your opinion of the teacher's role in the classroom?

64 **T:** I think.... The formal classroom teaching should not downplay any aspect of language even though it is grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary. And all those aspects should be taught in tandem rather than separately. Second, teaching those things is difficult but not as difficult as encouraging the pupils to use what they have learned.

65 **I:** Do you think formal teaching is enough to encourage them to do so?

66 **T:** Do you mean classroom teaching?

67 **I:** Yes, teaching in the classroom? Is it alone adequate?

68 **T:** I think if both the teacher and the pupils are active enough because there are so many class periods in the classroom. One period emphasises grammar, other pronunciation or vocabulary. There are periods of skills. So if both the teacher and the pupils are active enough, that might be achievable. But I don't think the ultimate goal can be achieved.

69 **I:** Could you tell why?

70 **T:** Because, pupils are of various levels, attitudes, even they have too much to do, too many subjects to learn therefore their investment in learning English is limited. Furthermore, they just learn English in the prescribed periods, then they forget. It seems that the intended goal is not achieved. If teachers and pupils work to the best of their capacity and teachers know how to encourage the pupils to use the language at least in the class periods, only 60%-70% of the foreign language learning goal could

be achieved. Personally I think in order to improve the pupils' language competence it is necessary to create the target language environment for them to contact with the language naturally. In fact, in the school we have something, for example, English language clubs in which the pupils participate enthusiastically. Sometimes, we organise a writing competition, for example to describe the schooling memories, to write poetry, something like that. These activities are to create incentives for them and to provide more opportunities for them to use the language. They are just small bricks to contribute to the teaching and learning of foreign language. But I think they are necessary. They both provide opportunities for the pupils to use the language and to create their interest in learning the language in the classroom periods.

71 **I:** It sounds you've done a lot of good things. But what makes you think that at best just 60%-70% of the goal can be achieved?

72 **T:** I think as I have said pupils differ in terms of level and ability. For example, in one class only 25 pupils are classified as relatively good users of the language, it is unrealistic to hope that 40 pupils are all good. This is the first reason. The second reason is er... er... the pupils need the environment. They have other subjects to learn. For example, they have one English period today, then following periods are for other subjects. Obviously the use of the language is discontinued. Consequently, the achievement is limited to a certain level. Under such a circumstance, the pupils learn something which they then forget, including the good pupils.

73 **I:** Now just go back to your model of teaching grammar, which involves steps like pupils' recognition, pupils' analysis, pupils' comparison, and finally teacher's confirmation. What do you mean by recognition and how do you often help the pupils to recognise the target grammar point?

74 **T:** Recognition [notice] means recognition of the use, the use and the form. I mean the form and the use. Recognising both at the same time and in a natural context rather than being imposed [by the teacher], which confuses them.

75 **I:** How then do you do to help them recognise the form and the use?

76 **T:** Take an example. When I am presenting the present perfect and the past simple. I ask the pupils to do a simple thing, that is to underlie the verbs in the text. Then when the pupils have noticed the verb forms, for example, 'Have you ever been?' and "Did you go?" I ask them the question "In your opinion what is the difference between "Have you ever been?" and "Did you go?". The pupils cannot answer but they have to ask themselves the question why they differ.

77 **I:** In your opinion how useful to grammar learning is recognition?

78 **T:** I think pupils or anyone else who try to seek answers to their own questions achieve greater efficiency .

79 **I:** How do you have that idea?

80 **T:** Possibly it is from my learning experiences from school to university, and even now. I think if this is true to myself, it may be true to the pupils. Also, it is through my teaching experience that I think, to be more exact, I see that when the pupils have the opportunity to ask questions and to seek answers to their own questions by themselves or with the teacher' help, the knowledge becomes more deeply ingrained [in their mind] than when knowledge is dictated by the teacher.

81 **I:** It sounds a great idea. Now we come to the next stage, analysis. What do you mean by analysis?

82 **T:** Analysis, for example, when the pupils are learning ‘will’. ‘Will’ doesn’t have only one meaning. It has many different meanings. So possibly in a text or in a dialogue, the pupils are given the opportunity to analyse to see what the meaning of ‘will’ in this case is, e.g., does it refer to spontaneous decision or suggest or offer. Analysis helps the pupils to see in this context, it [“will”] has this function, so on.

83 **I:** It means that the pupils analyse the meaning and the function of the grammatical structure. In what way do you think this is necessary?

84 **T:** Yeah, as I’ve said several times since the beginning about the active acquisition of knowledge, which is always more effective. I think when the pupils analyse [the structure], and find out the answer, first they have the sense of achievement. Their acquisition of knowledge is more comprehensive, and then it motivates them.

85 **I:** Giving the pupils chance to analyse the grammatical structure is motivating to the pupils. Interesting. Where does that idea come from?

86 **T:** This is from my practical teaching experience because I did not have this activity [while learning English]. In my teaching, I am aware of this.

87 **I:** Next is comparison. What do pupils compare?

88 **T:** Mainly compare the meaning and the use [of the target structure] in this situation with another situation.

89 **I:** Right. That is to compare the meaning and the use of the target grammatical structure in different situations. What is your purpose behind this?

90 **T:** Because, in the process of learning, it is inevitable that pupils make errors. So it is necessary to help them not to commit errors, to be more exact, to minimise

errors. If the pupils don't make errors, how can errors be minimised, so it'd be better to let them compare and arrive at their own conclusion that it should be used like that in this situation. Comparing one grammatical item with another helps them to create a barrier or to minimize errors. The fewer errors they make, the more accurate their use of language is.

91 **I:** That makes me curious. How do you come to have this idea?

92 **T:** First is from my own way of learning. For example, as I've told you I often ask why and how questions. When I can answer those questions, it means that I have mastered the knowledge and the use of language is more effective. Second it is through my practical teaching experience, I feel for no reason that it is necessary.

