ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM REFORM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: A CASE OF INTENTIONS AND REALITIES IN VIETNAM

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Linguistics

by

Thao Thi Vu

August 2020

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Signed

November 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisors, Dr John Walsh and Dr William Winser, for their continuous guidance, insightful comments and support during the past four years. I am indebted to their scholarship, academic rigour, wisdom, time, passion and encouragement. I was so fortunate and blessed to have had them as my supervisors. Both the personal and professional conversations I had with them were valuable, fruitful and were lifetime lessons both in education and in life. They challenged me to think, write, learn and develop beyond what I thought I would be able to do. Without their patience, support and inspiration, my PhD journey would not be as rewarding and fruitful as it has been.

I owe thanks to all of those who participated in this study for their generous sharing, insights and participation, without which this dissertation would not be accomplished. I cannot mention their names for ethical reasons, yet I wish to send them my deepest gratitude for sharing the time with me in those lengthy interviews and classroom observations.

This work would not have been possible without the financial support from the Vietnamese Government and the University of Adelaide. I am grateful to their generous support during the past four years, without which this dissertation would not come into being. I would also like to send my special regards to all the staff at the Linguistics Department, the University of Adelaide, to Hai Duong Department of Education, local schools and students for their valuable support at different stages of the study. My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Hoang Van Van; the conversation with him provided me with insights and inspiration to conduct this study.

To my friends and colleagues in room 915 Napier Building, thank you for being my friends, sharing the fun moments with me in our cosy little office and the countless conversations and ideas for life. I would really miss those days full of laughter, warmth and friendship.

I am indebted to all my colleagues and friends who patiently listened to and provided me with understanding and encouragement. They made the past years much more enjoyable and relaxing.

My whole-hearted dedication goes to my beloved families, to my Mum and Dad, whose love and support have always been with me in whatever I pursue. A special thanks to my husband, Trung Tam Doan, who always provides me with unending inspiration, who listens to my problems, cheers me up and encourages me to become a better version of myself. Thank you for being my caring husband, my life partner and my best friend.

ABSTRACT

Globalisation and the global economy have become bywords in the new millennium. English has become the lingua franca for increasing international trade and commerce, and the spread, the reach, the creep of English has been an undeniable aspect of the phenomenon. As a result, developing countries are under pressure to increase their numbers of competent English users so as to improve national competitiveness and become participating members in this commercial world. In response, significant efforts in numerous countries have been dedicated to large-scale, heavily-invested reform projects aiming to bring about radical change in English language curricula, materials, and pedagogies. Common to such reform efforts has been a move towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has generally been promoted as the approach to teaching and learning most likely to produce the communicative English users require for commercial exchange.

Vietnam has recently taken the path of English language reform at the school level with the Government allocating $US425 million to the initiative. Project 2020 was announced in 2008 with specific English language achievement targets to be met by 2020. As part of the reform, the curriculum content was provided within a new textbook series and CLT was prescribed as the pedagogy to deliver the curriculum. Project 2020 has provided the context and data for this study.

The study focused on the reform at the lower-secondary level (Years 6 – 9) and used a mixed methods research design to facilitate both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The data set comprise an online teacher survey (n=112), the official curriculum mandates and textbooks, semi-structured interviews with teachers (n=11) and school principals (n=4), as well as 28 recorded classroom observations in urban and rural schools.

The findings reveal that the intentions of the reform as expressed by MOET and the realities of classroom implementation are currently at a distance from each other, evident in the negative attitude of the teachers towards the feasibility of the curriculum goals and their fragmented understanding of CLT principles and premises. The analysis of classroom discourse provided evidence that classrooms were largely teacher-dominated, textbook-based and had minimal student-to-student interactions, all of which were at odds with CLT.

To bridge the gap and deliver the communicative requirements of the nation, the study argues for an approach to teaching and learning in sympathy with the socio-political and cultural context in Vietnam, driven by a major focus on teacher professional development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ..... **II**
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **III**
ABSTRACT ..... **IV**
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **V**
LIST OF TABLES ..... **IX**
LIST OF FIGURES ..... **X**
LIST OF EXTRACTS ..... **XI**
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **XII**
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION **1**
1.1. Background 1
1.2. Research questions 5
1.3. Objectives of the study 6
1.4. Significance of the study 6
1.5. The structure of the thesis 7
CHAPTER II: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY **9**
2.1. Overview of the education system in Vietnam 9
2.1.1. History 9
2.1.2. The education system in Vietnam 13
2.1.3. The political-institutional context of education in Vietnam 13
2.1.4. The socio-cultural context of education in Vietnam 15
2.1.5. Educational practices in Vietnam 17
2.2. English language education in Vietnam 18
2.3. The Foreign Language Project 2020 21
CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW **27**
3.1. Global English 27
3.2. Native Speakers (NS) and Non-native Speakers (NNS) 29
3.3. The non-native English (NNS) teacher 31
3.4. National English language education policies 34
3.4.1. The place of English in national schooling systems 34
3.4.2. Current trends in English language education 35
3.4.3. National approaches to curriculum reform 36
3.5. English language pedagogy 38
3.5.1. Methods and approaches in language pedagogy 39

3.5.2. Developments in language pedagogy 40
3.6. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)..43
3.6.1. The background to CLT 43
3.6.2. Communicative competence..46
3.6.3. Core principles of CLT 48
3.6.4. The role of grammar..51
3.6.5. Different manifestations of CLT 52
3.6.6. The global uptake of CLT in school curricula 53
3.6.7. Issues pertaining to CLT..55
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 60
4.1. Mixed-methods research design..60
4.2. The present study..62
4.3. Data collection..64
4.3.1. The official curriculum documentation 65
4.3.2. The curriculum textbooks..66
4.3.3. Research participants 68
4.3.4. The survey..69
4.3.5. Classroom observations..70
4.3.6. Semi-structured interviews..73
4.4. Data analysis..75
4.4.1. Qualitative content analysis of the curriculum documents and interviews.........76
4.4.2. Integrated framework for textbook analysis..79
4.4.3. Resources from Systemic Functional Linguistics for the analysis of teacher attitude and classroom discourse 84
4.5. Legitimation of data quality and findings in mixed methods research 97
4.6. Ethical considerations 100
4.6.1. Level of risk 100
4.6.2. Confidentiality..101
4.6.3. Storage of data..101
4.7. Limitations of the study 102
CHAPTER V: INTENTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM..104
5.1. Statements of aims and objectives 104
5.2. Communicative competence..106
5.3. CLT as the prescribed pedagogy..107
5.4. Testing and assessment..109
5.5. Prerequisites for curriculum implementation 111
CHAPTER VI: THE NEW TEXTBOOK SERIES 113
6.1. Textbook publication 113