93 **I:** There's one more step in your model, that is confirmation. What do you confirm to the pupils?

94 **T:** First confirm the form. This is easy because it is visible to the pupils. All I have to do is just write up, box it so that the pupils can get it ingrained in their mind. Another thing to confirm is the outcome of their analysis and comparison. Confirmation is giving the rules, the norms.

95 **I:** Could you share how you confirm the norms?

96 **T:** After listening to the pupils and to their discussion, I ask them if they agree with what their friends said. Then I confirm in a very simplistic way, for example, write up on the board and get the pupils to copy down in their notebooks. There are important structures. I don't mean this structure is more important than the other. By 'important' I mean the structure that pupils are very likely to forget. Any structure that my teaching experience tells me that the pupils are likely to forget, I ask them to box it in red, for example. In that way my control is natural while to make the pupils

active, I ask them to work carefully such as writing down the rules of those grammatical items.

97 **I:** One thing I want to know more is why you give the pupils opportunity to discuss before you, the teacher, confirm the rules and get the pupils to note down those rules in their notebooks? What is your purpose behind it?

98 **T:** When I let the pupils discuss, first I show my respect to their individual opinion since each pupil may have different recognitions, and you never know there might be pupils who have a new discovery. Perhaps, the teacher can learn from the pupils. Second, it is to allow them to arrive at the rules naturally, and third, to encourage not only broad learning but also active learning in the sense that they are daring enough to speak out their own opinion. This is also a way of letting the pupils understand that the teacher respects them, and also of inspiring them to learn.

99 **I:** I love your idea. Where did you take this idea?

100 **T:** This idea is rooted first of all in my lifestyle. I respect everybody even when she or he is younger than me. I respect others' opinions, I want to listen to others. Secondly, my teaching experience has informed me of various benefits of giving pupils chance to have their voices heard. A pupil may be wrong, but he or she has opportunities to exchange ideas and to learn from others. That is active learning. It motivates the pupils really.

101 **I:** I agree with those benefits. But how do you know those benefits?

102 **T:** I see that this teaching style may be new to the pupils in this environment because many teachers do not behave in the same way. When the pupils have something new, they are excited. A child always likes something new. The new is individuals are respected, so they feel excited.

103 I: You mean the new way of learning?

104 T: Way of learning or the new learning environment that is created by the teacher. The teacher creates for them a new learning style. From my teaching experience I see that in all classes, not just the English language stream, but even the maths stream pupils as well as pupils of other streams and those from other schools that I teach are so excited about this.

105 I: From the beginning we've been occasionally mention pupils' errors and how to minimise the pupils' errors. From you point of view, how can pupils' errors be minimised?

106 T: It must first start from the pupils' awareness. In order to minimise their errors it is necessary to provide them or help them to master solid knowledge. I think so. For many teachers, they show very academic [theoretical] knowledge.

107 I: Knowledge means different things to different people. What do you mean by knowledge?

108 T: Knowledge has two parts. One involves rules, second application. There are teachers whose knowledge is excellent but the way they present their knowledge is ambiguous. So first it must be unambiguous to be convincing. How to be unambiguous, I've said about this at the beginning. Let the pupils recognise for example. They can recognise more clearly than when someone imposes on them. After the knowledge has been provided, the pupils need practice. While they are practicing, the teacher should guide them continually.

109 I: How do you often treat the pupils' errors?

110 T: Do you mean grammatical errors or ...

111 **I:** Grammatical, pronunciation, and lexical errors.

112 **T:** All of them? Uh. I need to clarify a little bit about error treatment. Each class period has its own objectives, therefore errors should be treated differently. Take a speaking period for example, error correction is secondary because the primacy is pupils' speaking performance. If errors are corrected frequently, their fluency, and even their psyche, will be negatively affected. Obviously, the pupils may show many grammatical errors, but they manage to get themselves understood. So I just ignore errors that do not interfere the meaning. The ultimate concern is the pupils' speaking. However, for the grammar periods, the situation is different. Because the [grammar] periods aim at accuracy more than fluency, error correction should be more frequent, especially errors related to the target structure being taught. For example, when the pupils are doing exercises regarding the difference between the present perfect and the past simple, any errors related to these two tenses should be corrected immediately in order that the pupils can have understanding and then can apply [use the target structure]. So I just restate that attitudes towards errors vary depending on the lesson periods.

113 **I:** I see your point. And when in classroom, how do you correct your pupils' errors?

114 **T:** Again, the attitudes vary depending on the class periods. For example, in a grammar period, error correction should be more direct. But in a writing period, I have to note down all pupils' errors on a piece of paper so that those errors can be corrected on the chalkboard without mentioning who made which error to keep the pupils from being stressful. But in a speaking period, that approach to error correction is not appropriate since while the pupils are role-playing and conversing I cannot take notes of their errors. I have to give feedback immediately following the conversation. As I've said, any error that can be ignored, I ignore it. Only serious errors are corrected. But error correction is not just for the pupil who made it, but for the whole class so that everybody can learn from each other's errors.

115 I: What do you mean by ‘direct correction’?

116 T: It means , uh..., for example, say ... “It would be better to say” and “rather than”.

117 I: Where do your ideas of error correction come from?

118 T: First, it is from reading that I read in my Master’s course. In fact, while I was studying at the university, this issue was rarely touched upon even though while I was writing my graduation paper on error correction, professors talked about this approach. However, it was not until I did my Master’s course that I read papers related to the topic and had a more comprehensive view. Furthermore, from my teaching experience I understand which approach [to error correction] is better. Basically, it is rested on my attitude that pupils should be respected.

119 I: There may be more that I want to talk with you but time is over. Thank you very much for your time and sharing with me your views on grammar instruction. Hope to see you again in the next interview if that is needed.

The interview ends.

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE OF LESSON OBSERVATION

(With reference to 4.8, 4.16)

21 Feb 2009 Observation

Teacher: 4

Grade: 11

Code: T: Teacher; Ps: Pupils; sentences in *italics* are my translation when the teacher speaks Vietnamese

< > interpretive comments

01 **T:** I would like to introduce Mr Canh to observe our lesson today.

02 **Ps:** Clap hands

03 **T:** Who is absent today? Monitor?

04 **Monitor:** Nobody

05 **T:** Nobody? Thank you.

06 **T:** Let's begin with our new lesson today and we begin with the "Language Focus" <writes the lesson title on board>

07 **T:** Now first of all I want you to do one small exercise <writes pairs of simple sentences on board> Can you see clearly? Rewrite the sentences to make one sentence using the relative pronoun. Ta hiểu yêu cầu của bài chưa? Tôi có 5 cặp câu *Do you understand what to do? I have 5 pairs of sentences.* You join them to make one sentence using relative pronoun 'who' 'which' 'whom'.

Do you know the woman. She is coming toward us.

Jane's father works in this school. I met him yesterday.

I come from a city. It is located on the South part of the country.

Do you like the book? I gave it to you last week.

The fish was really delicious. We had it for dinner.

08 **Ps:** <write the sentences silently>

09 **T:** Các em không cần phải chép đâu các em làm thôi *You don't need to copy the original sentences, just write your new sentences*

10 **T:** <3 minutes later calls 2 pupils to go to the board and write the new sentences as required>

<Two pupils write the exercise on board for 2 minutes, two sentences for each>

11 **T:** Thank you <calls one more pupil to write the fifth sentence>

12 **T:** <3 minutes later> Thank you. Now the class look at the board please.
Sentence 1:

The woman is coming toward us. Do you know her? <reads the pupil's sentence: Do you know the woman who is coming toward us?> Sentence 2: Jane's father works in this school. I met him yesterday <reads the pupil's sentence: Jane's father who I met yesterday works in this school?> and the third: I come from the city. It's located in the southern part of the country. <reads the pupil's sentence: I come from the city which is located in the southern part of the country>. And No. 4: Do you like the book. I gave it to you last week <reads the pupil's sentence: Do you like the book which I gave you last week>.

13 **T:** Được không các em ? Câu của bạn thiếu cái gì nhỉ? À thiếu dấu chấm. Trường hợp này ta có cần giới từ nữa không các em nhỉ? Không, đúng không. *Is it correct? What's missing in your friend's sentence? The punctuation mark. Do we need the preposition here? No, Is that right?*

14 **T:** Và câu cuối cùng là: The fish was really delicious. We had it for dinner. Câu này bạn có vẻ hơi lúng túng đúng không <reads the pupil's sentence: The fish which we had for dinner was really delicious> *And finally: The fish was really delicious. We had it for dinner. Your friend seemed to be a little bit unsure about this sentence <reads the pupil's sentence: The fish which we had for dinner was really delicious>*

15 **T:** Được chưa nhi? Lúc đầu bạn có dấu phẩy ở đây đúng không các em ? Có cần dấu phẩy không? Không cần đây nó là defining đúng không? *Is it alright? At first your friend used a comma here, right? Is a comma needed here? No, no need as it is defining, right?*

16 **T:** Now today we're going to review the relative clause and the omission of relative pronouns. <writes the title on the board>. Now look at the board please. Do you know that sometimes relative pronouns can be omitted and sometimes it cannot be omitted. 'omit' do you know omit? 'omit' là gì các em? Có thể bỏ đại từ tính ngữ đó. Các em suy nghĩ một chút rồi trả lời câu hỏi của cô *what does 'omit' mean? It means 'bỏ' the adjectival pronoun can be omitted. Now think for a second and answer my question*

17 **T:** When can the relative pronoun be omitted and when can't it be omitted?

18 **T:** Chúng ta nhìn lần lượt từng câu một <we look at sentence by sentence>

19 **T:** Now the first sentence <reads aloud the sentence on board>. Do you know the woman who is coming toward us? 'Who' is ... can be omitted or can't be omitted? **Truong Son** <calls on one pupil>

20 **Truong Son:** it can be omitted <he mispronounced the word 'cannot'>.

21 **T:** cannot or can

- 22 **Truong Son:** can't
- 21 **T:** OK <writes on the board: can't be omitted>
- 22 **T:** Theo ý bạn Sơn là như vậy. Có bạn nào đồng ý với bạn không? Đúng không nhỉ? *that's Son's idea. Anybody agrees? It is correct?*
- 23 **Ps:** Đúng *correct*
- 24 **T:** Tiếp tục *Go on*. What about the second sentence? Tan <calls on another pupil>
- 25 **Tan:** can be
- 26 **T:** it can be omitted <writes on the board>. What about other ideas? Hung
- 27 **Hung:** Can't
- 28 **T:** the second sentence? Câu thứ hai em có đồng ý với bạn Tan không? *Do you agree with Tan in the second sentence?*
- 29 **Hung:** Không ạ *No*
- 30 **T:** Em không đồng ý phải không? *You don't agree, do you?*
- 31 **T:** Không *No*
- 32 **T:** ah it can't be omitted. Tiếp tục nào *Go on please*
- 33 **T:** The third sentence, Tung? <calls on another pupil>

34 **Tung:** which

35 **T:** I come from the city which is located in the southern part of the city. What about the 'which' here? 'which' can be omitted or can't be omitted?

36 **Tung:** Can't

37 **T:** <writes : can't be omitted on board> . What about other opinion, Ha? <calls on another pupil>

38 **Ha:** can't

39 **T:** can't be <writes on board: 'can't be omitted'>. What about No. 4, Cuong?