6.1.1. Textbook package 113
6.1.2. Published form of the textbook 114
6.1.3. Subdivision of the textbook 114
6.2. Textbook design 116
6.2.1. Learning objectives 116
6.2.2. Principles of sequencing 119
6.2.3. Types of language practice 123
6.2.4. The targets within language practice 131
6.2.5. Participation 132
6.2.6. Visual images in Tieng Anh 133
CHAPTER VII: REALITIES OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM 143
7.1. Teacher Attitude 143
7.1.1. The necessity and feasibility of the new curriculum 143
7.1.2. Attitude towards the new curriculum 145
7.2. Teacher understanding of CLT 157
7.2.1. Teacher conceptualisation of CLT 158
7.2.2. Sources of teacher understanding 162
7.3. Classroom discourse analysis 164
7.3.1. Class size and arrangement 165
7.3.2. Pedagogic activities 167
7.3.3. Pedagogic relations 171
7.3.4. Pedagogic modalities 192
CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION 198
8.1. The intentions of the curriculum reform 199
8.1.1. The top-down model of reform 200
8.1.2. The socio-political context of reform 203
8.2. The realities of the curriculum reform 204
8.2.1. Teacher attitude towards the curriculum reform 205
8.2.2. Teacher understanding of CLT 207
8.2.3. Professional development and support for teachers 209
8.2.4. The realities of the English language classroom 211
8.2.5. The textbook in action 215
8.3. Constraints to the implementation of the curriculum 220
8.3.1. Conceptual constraints 220
8.3.2. Macro-level constraints 222
8.3.3. Classroom-level constraints 224
8.3.4. The question of ideology 227
8.3.5. The ‘shadow’ industry 229

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 231
9.1. Major findings 231
9.2. The proficiency targets 234
9.3. Structural changes 236
9.4. Implications for leadership 238
9.5. Teacher professional development 240
9.5.1. The need to understand the nature of CLT 241
9.5.2. Adapting as opposed to adopting CLT 241
9.6. The need for future research 248
9.7. Concluding remarks 249
LIST OF REFERENCES 250
APPENDICES 270
Appendix A. Teacher Survey 270
Appendix B. Classroom Observation Protocol 277
Appendix C. Interview Protocols 281
Appendix D. Ethics Approval 284
Appendix E. Consent Form 285
Appendix F. Participant Information Sheet 286
Appendix G. Sample Analysis 292

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Curriculum allocation for the English language program within Project 2020..........20
Table 2.2. Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam..........20
Table 2.3. Targeted proficiency level for each level of schooling..........21
Table 4.1. National English language policy documents at the lower-secondary level..........58
Table 4.2. The units selected for the textbook analysis..........59
Table 4.3. Number of districts and schools using the new curriculum in 2017..........61
Table 4.4 Teacher demographics..........63
Table 4.5. The selected schools for classroom observations..........65
Table 4.6. Interviewed teachers..........66
Table 4.7. Details of the school principals..........67
Table 4.8. An example of data coding..........71
Table 4.9. Materials analysis..........72
Table 4.10. Aspects of classroom discourse analysis..........83
Table 4.11. Types of criteria for trustworthiness..........88
Table 4.12. Summary of data and methods of data analyses..........92
Table 5.1. Lexical search terms and occurrences..........94
Table 5.2. Instructional hours within the new curriculum..........95
Table 6.1. Development of themes and topics..........106
Table 6.2. Number of texts and text-based activities in the Tieng Anh..........115
Table 6.3. Classroom working arrangements..........118
Table 6.4. Images included in the Tieng Anh..........119
Table 7.1. Teacher perception of student needs..........129
Table 7.2. The need for the curriculum change..........129
Table 7.3. The achievability of the curriculum goals..........130
Table 7.4. Attitude types in teacher responses..........131
Table 7.5. Inscribed and invoked Appraisal instances in teacher responses..........131
Table 7.6. Example of Appraisal analysis..........132
Table 7.7. Teacher understanding of CLT..........142
Table 7.8. Details of selected lessons..........148
Table 7.9. Average size in the observed classrooms..........148
Table 7.10. Types of language practice..........150
Table 7.11. Number of individual and collaborative activities..........151
Table 7.12. Exchange initiations..........161
Table 7.13. Classroom talk..........161
Table 7.14. Instructional and regulative exchanges..........162
Table 7.15. Classroom participation..........165
Table 7.16. The use of English and Vietnamese..........170
Table 7.17 Textbook coverage..........173

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1. The research procedure 64
Figure 4.2. Language as a stratified model 85
Figure 4.3. Co-tangential contextual circle....86
Figure 4.4. The metafunctions....87
Figure 4.5. Modelling language in context 88
Figure 4.6. The subsystems of discourse semantics used for analysis 89
Figure 4.7. Basic system for Appraisal 90
Figure 4.8. Dimensions of pedagogic register 92
Figure 4.9. Pedagogic register in the language-in-context model 92
Figure 4.10. Classroom participation and educational success 97
Figure 6.1. Learning objectives in Unit 2 Tieng Anh 7....116
Figure 6.2. An extract from the Book Map in Tieng Anh 7 117
Figure 6.3. A Closer Look 1, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 2 121
Figure 6.4. Skills 1, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1 122
Figure 6.5. Types of learning activity in the Tieng Anh series 123
Figure 6.6. Examples of mechanical vocabulary exercises 124
Figure 6.7. Examples of mechanical vocabulary exercises 125
Figure 6.8. Examples of mechanical grammar exercises 126
Figure 6.9. Examples of Pronunciation exercises 127
Figure 6.10. Meaningful practice with a focus on vocabulary and grammar 128
Figure 6.11. Write an email, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1 130
Figure 6.12. Role play, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1 130
Figure 6.13. Discussion, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 2 130
Figure 6.14. The focus of language practice 131
Figure 6.15. A vocabulary exercise, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 1 135
Figure 6.16. Image description task, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1 135
Figure 6.17. Real-life photographs used for illustration, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 2 136
Figure 6.18. Real-life photographs used for illustration, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3 136
Figure 6.19. Examples of the images used for decorative purposes, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 3....137
Figure 6.20. Visual with no connection to the learning task, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 2....138
Figure 6.21. A well-labelled photograph, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3 139
Figure 6.22. A non-labelled photograph, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3 139
Figure 6.23. Examples of images that need better design, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 2 140
Figure 7.1. Typical classroom settings 166
Figure 7.2. A reading text, Lesson 4 194
Figure 7.3. A grammar exercise, Lesson 5 194
Figure 8.1. Change agent relationships: top-down model 201

LIST OF EXTRACTS

Extract 1 Lesson 3......163
Extract 2 Lesson 6......163
Extract 3 Lesson 2......165
Extract 4 Lesson 3......165
Extract 5 Lesson 1......166
Extract 6 Lesson 6......167
Extract 7 Lesson 6......167
Extract 8 Lesson 4......168
Extract 9 Lesson 1......168
Extract 10 Lesson 2......170
Extract 11 Lesson 5......170
Extract 12 Lesson 5......170
Extract 13 Lesson 2......171
Extract 14 Lesson 4......173
Extract 15 Lesson 4......174
Extract 16 Lesson 4......174
Extract 17 Lesson 1......177
Extract 18 Lesson 2......179
Extract 19 Lesson 2......179
Extract 20 Lesson 3......180
Extract 21 Lesson 2......182
Extract 22 Lesson 4......182
Extract 23 Lesson 1......183
Extract 24 Lesson 3......183

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DOET	Department of Education and Training
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MOET	The Ministry of Education and Training
NNS	Non-native speaker
NS	Native speaker
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

I was born and went to school in Vietnam. My memories of seven years of English language study at school are mostly of rote learning and reciting lists of vocabulary, grammatical rules and sentence structures in mechanical practices entirely disconnected from authentic contexts of use. The curriculum intention was to prepare the 'best' of English language students to pass the highly competitive grammar-based written examination for university entry. Our classroom reality was a grammar-based process of teaching which enabled precisely the kind of learning suited to the examination requirements. On reflection, I would consider that there was little difference between the intention of the English language curriculum and the reality within our classrooms.