40 **Cuong:** can

41 **T:** can be omitted <writes on board>. What about the last sentence, Trang? <calls on another pupil>.

42 **Trang:** can be omitted

43 **T:** ah it can be omitted too.

44 **T:** Các em nhìn lên bảng. Câu đầu tiên : who can't be omitted *Look at the board. The first sentence: who can't be omitted* It's right. Câu thứ hai *the second sentence 'who' here can't be omitted.*

45 **T:** Go on. What about the 'which' here? 'which' here can't be omitted too.

46 **T:** So when the relative pronoun can be omitted and when it can't be omitted? <Translates into Vietnamese>, Thao <calls one pupil>

47 **Thao:** Thừa cô có thể bỏ đại từ nếu như nó đóng vai trò tân ngữ *the relative pronoun can be omitted if it plays the role of the object*

48 **T:** Ah, when the relative pronoun is object in the relative clause. Nhưng mà câu này nó cũng là tân ngữ sao không bỏ được? *But why can't it be omitted in this sentence though it is also the object?*

49 **Thao:** Nhưng câu đây nó trong mệnh đề quan hệ không xác định. *But it is in a non-defining clause*

50 **T:** A trong non-defining clause, đúng không? Như vậy em có thể nói tóm lại như thế nào nhỉ? *Ah in the non-defining clause, right? So how can you summarize the rules?*

51 **Thao :** Trong mệnh đề quan hệ hạn định khi đại từ quan hệ đóng vai trò tân ngữ thì ta có thể bỏ *In a defining clause, the relative pronoun can be omitted if it is the object of the sentence.*

52 **T:** Thế còn khi nó là chủ ngữ có bỏ được không các em? *When else can the subject be omitted, pupils?*

53 **Ps:** No

54 **T:** No, it can't be omitted.

55 **T:** Đây ta thấy đây nó là gì chủ ngữ đây, đây cũng là chủ ngữ còn hai trường hợp cuối là gì nhỉ? Tân ngữ. *What's its function in here? The subject, this is also the subject and what about the last two cases? The object*

56 **T:** So when relative pronoun is the object it can be omitted but when the relative pronoun is the subject it can't be omitted. Do you understand? Hiểu hết chưa

nhỉ? Ta thấy mọi thứ rất rõ ràng thôi không có vấn đề gì nhưng nhớ là nó phải trong defining clause. Thế nào là defining relative clause thế nào là non-defining clause tôi nghĩ là không cần phải nhắc lại nữa nhỉ. Chúng ta đã rõ chưa. Đã học ở lớp 9 rồi. Cả lớp rõ chưa? *Do you all understand? We see things are very clear, nothing unclear but bear in mind that it must be in a defining clause, I don't think I need to explain again what a defining relative clause is and what a non-defining clause is. Learnt in Grade 9 already. Is the whole class clear?*

57 **T:** Now open your book and do the exercise No. 1: Complete each of the following sentences using a suitable sentence in the box to make a relative clause without a relative pronoun. <explains the instruction in Vietnamese>. The first sentence has been done as an example.

58 **T:** [three minutes later, she calls on two pupils to go to the board] . Cả lớp ta chữa câu số 3 *The class correct sentence 3* <calls on one pupil>, Khanh please.

59 **Khanh:** <inaudible>

60 **T:** <repeats Khanh's sentence> The short story John told is very funny. Good

61 **T:** Cả lớp nghe rõ chưa? *Did the whole class hear clearly?* Tiếp tục, câu 4 *go on, sentence 4*

62 **T:** <reads aloud> The dictionary

63 **P:** The dictionary I bought yesterday it yesterday is expensive but is very interesting.

64 **T:** <echoes the pupil's sentence> Đúng hay sai, Hiên? *Correct or not, Hien*

65 **Hien:** The dictionary I bought yesterday is expensive but very interesting.

66 **T:** expensIVE [corrects the pronunciation]. Tiếp tục câu số 5, mời em *Go on sentence 5, you please* <appoints one pupil>.

67 **T:** <reads aloud> I didn't like the man

68 **P:** I didn't like the man ... we met him at the Saturday party.

69 **T:** Đúng không? *Correct?*

70 **P:** I didn't like the man who we met him

71 **T:** ta không cần dùng 'man' vì ở đây 'who' thay cho cái gì? The man đúng không và trong trường hợp này có thể bỏ được không các em? À được. Thế thì em làm lại là gì? *we don't need to use 'man' because what does 'who' replace? The man, right, and is omission possible here? Yes. So now how can you say it again?*

72 **T:** I didn't like the man we met at the Saturday party. Now the last sentence.

73 **P:** The beef we had it for lunch was really delicious.

74 **T:** Một cái lỗi rất nhiều bạn mắc *An error committed by many of you* .

75 **P:** The beef we had for lunch was really delicious.

76 **T:** Từ 'it' ở đây được thay bằng 'which', từ 'which' ở đây thì sao các em? *the word 'it' here is replaced by 'which', and what happens to 'which' here?*

77 **P:** Bỏ *omitted*

78 T: Đúng không và ta xem hai câu trên bảng. Câu thứ nhất: Can you find the bike you lost? Đúng chưa cả lớp? Trong bài câu của người ta là 'you lost it' và từ 'it' ở đây được thay bằng gì? Which và trong trường hợp này 'which' can be omitted. Cả lớp rõ chưa? *Is it right? And we look at the two sentences on the board. The first sentence: Can you find the bike you lost? Is it correct, class? In the original sentence, it writes 'you lost it' and what is 'it' replaced by? Which and 'which' in here can be omitted.*

79 T: Câu số 2: Most of the classmates he invited to the birthday party couldn't come.

80 T: Và ở đây ta bỏ cái gì? Nếu đúng ra thì phải là gì? Cả lớp. Nếu ta dùng đại từ tân ngữ ở đây là gì nhỉ? Who đúng không who ở đây ta có thể bỏ được nhỉ. Bây giờ ta sang bài tập số 2, bài tập số 2 các em lưu ý một chút là với những mệnh đề relative clause với preposition. <reads aloud the instruction>: Complete each of the following sentences using a suitable sentence in the box to make a relative clause with a preposition. *What is omitted in here? What should it have been? The whole class? What should we use as an object pronoun here? Who, right? And it can be omitted here? Now we move to exercise 2, I want to draw your attention to the relative clauses with prepositions* <reads aloud the instruction>: Complete each of the following sentences using a suitable sentence in the box to make a relative clause with a preposition.