I was one of those lucky enough to pass the examination. However, despite having a repertoire of grammatical and lexical resources, I had little idea of how to draw on these resources to speak, listen or write in English above the sentence level. I was unable to relate my passive knowledge of language form to any context in which I was required to actively negotiate meanings. I could not perform basic communicative functions, and I lacked productive skills and strategies. In sum, I lacked any real communicative competence.

Whilst majoring in English at university, I began to understand the function of English as fundamentally an instrument of communication to achieve various real-life communicative purposes. I became aware that learning a language meant that I should be able to *do* things with the language – as Halliday (1993) proposed, learning *through* language as well as learning *about* language. I have now graduated through the education system and am professionally involved in English language education in my home province in the north of Vietnam. As part of my professional role, I regularly visit schools and classrooms. Twenty years on from my personal learning experiences, I witness the same and similar classrooms as my own. I see school students who are 'structurally competent' English language learners, but 'communicatively incompetent' in their ability to use the language they have been learning for years.

Whilst there are a range of reasons why students across Vietnam engage in learning English, the most obvious is that English is now a mandated school subject for compulsory education, a national response to the perceived global importance of the language. English has become the undisputed language of science and technology, and beyond any doubt, the chosen language of international communication and, thus, the linguistic vehicle for globalisation. Strongly implicated in capitalist discourses of global economic development, English is widely accepted as "the way of securing economic advancement, elevated status, prestige and trans-national mobility" (Singh, Kell, & Pandian, 2002, p. 53). In Vietnam, English has become increasingly important since the country began to open to the West in the last decade of the 20th century. The growing status of English as a lingua franca, coupled with the country's entry into multiple regional and international organisations, has created a pressing need for national English competence in education, employment, tourism and business, not only for communication with native English speakers but also with many more non-native speakers of English (G. Simons, 2018). English is seen as an instrumental, pragmatic and commercial tool for global integration as well as for the enhancement of the country's competitiveness in the international economic and political arena (R. Kirkpatrick & Bui, 2016; H. Nguyen, 2011; N. T. Nguyen, 2017).

In consideration of the clear economic advantage and necessity of English proficiency for its citizens, as in most Asian countries, the Vietnamese Government has initiated language policies to enhance the English abilities of its citizens. During the 1990s, English was adopted as a compulsory school subject, and quickly became the most dominant foreign language taught and learnt in schools and tertiary institutions (Le, 2007; X. V. Nguyen, 2002). However, despite this investment in time and resources for English language education, English teaching and learning in Vietnamese schools over this period was sustained by traditional textbooks and traditional teachers, with a belief in grammar and vocabulary as the best way to prepare students for the unchanging "formal, discrete-point, high-stakes tests and examinations" (Burns & Knox, 2005, p. 256). As a result, the great majority of Vietnamese school leavers graduated with limited communicative skills, unable to use English for communication. I count myself as one of these students. The teaching and learning of English at that time was no preparation for participation in the global economy and the perceived benefits it would bring.

The demand for improving the standard of English teaching and learning has become increasingly critical and obvious with the inexorable advance of globalisation, so that young Vietnamese citizens are now required to be equipped with English language proficiency for both personal and national participation in the global economy. It has been widely accepted that without major changes and input to curriculum and pedagogy, English teaching in Vietnam will fail to effectively serve the demands being made on it (Hoang, 2011).

In response to the economic imperative and approximately two decades of little progress towards addressing the issue, the Vietnamese Government launched a major language initiative in 2008, entitled *"Teaching and Learning Foreign Language Education in the National Education System in the Period 2008-2020"*, which has come to be known as Project 2020. The stated aim is to "renovate the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system" (Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, 2008, p. 1). Project 2020 is a mandated reform of English language curriculum and pedagogy at the national level. Within the goals of this ten-year program, school graduates at the end of Year 12 are expected to reach Proficiency Level B1 adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment – CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). At the lower-secondary level, which is the focus of this study, the curriculum target is Proficiency Level A2.

The reform within Project 2020 is of great significance in Vietnam, as the future economic wellbeing and success of the nation has been entrusted in no small part to the English language capabilities of its citizens. These globally participating citizens of the future are the school children of today and so it is crucial that the educational reform is successful. However, the challenge is enormous, with approximately 27,000 primary and secondary schools across the country, more than 60,000 English language teachers, and approximately 16 million students in these schools (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2017). Project 2020 is still relatively new, and at the time of writing, it is being rolled out in some parts of the country.

It is salient to note that whilst Project 2020 is an innovation in English language teaching and learning in Vietnam, the notion of English curriculum reform is not a new phenomenon in countries where English is a second or foreign language, including near neighbours of Vietnam. Perhaps motivated by the same economic incentives, several other countries, for example, China, Japan, South Korea,

Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey and Libya, have each made concerted renovations and innovations in curriculum and materials development, teacher training, pedagogy, evaluation and assessment, all with the prime goal of improving English proficiency across specific populations (Kam, 2002; Nunan, 2003; Spolsky & Sung, 2015). Consistent across these national curriculum policies has been a discursive positioning of citizens as proficient English users who contribute significantly to the country's competitive edge in the global community. These countries have had policies of making English available, often as a compulsory school subject, and have allocated significant budgets for English language education reform in their schooling systems. Common to such reform efforts has been a shift towards a Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT). A similar pathway has been adopted in Vietnam within Project 2020. This makes perfect sense given the history of communicative incompetence amongst Vietnamese students as described above. Within Project 2020, great emphasis has been placed on enhancing student communicative competence, with new curricula and a new series of textbooks designed for the three levels of schooling from Year 3 to Year 12, all adhering to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as part of a learner-centred pedagogy.

Project 2020 comprises a relatively standard scope and sequence of English language content across the ten-year period. The vehicle for this curriculum content is a new set of textbooks, *Tieng Anh* (translated as 'the English Language'), whilst the underlying pedagogic principles are based in CLT. All of these elements are part of what the Government of Vietnam considers curriculum reform, so that curriculum incorporates the content to be taught and learned, the materials used to achieve these and also, importantly, the approach to teaching and learning that is prescribed to achieve these outcomes. In this way, the curriculum reform embraces the content, the materials and the pedagogy. In different contexts, these terms are used differently. Elsewhere, pedagogy is used to refer to how the curriculum content is enacted within classrooms. In this way, pedagogy takes on a distinct and critical place in the education process, where curriculum may be viewed as the 'what' is to be taught and learned, and pedagogy is seen as how the teaching and learning is to take place. This distinction is important in this study because the focus here is not so much on the content of the curriculum; rather, it is on the materials and perhaps most importantly, on the pedagogy.

The core aim of the study has been to look closely at the rollout of the reform to date. One part of the research has been to describe and analyse what was intended and initiated by the government agency in Vietnam responsible for policy development and implementation, that is the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Another part was to analyse and interpret how the reform was perceived, understood and enacted by practitioners at the local level. The research effort was to document the intentions of the reform at the policy level and realities of the reform at the classroom level. The overarching aim was to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to Project 2020 as an important national step towards international and global participation.

To inform the factors inherent in the curriculum renewal, the study examines the intentions of the policymakers for English teaching and learning at the lower-secondary level, evident in the policy documents published by MOET. This is supported by a critical analysis of the new curriculum materials, the *Tieng Anh* textbook series as the concrete manifestation of the curriculum intentions. This offers understanding of how CLT is made concrete in language input and classroom activities as the means of supporting students to achieve the curriculum goals. It is important to note that the content of the curriculum, its scope, grading and sequencing in the *Tieng Anh* textbooks is not central to the research. The key interest is not so much the 'what' of the curriculum, but rather the 'how', that is the CLT approach which is prescribed to deliver the curriculum content. To understand the realities of practice at the local level, the study explores what teachers know about the 2020 reform and how they feel about it, based on the view that changes in teacher attitude and understanding of the curriculum and pedagogy are "the foundation of achieving lasting reform" (Fullan, 2007, p. 37). Another key focus of the research is on pedagogy, how teachers go about teaching the curriculum content. Insights into practices of CLT are informed by an analysis of classroom discourse drawn from recordings of teachers and students working with the new curriculum materials. The voices of other stakeholders at the local level are also sought, including school leaders, as a means to understand a range of perspectives towards the change, especially the preparations made for the change to occur.

1.2. Research questions

At a broad level, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of the intentions and realities of English language curriculum renewal within Project 2020 in Vietnam,

with a specific focus on lower-secondary education. In particular, the study seeks to inform the following research questions:

1. What are the intentions of the policymakers for English language teaching and learning in lower-secondary schools as expressed through official documentation of the reform?
2. How are these intentions made explicit in the fit-for-purpose textbook series, Tieng Anh?
3. How are the intentions manifest in the reality of lower-secondary classrooms?
   - 3.1. How do the teachers evaluate the new curriculum – how do they appraise it?
   - 3.2. What do the teachers understand of the new curriculum and its pedagogic underpinnings?
   - 3.3. How do the teachers go about enacting the proposed reforms in their classrooms?

1.3. Objectives of the study

The study aims to address these questions in the context of different school environments in one northern province of Vietnam. Accordingly, it:

1. establishes the intentions of policymakers for teaching and learning English in lower-secondary schools as expressed through the curriculum documentation;
2. analyses the accompanying textbook series to explore how the curriculum intentions were made explicit;
3. examines the implementation of the curriculum by analysing and interpreting:
   - 3.1. teacher attitudes towards the reform;
   - 3.2. teacher understandings of the new curriculum and its pedagogic underpinnings;
   - 3.3. teaching and learning in selected English language classrooms.

1.4. Significance of the study

The study aims to provide insights into the complicated process of educational change at a national level and the vantage points of the different participants involved in such change. It aspires to be of hands-on significance to teachers and

students in Vietnam who are directly involved in the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom. It also wishes to be of significance to the policymakers, curriculum designers and relevant government authorities in Vietnam who may potentially use the study to refine practices and processes for the benefit of all stakeholders. Practical implications in the light of the findings provide a starting point for considering what worked for teachers in practice as well as for setting new targets as part of ongoing reform.

Additionally, the findings drawn from this study may be compared to similar English language curriculum reform contexts, allowing for the transferability of findings to other settings. The project may be useful as a source of reference for interested readers who are facing similar issues in the implementation of curriculum renewal, especially in Asian contexts. It may also serve as a useful source of reference for those who are interested in processes and practices of educational change, especially at the level of classroom discourse. .

The study adds to the extensive literature on CLT by offering a systematic review of the communicative approach from its early days to its current developments and manifestations. It provides empirical evidence of CLT in English language classrooms, shedding light on the practicality of CLT at the classroom level in one particular context. A number of suggestions and recommendations are made with regard to addressing the gaps between the intentions and the realities of the reform, in the hope of supporting the achievement of the national goals which are critically important to the lives of all Vietnamese citizens.

1.5. The structure of the thesis

Chapter II details the context of the study, beginning with a sketch of Vietnam's education system, followed by an historical account of English language education in the country, detailing the current issues and debates about the teaching and learning of English. Chapter III reviews the literature relevant to the focus of the study, and the research gap within which this thesis is located. It identifies the underlying forces behind the policy direction of the Vietnamese Government's national plan to develop the English language capacity of its young citizens. This is followed by a review of the literature on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the heart of the policy, its background, principles, development and contentious issues based on both theoretical and practical grounds. Chapter IV outlines the

research methodology, specifying the design, methods of data collection and analytical frameworks for the analyses and interpretation of each type of data. The research findings are presented in the subsequent three chapters, V, VI and VII, each providing a response to one of the research questions posed above. Chapter VIII then discusses the meaning, significance and relevance of the research findings in relation to the literature previously reviewed in Chapter III and the context of the study. It also specifies the implications both from theoretical and practical vantage points. Chapter IX provides a summary of the study findings and concluding remarks. It also includes the limitations of the study and suggestions for further study into other aspects and issues of the English language educational reform for schools in Vietnam.

CHAPTER II: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Vietnam is a one-party Communist state of approximately 90 million citizens, a coastal country in peninsular Southeast Asia bordered by China, Laos and Cambodia. In the 20th century, Vietnam witnessed seismic structural and political changes on its way to establishing itself as an independent country, The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, in 1975. In the 21st century, Vietnam is regarded globally as an economic success, a country which has emerged from a troubled past to take its place in the world, albeit within a communist regime. The economic growth has fuelled significant changes across many sectors of society, with education being one. This is the political context of the country which in important ways impacts on the structure and operation of Vietnamese society, labelled in the study as the socio-political context.

As a way of contextualising the study, a brief overview of Vietnam's education system is given, followed by a historical account of English language education in the country, detailing the current issues and debates about the teaching and learning of English language in Vietnamese schools. Project 2020, the national English language reform for school education outlined in Chapter I, and the focus of the study, is detailed as part of this discussion.