81 T: The flight which I wanted to travel on is fully booked. Now you say: The flight I wanted to travel on is fully book.

82 T: <3 minutes later> Truong Son, please
<Truong Son goes to the board and writes the sentence>

83 T: Have you finished the second exercise? <says the question again in Vietnamese.

84 **Ps:** <silence>

85 **T:** <1 minute later> No. 4 <points to one pupil>

86 **P:** <stands up and reads aloud> I wasn't interested in the thing they were talking about.

87 **T:** Good. Và ta thấy ở đây ta phải bỏ từ 'them' *And you see we have to omit the word 'them'*

88 **T:** No. 5, Phúc please.

89 Phúc <stands up and reads aloud>: The job we applee for

90 **T:** applied <corrects the pronunciation>

91 **Phuc:** we applied for

92 **T:** apply for các em có biết là gì không ? *Do you know what 'apply for' means?* <one pupil says the translation>

93 **T:** Mai nhắc lại cho cô câu đó nào? *Can you repeat, Mai ?*

94 **Mai:** He didn't get the job he applied for.

95 **T :** <echoes the pupil's sentence : The bed I slept in was very modern.>

96 **T:** Ta nhìn lên bảng hai câu <Truong Son wrote>. Câu thứ nhất *Look at the two sentences on the board . The first sentence:* I like the job because I enjoy the people I work with. Correct. Ở đây ta bỏ từ gì đây, Son? *Here what word we omit, Son?*

97 **Son:** <inaudible>

98 **T:** who hoặc là whom *who or whom*

99 **T:** Sentence 2: The dinner party we went to wasn't very enjoyable. Correct.

100 **T:** Như vậy hôm nay các em nhớ là với đại từ quan hệ khi nó là tân ngữ trong câu thì ta có thể bỏ nó nhưng nhớ là chỉ trong mệnh đề defining relative clauses các em nhớ chưa thể còn trong non-defining relative clauses ta không bỏ được mặc dù nó là tân ngữ còn khi nó là chủ ngữ ta có thể bỏ được không nhỉ, không bao giờ bỏ được. *Today you should remember that when the relative pronoun is the object it can be omitted but only in defining relative clauses, while in non-defining relative clauses it cannot be omitted. In case it is the subject it can never be omitted.*

101 **T:** Bây giờ còn ít thời gian tôi muốn các em đặt cho tôi vài câu không nhất thiết các em phải dùng relative pronoun với tân ngữ không mà có thể cả chủ ngữ nhưng trong trường hợp có thể bỏ được các em nên bỏ. *Now we have few minutes left and I'd like you to make up a couple of sentences using the relative pronoun either as the object or the subject, and omit it where possible.*

<Pupils make up their own sentences and then the teacher calls on 8 pupils to read aloud their sentences within 4 minutes. The teacher listens. Most of them are not heard by others because they speak so softly.>

102 **T:** Bài tập về nhà các em đặt cho cô 5 câu sử dụng relative clause trong trường hợp relative pronouns can be omitted. *For homework each of you make up 5 sentences using relative clauses with the relative pronoun omitted.* Good bye.

(The lesson is over)

APPENDIX G
SAMPLE OF STIMULATED RECALL
(With reference to 4.9, 4.16)

Date: 29 Oct, 2008

Teacher 6

(I: Interviewer; T: Teacher)

01 **I:** Thank you very much for letting me observe your lesson today and for your time for this interview. Now I'm going to play the video of your lesson, then I'll pause at some places where I want to know your thoughts while doing a particular activity. Of course, you can stop me anywhere you think you want to say about your activity. To save time, my first question is about the aim of your today's lesson. What aim did you want to achieve in today's lesson?

02 **T:** My aim is to help students to master the complex reported sentences so that they can use it in their communication as I did by the end of the lesson in an attempt to enable them to use in daily communication. Practice it again once more.

03 **I:** Do you think you have achieved your aim?

04 **T:** I think I did for today's lesson.

05 **I:** What makes you think you achieved your aim?

06 **T:** I noticed in the Free Practice Stage, the students were able to report speeches, for example speeches made by their parents. What their parents did... they reported those speeches. This means the teacher was proactive in advising them.

07 **I:** In your opinion the way you taught today's lesson was suitable to the students or not?

08 **T:** To the students of this group I think that was suitable because the students master the lesson through situations the teacher gave on the condition that I had to speak Vietnamese all the time. Their fluence.... At first when I spoke English they did not understand at all. Vietnamse is easier for them.

09 **I:** In your opinion, what are the benefits of teacher speaking Vietnamese?

10 **T:** In my opinion, with this group pf students, using Vietnamese helped them understand the lesson better, for example, if I spoke English, except for instructions, they didn't understand. It is a must to speak Vietnamese to this group of students in order for them to understand the lesson better.

11 **I:** Suppose you spoke English? Would they understand?