2.1. Overview of the education system in Vietnam

2.1.1. History

Vietnam is a multilingual country with 54 ethnic groups, of which approximately 86% are Vietnamese, with ethnic minorities comprising the remainder (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Administratively, Vietnam is divided into 63 provinces governed centrally from Hanoi via provincial capitals. As stipulated in the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Vietnamese language is the national language and is also the lingua franca of the country, used as the medium of instruction in schools (The National Assembly of Vietnam, 2013).

The historical lineage of officially recorded education in Vietnam stretches back over a thousand years with major influences on education including Confucianism, colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle, post-colonial state formation, and most

recently, the development of a state-dominated market economy within a Marxist-Leninist political framework. Changes in Vietnam's education over time have been both radical and momentous, responding to and affecting major social, political and economic change.

Chinese colonisation for almost one thousand years from 111 B.C. to 939 A.D., saw intellectual activity in Vietnam reflect a blend of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, which "were intertwined, simplified, and assimilated into Vietnamese animistic beliefs" (Le, 2011, p. 10). The Chinese influence was manifest in the use of written Chinese as the language of the state, the development of a Confucian scholar class, and the establishment of formal examinations for the recruitment and regulation of dynastic bureaucracies (H. L. Pham & Fry, 2004; Tran, 2004). Although the majority of Vietnamese people claimed to be Buddhists, they adopted the hierarchical principle of Confucianism as the moral and social code of conduct. Vietnamese architecture, arts, aesthetic values, educational philosophies and practices all adhered to Confucian doctrines. This is the socio-cultural context of Vietnam. Confucian ideas and institutions promoted and reproduced hierarchies of power, wealth, of social status and of different roles for men and women in the family and in society (T. M. P. Nguyen, Jin, & Gross, 2013; Penner & Anh, 1977). Girls and women were largely excluded from formal education and social roles as they were mostly expected to learn and perform "certain virtues of feminine behaviour", such as cooking and sewing, and submit to male authority (London, 2011, p. 8). Confucian values had a strong impact on the development of Vietnam's education system, the legacies of which remain today. During this period, education was intended for the elite class, with the result that only a small number of people were involved in formal studies. Limited access to education among women and the poor, coupled with the challenge of mastering the Chinese writing system resulted in the vast majority of Vietnamese people remaining functionally illiterate (Wright, 2002).

French colonisation from the end of the nineteenth century transformed Vietnamese institutions, including those governing education. The French authorities undertook a restructuring of the country's school system by focusing on the acquisition of French language as part of colonisation. The French-style educational system was also reserved for an elite and was accessible to only a small cohort, essentially the children of the French colonists and those Vietnamese who were trained to become functionaries in the colonial administration system. Girls were allowed to attend

schools in which French and a Romanised Vietnamese script, called *Quoc Ngu*, were used as the media of instruction. According to Wright (2002, p. 231), 3% of the population attended school in 1941 colonial Vietnam; most of those enrolled only for three years, a level that could neither guarantee full literacy in *Quoc Ngu* nor competence in French.

The illiteracy rate remained high during the independence struggle against the French as war placed great limits on opportunities for any quality of education across all regions of the country. After the declaration of independence in 1945, the communist-led Government announced a strong commitment to a fully literate population through compulsory basic schooling at the primary level. In October 1945, President Ho Chi Minh urged the entire population to fight against illiteracy, based on the philosophy that 'an ignorant nation is a weak nation'. The Government officially established free, basic education for the masses, and at the same time, set up regular night classes for illiterate farmers and urban sailors. Literacy was to be in the national language – Vietnamese, and *Quoc Ngu* was used as the official writing script. In less than a year, it was estimated that more than 2.5 million people had reached a functional level of literacy (UNESCO & MOET, 2015).

Between 1954 and 1975, American military involvement in the south of Vietnam began another period of war, resulting in a formally divided Vietnam. During this period of two Vietnams, the country experienced the formation of two States with two separate education systems. The education system in the north, administered by the Communist Party, was inspired by the Soviet model, focusing on the perceived requirements for the wartime situation and reconstruction. As a result of the alliance with Russia and its Soviet satellites, Russian became the dominant foreign language taught and learnt in North Vietnam. In the South, administered by American-supported goverments, American standards were adopted, focusing on a broad practical curriculum. English was the popular language of communication among the Southern Vietnamese elite. However, war and the increasing chaos it brought gradually eroded the education system before the official collapse of the South in 1975.

In the post-war period after unification in 1975, a single national education system was established despite severe financial constraints and foreign trade embargos. The year 1986, known as *Doi Moi* (Open Door Policy, or Innovation), marked a milestone in Vietnam's transition from a centrally planned socialist economy to an

open market economy. *Doi Moi* was launched as an urgent response to the demise of the Soviet bloc, and the urgent need to lift the country out of economic malaise, famine, limited foreign trade and a high illiteracy rate by implementing open-door policies with other countries (Bui & Nguyen, 2016; N. T. Nguyen, 2017). The policy entailed economic liberalisation and brought about radical changes in all aspects of society (X. Nguyen, Roemmele, & Robert, 2013; Q. Truong & Vuong, 2002). In this context of change, the education system was seen to be failing to keep pace with the new demands of the labour market. The emphasis in education at the time, according to T. H. T. Pham (2011) was "to imbue students with nationalism and human dignity" (p. 215). The curriculum was mainly centred around Confucian classics, ancient poetry, Vietnamese history and military tactics. Practical sciences were devalued and ignored, leading to a serious shortage of competent workers when Vietnam began the process of economic integration and entered regional and international organisations, such as the Association of South-East Asian Countries (ASEAN) in 1995, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998, and later the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2007. It was estimated that only 15% to 20% of the labour force had sufficient training and skills to meet the requirements demanded by this integration (T. H. T. Pham, 2011).

After more than 30 years of reform, Vietnam is now entering a period of rapid social and economic development with increasing production and a rising standard of living. Economic growth reached an average annual rate of 6.67% in 2015 and 7.1% in 2018 (World Bank, 2019). Although still defined as a developing nation, the country has witnessed remarkable advances in science and technology, along with an explosion of the market economy. These are the drivers behind the national need for a more efficient workforce in terms of knowledge and professional skills. Education, in the context of this radical socio-economic shift, is considered by the Government as a 'top national priority', a 'national strategy' for the development of the nation. Vietnam's leaders have acknowledged the importance of the knowledge economy and expressed a strong commitment to providing equitable access to "education for all".

Education has been an integral part of Vietnam's history, and in the context of contemporary society, it remains central to the national identity and aspirations for the future of the nation. These hopes for the future sit alongside the fact that values

and beliefs from earlier periods are held close in the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.

2.1.2. The education system in Vietnam

The Vietnamese education system is comprised of the three sectors of early childhood education, basic education and higher education. Early childhood education includes nursery, kindergarten and pre-school for children under six years of age. Basic education covers primary education from Years 1-5 for children aged 6-11, lower-secondary education from Years 6-9 for children aged 12-15, and upper-secondary education from Years 10-12 for students aged 16-18. At the end of upper-secondary schooling, students undertake a national examination to gain a School Completion Diploma to enter higher education institutions. At both the lower and upper-secondary levels, there are ‘Normal’ schools for the majority of students. A category of ‘Specialised’ schools or ‘Selective’ schools service approximately the top 5% of students with the highest academic achievement. Because of the restricted number of places, it is highly competitive to gain entry to these schools, which is mostly based on academic records and achievement at lower levels. At Selective upper-secondary schools, more instructional hours are devoted to specialised subjects, such as maths, physics, English, and literature, while supplementary materials in addition to mandated textbooks are also used. Students in these schools are often under pressure to gain and maintain high academic achievement and class rankings, a result of the expectations of the school, their teachers and their parents. The outcome of this two-tier organisation is a highly competitive system, with a strong focus on high stakes examinations at the upper level. Status and rewards are afforded to the most successful students in the system, and this creates a ‘backwash’ effect at lower levels, where a culture of competition and success or failure in examinations is also promoted. As a consequence of this competitive examination culture, parents and students are motivated to engage with private tutoring outside of the formal education system and a ‘shadow’ industry of after-hours and weekend tutoring flourishes.

2.1.3. The political-institutional context of education in Vietnam

The organisational context of education in Vietnam is grounded in two central sets of interrelated structures: the bureaucratic and the political (D. T. Truong & Hallinger, 2017).

The bureaucratic structure of education is embodied in hierarchic lines of authority and operates at three levels. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) serves as the highest-level administrative agency responsible for national education policy and the operation of the national system of schools. MOET's responsibilities include the drafting of education plans and strategies, the management of human and financial resources in education, and the formulation of law and policies, which are to be approved by the National Assembly in accordance with the directives of the Communist Party of Vietnam. MOET holds centralised power in curriculum development, determining the goals and content of the national school curricula, their syllabi and mandated textbooks for national use. It also plays a leading role in student admission regulations, student assessment policies and the administration of the national university entrance examination. At the local level, the system is decentralised with provincial and district levels charged with the implementation and management of MOET's policies and resources. Provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOETs) are responsible for the direct oversight of upper-secondary education in each province, while the more localised district-level offices govern kindergarten, primary and lower-secondary schools and report to the provincial DOET. In this way, the organisation of education across the country is highly organised in a centralised system in which decisions made within the MOET bureaucracy are accepted by all levels within the system. In line with the Vietnamese socio-political system, this is standard and normalised practice for the administration and management of all national services. From a different vantage point, it would be described as a 'top-down' organisational structure.

Education in Vietnam is also highly politicised. The constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam grants a leading role to the Communist Party as the sole representative of the State, people and society (London, 2011; D. T. Truong, Hallinger, & Sanga, 2016). The role of the Communist Party is formally embedded in the decision-making structures of the education system. At all levels, the Communist Party Committee (CPC) is empowered as the supreme political body in the direction and management of all school practices. Educational administrators and school principals hold the formal title of "Government Officer", and are the Government and CPC representatives at all educational levels (D. T. Truong & Hallinger, 2017; Q. Truong, 2013). Decision making at all levels of education has, according to Q. Truong and Vuong (2002), been dominated by "bureaucratic, familial, conservative and authoritarian styles of management" (p. 45). All workers

in the education system, with or without political affiliation, are expected to obey and implement the policies and directives of the CPC. Other aligned political organisations, such as the Communist Youth Union and the Labour Union, are active in all schools and educational institutions.

In an effort to respond to global trends in educational management in recent years, Vietnam has sought to decentralise governance in education, aiming to increase "grass-roots democracy and staff participation in school management" (D. T. Truong & Hallinger, 2017, p. 543). However, a number of studies have concluded that the bureaucratic and political lines of authority and power in decision making remain largely unchanged, marking policymaking in educationas clearly controlled from the centre (London, 2010; D. T. Truong et al., 2016; Q. Truong, 2013).

2.1.4. The socio-cultural context of education in Vietnam

Cultural values are commonly evidenced in the social norms and beliefs about what is proper, accepted, right and fair by members of a social group or a society (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). These values are transmitted cross-generationally and serve as models for desirable behaviour at home, at school and in communities. In Vietnam, it is true to say that Confucian values have remained pervasive and visible not only in the conduct of social relations, but also in educational processes and practices (Borton, 2000; D. T. Truong et al., 2016). These values have shaped the Vietnamese culture which has been typically characterised as functioning with high levels of power distance and collectivism (Hallinger, Walker, & Trung, 2015).

The concept of power distance is defined by Hofstede (2001) as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 98). Hofstede developed a power distance index, within which high power distance led to the expectation that differences in power were visible and marked in behaviour, and expressed in a subordinate-superior relationship (Bjørge, 2007; Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). Vietnam scores highly on this power distance index, a finding which has been attributed to Confucian teachings about patriarchy, gender, age, social roles and status, all of which rationalise and legitimise the hierarchic organisation of society (D. T. Truong et al., 2016). In the family, children are expected to obey their parents. In school, students are expected to respect and obey their teachers. Old age is a symbol of wisdom and knowledge rather than frailty. Vietnamese people traditionally

value absolute obedience of and respect towards parents, elders, teachers and managers. As Q. Truong and Vuong (2002) commented, this high power distance is reflected in clear subordinate-superior relationships at home, at school and in the workplace. The influence of hierarchy is revealed in how people use language to enact social relationships and fulfil their roles in the family and in society (Borton, 2000; Jamieson, 1995). A simple example is in the vocative pronouns always used in Vietnamese to address older people and those of higher social standing, where the pronouns are used to indicate respect.

In education, the Education Law (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2019) included the explicit goal "to teach students how to respect, love and show good behaviour towards grandparents, parents, teachers, and elderly persons; love their brothers, sisters and friends" (ch. 1, art. 23). This clear statement of Confucian values has been translated not only into school curricula and materials, but has also determined the expected roles and relationships of teachers and students in classrooms (Le, 2011; London, 2011). The teacher is viewed as the holder and transmitter of knowledge, the "primary knower" (Berry, 1981) from a linguistic perspective. The teacher is also the model of morality, is highly respected by students and parents, and is accorded high status in the community. This respect for teachers is reflected in a motto which can be found in every school: *"Tiên học lễ hậu học văn*", translated as "*First learn to behave, then learn the knowledge*" (Le, 1999). These cultural values have traditionally been most clearly evident in the teacher-centred pedagogy, and in the rote learning, recitation and memorisation as the optimal learning strategies for students which have been the hallmark of Vietnamese classrooms (Le, 2011; T. H. T. Pham, 2011).

Collectivism has been a prevalent trait of Vietnamese culture throughout its history and is characterised by an emphasis on harmony, cooperation, unity and conformity (Hofstede, 1980; Park, Rehg, & Lee, 2005; Ralston, Nguyen, & Napier, 1999). Again influenced by Confucianism which conceives of an individual as part of a group or community rather than as a separate or unique being (Yao & Yao, 2000), building harmony within family and society has been a core value. In a collectivist society, Vietnamese people strive to demonstrate "a strong sense of familial affiliation and community spirit" (D. T. Truong & Hallinger, 2017, p. 544). Unlike more individualistic societies which foster identification and individuation of its citizens, Vietnamese people tend to discourage conflicts which might threaten group

harmony. In the classroom, students are judged to be rude if they interrupt, question, or challenge their teacher, as this would violate not only the asymmetric teacher-student relationship but also undermine group harmony.