12 **T:** The disadvantage of teacher speaking English is after I have spoken English I have to speak it again in Vietnamese, which is a waste of time. And the students do not concentrate. I mean their ears are on and off. For today's lesson, I think the students had to use what they had memorized for example at first they had to recall Verb or the Object plus Verb, they had to use that grammar point. After they had recalled, if the teacher spoke English so much they would not understand anything. Then the students would feel on the air while the teacher did not have enough time. That's why I decided to use Vietnamese with this group of students.

13 **I:** Look at this. What were you thinking when you asked two students to write two columns on the board?

14 **T:** When I asked the students to write on the board the columns of verbs my aim was they had discussed these verbs already, I mean I had divided the class into two teams, each team had a separate task. My aim was to consolidate what they had

learned so that they would be able to use those verbs for the subsequent exercises. This is called a warm-up.

15 **I:** What were you thinking when you checked the verbs the students had written on the board here?

16 **T:** When I checked, my purpose was to help the students to memorize more deeply these verbs once again. That is to say, if the other team, the team who wrote verb+to+verb, the other team would know this verb had been written, I mean this was to make the students to recall all the verbs they had learnt that could be used for the next part of the lesson.

17 **I:** How important was that recollection to today's lesson?

18 **T:** If the students had failed to recall the structure, they did not know the structure to- verb or verb+ object+ to verb they would feel confused when starting the lesson. They wouldn't know this verb would goes with an object with to- verb or the object that goes with to-verb or to verb+ to verb or the following verb would be an ing-form.

19 **I:** Here you were writing on the board verb+to verb and verb+object+ to verb. What were you thinking while writing these two fomulas?

20 **T:** It is my purpose that when the students looked at these formulaic structures and the verbs listed by their classmates they would understand which verb is followed by an object, which by a to-verb.

21 **I:** Where does this idea of teaching come from? The idea of introducing the formulaic structure first thing?

22 **T:** It seems that my teachers taught me this way and now I do the same to my students.

23 **I:** While you were writing “keep quiet” what was your purpose?

24 **T:** I just wanted to have a lead-in activity. I created a situation to lead the students in the lesson. The purpose is for the students to report the speech, for them to know how to report a speech.

25 **I:** In your opinion, what did this help the students in today’s lesson?

26 **T:** I mean the students feel more naturally led into the lesson, i.e., I said to them today I taught you this, the structure is like this. It’s easier for the students to understand the lesson through situations.

27 **I:** Where did this idea of teaching come from?

28 **T:** I looked at the textbook and the situation came out.

29 **I:** In your opinion, how useful is the introduction of grammatical structures in situations?

30 **T:** When the students have the context, they understand more easily and faster. They would know when the structure is used.

31 **I:** While you were writing these two sentences on the board, what were you thinking?

32 **T:** While I was writing these two sentences on the board, I thought I gave the examples, i.e. through the situation then emphasize the situation. I wrote on the board

so that the students would notice the structure to be used when reporting someone's speech. Then I went to the main point, I told them what today's lesson was about.

33 **I:** What were you thinking when you were underlying these two verbs?

34 **T:** When I was underlying these two verbs I thought I was highlighting the structural differences of these two verbs, to help the students to realize the verb form because I had introduced verb+object, verb+object+to-verb, verb+to-verb.

35 **I:** Where did this idea come from?

36 **T:** I picked up this idea from the lower secondary textbook where the structure was introduced in situations. In the upper secondary textbook, skills are introduced separately. In the lower secondary textbook, skills are closely related, they introduced a situation on which the teachers bases to introduce the grammar point. But in the upper secondary textbook, things are different. The teachers have to think of the situations themselves in order to introduce the grammar point.

37 **I:** You learnt English or you taught English at the lower secondary school?

38 **T:** I didn't teach at the lower secondary school. I just read the book.

39 **I:** What book?

40 **T:** I have friends

41 **I:** The textbook or the methodology book or teacher book?

42 **T:** My friend trained teachers in using the new textbook and she gave me a training manual. I read it and used the ideas there.

43 **I:** You mean the teachers' guidebook?

44 **T:** No, it's just the suggested lesson plans, my friend gave me instructions (guidance). In the lower secondary school, they introduced the situation first then the grammar structure. My friend just told me a little and then I studied the book. That is my friend's instructions.

45 **I:** Here you were writing again the structure. What were you thinking in writing this structure on board?

46 **T:** When I wrote this formulaic structure again, I just wanted to highlight the point because what I did previously was just a warm-up. It's just a lead-in, now it is to highlight the point again. When using the reported speech we should use the sentence this way. I need to use one of the structures I have introduced to sum up the point for the students.

47 **I:** What can students benefit from such generalization of the structure?

48 **T:** The benefit is the students can memorize. What I did is to help them memorize better the lesson. I mean if I just introduced two formulaic structures, two sentences, it would be difficult. By doing this way, the students can generalize the formulaic structure, look at it and memorize better.

49 **I:** What do you think is the relationship between the memorization of the grammatical structure and the use of that structure?

50 **T:** The two are complementary because you memorize it and you are able to use it. You don't memorize it you cannot use it. You should know this verb is followed by to-verb or by an object plus to-verb.

51 **I:** Where did that idea come from?

52 **T:** It's just from my experience. Not knowing the structure how can you do the exercises?

53 **I:** What experience you mean? Teaching or learning experience?

54 **T:** Learning experience

55 **I:** Ah, experience in learning English. You learnt English this way, didn't you?

56 **T:** Yes, I learnt to memorize the structure first then I did the exercises. However, it depends on the structure. There are structures we can learn directly from the context but for more difficult structures we have to learn to memorize them. That is we should introduce the generalized structure.

57 **I:** Here when the student made an error, she said "promise to came", you underlay the error, then you rubbed that error out and wrote a new word for replacement. What were you thinking of?