Collectivism is also reflected in the concept of “losing face”. As noted by Borton (2000), “loss of face is painful in any society, but unbearable in Vietnam” (p. 24). From childhood, children are socialised to hold “communal assessment” as the highest standard (D. T. Truong & Hallinger, 2016, p. 544). Success achieved by an individual brings honour and pride to the family or the community (V. B. Pham, 1999). Misconduct or failure on the part of an individual is the responsibility not only of the individual, but also of her/his parents. “Losing face” is clearly reflected in parents’ expectations of their children to perform well at school, defined most clearly by high achievement in tests and examinations.

It is important to note that both the political and the cultural contexts and their interrelationship have an important bearing on this study. The concentration of political and positional authority reflects the obvious orientation of Vietnamese education administration towards a top-down, centralised model. The Communist Party leadership holds absolute power in deliberating strategic issues at the central and local levels, leaving “little room for bottom-up participation and grass-roots contributions” (Q. Truong, 2013, p. 4). Within this bureaucratic and political structure, it is normalised that educational and curriculum reform is to be shaped from the top. In terms of cultural traditions, Confucian values have shaped and defined educational processes and practices as well as the desired roles and relationships which pertain between the teacher and the student in Vietnamese classrooms.

2.1.5. Educational practices in Vietnam

Education in Vietnam has traditionally been knowledge-centred, where the textbook as the manifestation of the curriculum and the teacher determine the knowledge to be acquired (Le, 2011; London, 2010). As noted, the legacies of Confucianism are still to be found in the high value and respect for education throughout society as “the significant symbolic capital for social and economic upward mobility” (Le, 2019, p. 8). Confucian values about education, including the traditional relationship between teacher and learner, in combination with the collectivist foundations of the culture, shape the tenor of Vietnamese classrooms. These values are reflected in

the asymmetric teacher-student relationship which supports teacher-centred approaches and a highly structured curriculum. Underpinned by behaviourist stimulus-response patterns and rote learning, the educational system expects students to obey their teachers and to work hard at the tasks provided. Little attention has ever been given to the development of critical thinking which, according to V. H. Nguyen (2002), “was of no avail in a system based on absolute respect of books” (p. 293). Moreover, an examination-oriented system with a heavy emphasis on rote learning and memorisation has normalised passive strategies in school students (Le, 2011).

A governmental effort to shift from this inherent system of ‘passive knowledge transmission’ to more active and critical ways of thinking and learning was initiated in a ten-year master plan for educational development in 2000. In relation to English language, this was made explicit in the national curriculum reform of 2002 characterised by the promotion of student-centred learning. This curriculum reform was expected to pave the way for the decline of Confucian philosophical influences on education. However, the outcomes were modest, primarily because the traditional teaching and learning culture with its deep-seated values, tried and trusted for more than a thousand years, was not eroded nor diminished (T. H. T. Pham, 2011).

One review concluded that typical educational practices in Vietnamese schools could be characterised as having “top-down inflexible management, ideology-driven curricula rigidity, teacher-centred teaching, product-oriented assessment, outdated materials, and limited teaching research” (Le, 2015, p. 183). This was a damning condemnation of schools. Another, London (2011), argued that whilst rapid economic growth permitted increases in the scale and scope of formal schooling in Vietnam, there had been a prevailing sense that the current education system was inadequate to the country’s need for integration into the globalised world. For years, there had been debates and anxieties about the education system concerning the provision of expenditure, accessibility, equity across regions and disadvantaged groups as well as its overall direction and management.

2.2. English language education in Vietnam

English language education in Vietnam has been inextricably linked to political, economic and social change. A history of conflict with different enemies left Vietnam

having soured relations with the outside world for extended periods of its history. At the end of the lengthy period of conflict in 1975, the languages of Vietnam's enemies disappeared from the school curriculum (Wright, 2002). During the war with America, English was widely promoted in the south of Vietnam. However, after unification in 1975, the status of English fell sharply. In line with the prevailing Marxist-Leninist socialist regime and with aid in education from the Soviet Union, Russian became the dominant foreign language taught and learnt in the post-war period, with approximately 70% of school students studying Russian, 20% studying English, and 10% learning French (Hoang, 2011). At the tertiary level, the number of Russian majors outnumbered combined enrolments in all other foreign languages (Do, 2006; Le, 2007).

English began developing in importance following the launch of *Doi Moi,* the economic reform policy in 1986. The open-door policy marked a major shift in political direction from a centrally planned socialist economy towards economic liberalisation and the encouraging of foreign investment, resulting in a surge in demand for English proficiency. In the late 1990s, the Government instituted English as a compulsory foreign language in schools and tertiary institutions. At the millennium, 98% of school students were learning English as a foreign language across the system (X. V. Nguyen, 2002), and about 90% of tertiary students, regardless of their major, chose to study English (Le, 2007). Private English language centres and schools flourished, and people also began to study English for professional development and social mobility. Influenced by the market-driven economy, English has become a gatekeeper for educational, professional and commercial success, and is "synonymous with economic growth and prosperity" (Le, 2019, p. 8), with the phenomenon described as "English language fever" (Le, 2007, p. 172)".

From 1982 to 2002, in the National Curricula for English, the study of the language was introduced as a compulsory school subject in a three-year curriculum at the upper-secondary level, and as an option in a seven-year curriculum starting from the lower-secondary level. The two separate sets of textbooks in both sectors, as noted by Hoang (2011), were "mainly grammar-based, taking the view that grammar can be taught systematically as a set of rules to be mastered and transferred by the learner into proficient language use" (p. 10). Despite the use of two curricula, the high-stakes national examinations were based entirely on the three-year curriculum.

These discrete-point, written examinations were mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary (lexis) and reading comprehension, which supported a grammar-translation methodology and a teacher-centred pedagogy. Since oral skills were not part of these examinations, little attention was given to spoken language and most students were unable to engage in communicative uses of English, as personally attested to in the opening paragraphs of this thesis.

Inconsistencies in the English curricula, coupled with a perceived lack of English competence among students, led to more national curriculum reform in 2002, when a new English curriculum and series of mandated textbooks were developed and trialled. Six years later, this national project was completed with the uniform implementation of the new curriculum in all schools across the country. English was made compulsory at both lower and upper-secondary levels. A feature of this curriculum reform was the attempt to make classrooms more communicative and to encourage a shift away from the traditional grammar-translation method which had previously prevailed (Le & Barnard, 2009). A new goal for English teaching and learning was made explicit in the curriculum policy document whereby "communicative skills are the goal of English teaching at the secondary school while linguistic knowledge serves as a means to the end" (MOET, 2006, p. 6). Although promoting the use of English for communication, the curriculum did not explicitly prescribe any pedagogic approach or specific methodology to achieve the goal. Nevertheless, the 2006 curriculum is often seen as the first step towards introducing a communicative approach in Vietnam. This 2006 curriculum is still being used in schools whilst the new pilot curriculum within Project 2020 is officially rolled out nationwide.