58 **T:** When I underlay then rubbed it out I thought this could help the students to memorize better. They memorize that they should use a verb not a conjugated verb.

59 **I:** Here when you wrote this sentence on the board to correct the error to the whole class, what were you thinking of?

60 **T:** I thought the purpose was just I mean when I called the student to correct the error on the board, the whole class had to work, that is the whole class was involved so the whole class would realize the error better. They know they also make the same error and they know how to correct it. Just for them to memorize better.

61 **I:** With this error, you asked the student to identify the error. What were you thinking when you asked the students to identify the error in the sentence?

62 **T:** My purpose was just ... when the students find out the error ... they ... they can find out the error by themselves, they remember better because they themselves found out the error. If the teacher corrected, the students would be passive. Giving them chance to find out the error, correct the error by themselves, they would understand the lesson better.

63 **I:** Where did that idea of error correction come from?

64 **T:** My professors taught me.

65 **I:** Professors of grammar or of methodology, or teaching?

66 **T:** Professors of methodology. When you want to check something, you should refer to the students' understanding of the lesson. The teacher was just checking.

67 **I:** You learnt this at the university or ...?

68 **T:** At the university

69 **I:** Here at this point, before you let the students do the exercise, you asked them to identify the sentence elements. What were you thinking of when you asked them to identify the sentence elements?

70 **T:** When I asked the students to identify the sentence elements, the purpose was ... I thought the students would recall ... recall what... For example at the beginning when I asked them to recall which verbs followed by to-verb and which verbs followed by object + to-verb, it would help the students to do the exercise more

easily. If I hadn't do that the students would think I was going to do everything for them. If they and I worked together they would do the work more easily and in the right direction.

71 **I:** Why did you think that way?

72 **T:** I thought if we have some orientation in our mind, it's be easier to do the work.

73 **I:** Where did that idea come from?

74 **T:** From my learning experience. I mean from my learning experience at the university

75 **I:** Here you were explaining the grammar rules to the students?

76 **T:** No, I was not explaining the rules, I was just reminding as I observed that while the students were doing the exercises, some students didn't understand. So I just reminded them to support their recollection. A couple of students did wrongly and I reminded them [of the rules]. Up to this point, the students even don't know what the object is.

77 **I:** In brief, what did you circle the point here for? An error?

78 **T:** No. It's not a wrong sentence. My purpose is to highlight that 'advise' is followed by an object not 'will'. 'will' follows a personal pronoun.

79 **I:** Here what were you doing? What was in your mind while doing this?

80 **T:** I was re-checking so that the students can find out the errors. This is to help them memorize better. That's my purpose, just that.

81 **I:** Why did you think that when the students were able to find out their own errors, they memorize better?

82 **T:** You remember better when you do something by yourself. You find out your own errors you won't commit them again. If you're corrected by your teacher, you find it difficult to remember.

83 **I:** Why did you think that way?

84 **T:** This is from my personal experience. I felt this way while I was a student. Self-learning, I corrected my own errors and I memorized better. If I was corrected by the teacher, you'd make the same error again.

85 **I:** At this point, what was your purpose of giving this game to the students?

86 **T:** The purpose was to give the students an opportunity to report someone's speech so that they memorize better. See how to change a reporting statement into a reported one. Through a game ...

87 **I:** Memorize what?

88 **T:** The structure

89 **I:** I see, memorize the structure. Why should we emphasize the memorization of the structure?

90 **T:** If the students don't memorize the structure, they don't memorize ... if without memorizing, they cannot do the exercise, cannot use the grammar point. Without memorization of the structure there is no ability to use it. Teaching grammar is to make the grammar point internalized by the students so that they can put it into daily use. No memorization, no use.

91 **I:** ‘Use’ means ... what do you mean by ‘use’?

92 **T:** I mean the daily use

93 **I:** That is to ...

94 **T:** to interact in English. For example, reporting that yesterday I promised my parents that I would study harder; yesterday I promised my teacher; ... I told this, I told that, and reporting someone’s speech. That reported speech I had learnt from someone, i.e., learning it everyday.

95 **I:** Any thing else you want to say about your today’s lesson?

96 **T:** No.

97 **I:** Thank you for your time. See you again.

APPENDIX H
SAMPLE OF TEXTBOOK LESSON

(With reference to 2.3, 5.1)

Unit 13



HOBBIES

A. READING

Before you read

The pictures below present some hobbies. Work with a partner and say which you like to do in your free time.



While you read

Read the passage and then do the tasks that follow.


There are a number of things I like to do in my free time. They are my hobbies.

The hobby I like most is playing my guitar. My uncle, who is an accomplished guitarist, taught me how to play. Now I can play a few simple tunes. I have even begun to sing while playing the guitar, but I have not been very successful at this. My uncle tells me that all I need is to practise regularly and I should be able to do it. He is very good at accompanying people singing with his guitar and I admire him very much.

Another hobby of mine is keeping fish. I have a modest little glass fish tank where I keep a variety of little fish. Some of them were bought from the shop while some others were collected from the rice field near my house. They look so beautiful swimming about in the tank. I love watching them and my mother loves watching them, too.

I keep stamps, too. However, I would not call myself an avid stamp collector. Actually, I just collect the stamps from discarded envelopes that my relatives and friends give me. Mostly I get local stamps. Once in a while, I get stamps from places like Russia, the USA, Britain, Australia, China and others. I keep the less common ones inside a small album. The common ones I usually give away to others or if no one wants them I simply throw them away.

There are other hobbies that I indulge in for a while, but they are not as interesting as the ones I've been talking about. They really keep me occupied and I am glad I am able to do them.

 **Task 1.** The words and phrases below all appear in the passage. Use a dictionary to get their meaning. Then translate them into Vietnamese.

1. accomplished _____

2. accompanying _____

3. modest _____

4. avid _____
5. discarded _____
6. indulge in _____
7. keep me occupied _____


 **Task 2.** Answer the questions.

1. What is the writer's first hobby?
2. Is the writer an accomplished guitarist?
3. Why does the writer admire his uncle?
4. What is the writer's second hobby?
5. How did he collect his fish?
6. What kind of stamp collector is the writer?
7. Where does he collect the stamps?
8. Which does the writer get more of, local stamps or foreign stamps?
9. What does the writer do with the less common stamps and with the common ones?


After you read

Work in groups. Talk about your hobby.

B. SPEAKING

 **Task 1.** *Work in pairs.* Say which of the following you would like/not like to do and why.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● swimming | ● playing computer games |
| ● fishing | ● reading books |
| ● stamp-collecting | ● watching TV |
| ● mountain-climbing | ● chatting with a friend on the phone |

 **Task 2.** Lan is talking to Huong about her hobby of collecting books. Practise reading their dialogue with a partner.

Huong : What is your hobby, Lan?

Lan : Well, I like collecting books.

Huong : Could you tell me how you collect your books?

Lan : Well, this must be done regularly. Whenever I find a book which is interesting I buy it immediately.

Huong : Where do you buy your books?

Lan : I buy some from the bookshop near my house and some others from second-hand book stalls. Sometimes my friends, my mum and dad give me some.

Huong : How do you organize your collection?

Lan : I classify them into different categories and put each category in one corner of my bookshelf with a name tag on it.

Huong : What do you plan to do next, Lan?

Lan : I think I'll continue to make my collection richer and richer.

 **Task 3. Work with a partner.** Make a similar dialogue about collecting stamps. Use the suggestions below.

hobby	<i>stamps</i>
how to collect stamps	<i>buy from post office ask members of family, friends, relatives, postmen make pen friends with people overseas exchange stamps with others</i>
how to organize stamps	<i>classify stamps into categories: animals, plants, birds, landscape, people (hero, politicians, football players, singers etc.) in album</i>
where to keep stamps	<i>in album</i>
why to collect stamps	<i>broaden your knowledge: know more about landscape, people, animals, plants and trees.</i>
plan for the future	<i>collect more stamps</i>

C. LISTENING


Before you listen

Work with a partner. Write down three benefits of reading books. Then share your ideas with the class.


Listen and repeat.

magazines continually otherwise gigantic
profitably available bygone ignorantly

While you listen

 **Task 1.** You will hear a student talk about his hobby. Listen to his talk and decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The writer started his hobby when he was young. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. His parents were interested in reading fairy tales and other stories to him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The writer didn't start with ABC books. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Now he reads all the books available. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Reading helps the writer to know many things. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. According to the writer, by reading he does not have to study hard. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The writer is able to know about a tiger through reading. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Books might help him in his daily life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

 **Task 2.** Listen again and write the missing words.

The (1) _____ thing about reading is that I do not have to learn things the very hard way. For example, I do not have to catch a (2) _____ to know that it can kill me. I know the danger so I can avoid it. Also I do not have to go deep into the (3) _____ to find out about tigers. I can read all about it in a book.

Books provide the reader with so many facts and so much information. They have (4) _____ helped me in my daily life. I am better equipped to cope with living. Otherwise I would go about (5) _____ learning things the hard way.

So I continue to read. Reading is indeed a good hobby.

After you listen

Work with a partner. Talk about the disadvantages of over-reading (reading too much).

D. WRITING

Write about your collection, real or imaginary, following these guidelines.

- name of your collection
- how you collect them
- how you keep them
- when you started your collection
- how you classify them
- why you collect them
- your plan for the future

E. LANGUAGE FOCUS

- **Pronunciation:** / pt / - /bd / - /ps/ - /bz/
- **Grammar: Cleft sentences**
 1. Subject focus
 2. Object focus
 3. Adverbial focus

Pronunciation

- Listen and repeat.

/pt/	/bd/	/ps/	/bz/
stopped	robbed	stops	robs
jumped	stabbed	steps	bribes
stepped	grabbed	maps	rubs
trapped	bribed	shops	clubs

● Practise reading aloud these sentences.

1. She was robbed.
2. He stopped smoking.
3. Lan dropped the teapot.
4. The boy jumped out into the road and bumped into an old man.
5. She's been to a number of shops and clubs.
6. He rubs his hands because he wants to interrupt their talk.

Grammar

Exercise 1. Write the following sentences after the model, paying attention to the subject of the sentence.

Example:

The man gave her the book.

– *It was the man who gave her the book.*

1. The boy visited his uncle last month.

2. My mother bought me a present on my birthday.

3. Huong and Sandra sang together at the party.

4. Nam's father got angry with him.

5. The boys played football all day long.

6. The girl received a letter from her friend yesterday.

7. His presence at the meeting frightened the children.

Exercise 2. Write the following sentences after the model, paying attention to the object of the verb.

Example:

The boy hit the dog in the garden.

– *It was the dog that the boy hit in the garden.*

1. The man is learning English.

2. The woman gave him the book.

3. She sent her friend the postcard.

4. Hoa borrowed the book from Long.

5. The little boy greeted his grandfather in a strange language.

6. The pedestrian asked the policeman a lot of questions.

7. The dog barked at the stranger.

Exercise 3. Write the following sentences after the model, paying attention to the adverbial modifier of the sentence.

Example:

She bought him a present at the shop.

– *It was at the shop that she bought him a present.*

1. The boy hit the dog in the garden.

2. She made some cakes for tea.

3. His father repaired the bicycle for him.

4. She presented him a book on his birthday.

5. He met his wife in Britain.

6. She bought that present from the shop.

7. The meeting started at 8.00 a.m.