Before and after the introduction of the 2006 curriculum, there were a number of studies expressing concerns about the challenges of implementing a communicative approach in Vietnamese classrooms (Bock, 2000; H. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; H. H. Pham, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000). A survey by Tomlinson and Dat (2004) indicated that many teachers expressed their unwillingness to change their pedagogy, and also doubted the willingness of the students to participate in communicative activities. Le and Barnard (2009) in an attempt to investigate the implementation of the 2006 curriculum at the classroom level, conducted a case study in one high school and found that the expected communicative lessons were not implemented as outlined in the curriculum. Classroom pedagogies remained

"textbook-based, test-oriented, and teacher-fronted" (Le & Barnard, 2009, p. 22). The grammar-translation method and the presentation-practice-product (PPP) lesson format still had a clear influence on classroom practice. The paper-and-pencil format of testing remained largely grammar-based, and the washback effect demotivated students to become orally active and more competent or confident in using the spoken language. Large class sizes with mixed levels of proficiency, under-motivated students, and a lack of qualified teachers presented major challenges to English teaching and learning in schools (Le, 2007; L. Nguyen, Hamid, & Renshaw, 2016; H. H. Pham, 2007). The picture becomes gloomier when it is recognised that the qualities, distribution and accessibility of quality English education remained uneven across regions and for different sectors of the population (London, 2011). This was most clearly in evidence for ethnic minority students, who were encouraged to speak and maintain their own languages, were not proficient in the national language which was the language of schooling, and had very little motivation to be proficient in English (Le, 2015; H. Nguyen et al., 2018).

The stark conclusion was that secondary school and university graduates "got nowhere in communicative English" (Le, 2007, p. 175). Vietnamese students, including those who had an extensive repertoire of grammar and lexis, were communicatively incompetent and unable to use the language in real-life interactions. With the advances of globalisation, Vietnam increasingly felt the pressure to enhance English competence across the population so as to "improve national competitiveness in a rapidly changing global marketplace" (Wedell, 2009, p. 15). The Government's response to this pressing demand was to launch another reform of foreign language education, Project 2020.

2.3. The Foreign Language Project 2020

Project 2020 began in 2008 with the Government's launch of a national plan for *"Teaching and Learning Foreign Language Education in the National Education System in the Period 2008-2020".* With a budget of 9,378 billion VND (approximately 426 million USD), this project has been regarded as the most prominent and ambitious language initiative in Vietnam's educational history (Le, 2015; Bui & Nguyen 2016). The project reflected a clear commitment by the Government to lift English proficiency in the national schooling system. The overall goal of Project 2020 was written as follows:

> "to renovate the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the national education system, to implement a new foreign language programme at all educational levels and training degrees, so that in 2015 there will be obvious progress in qualification and use of foreign languages of Vietnamese human resources, especially in some prioritised sectors. By 2020, Vietnamese young people graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily life, study and work in a multicultural and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a competitive advantage of Vietnamese people to serve the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country".
>
> (Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, 2008, Article 1.1, Decision 1400)

Project 2020 was initially a twelve-year project separated into three phases:

- Phase 1 (2008 to 2010), prioritised the development of English curriculum and textbooks for a 10-year period of teaching and learning, along with the preparation of resources including school facilities and qualified teaching staff.
- Phase 2 (2011 to 2015) focused on piloting the new curriculum in a number of schools with adequate facilities and qualified teachers. In this phase, Mathematics was expected to be taught through English in 30% of high schools in nominated cities.
- Phase 3 (2016 to the time of writing) has been devoted to the institutionalisation of the new curriculum, the prescribed approach to teaching and learning, and the textbooks in all schools across the country. In line with the aims of the project, by the year 2020, 100% of students across the different levels of schooling are to be studying within the new English program.

The new English program consisted of curricula for three levels of schooling: a three-year curriculum for the primary level, a four-year curriculum for the lower-secondary level, and a three-year curriculum for the upper-secondary level. To the time of writing, each is being trialled where the aim is to gain practical experiences of its use in the classroom. Once rolled out nationally, the total number of compulsory teaching hours across the ten years are calculated at 735 hours, as shown in Table 2.1. This equates to approximately two hours of English every week across these ten years of schooling.

Table 2.1. *Curriculum allocation for the English language program within Project 2020*

Level of Education	Year of Schooling	Number of Periods	Total (hours)	Note
Primary	Years 3-5	3 years x 3 periods (35 mins each) x 35 weeks	184	Compulsory
Lower-secondary	Years 6-9	4 years x 3 periods (45 mins each) x 35 weeks	315	Compulsory
Upper secondary	Years 10-12	3 years x 3 periods (45 mins each) x 35 weeks	236	Compulsory
		350 weeks	**735**	

A six-level Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam was developed, built on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment – CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework provided a basis for the elaboration of language syllabi, textbooks, and the measurement and assessment of language proficiency. It consisted of three broad tiers – basic, intermediate and advanced, divided into six levels equivalent to the six levels on the CEFR as described in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. *Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam (MOET, 2014)*

Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam		CEFR equivalence
Basic User	Level 1	A1
	Level 2	A2
Intermediate User	Level 3	B1
	Level 4	B2
Advanced User	Level 5	C1
	Level 6	C2

The specific goal set for English language education at each level of schooling was Level A1 for primary schools, Level A2 for lower-secondary schools, and Level B1 for upper-secondary schools. Accordingly, after ten years of English language learning, school graduates at the end of Year 12 were expected to be independent, intermediate users of English capable of achieving Proficiency Level B1, outlined here in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. *Targeted proficiency level for each level of schooling (MOET, 2014)*

Level of schooling	Targeted level of proficiency	CEFR equivalence	General description
Primary school **(Year 3-5)**	**Level 1**	**A1**	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce himself/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
Lower-secondary school **(Year 6-9)**	**Level 2**	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
Upper-secondary school **(Year 10-12)**	**Level 3**	**B1**	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
	Level 4	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	Level 5	**C1**	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of

			organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
	Level 6	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

As part of the initiative, more than 60,000 school teachers of English were expected to be confident, intermediate to advanced level users of English. Level B2 was required of primary and lower-secondary teachers, while upper-secondary teachers were expected to operate at Level C1. The importance of these expected levels of proficiency for teachers lies in the fact that a nationwide review of proficiency levels amongst teachers in 2011-2012, revealed that 83% of primary school teachers, 87% of lower-secondary and 92% of upper secondary teachers failed to meet the required levels of proficiency and were under-qualified to teach the new curricula (N. H. Nguyen, 2013). In response, in-service teacher training courses and workshops were organised across the country, aimed at enhancing teacher capacity. This investment of time, effort and resources into language courses and training workshops was seen as MOET's commitment to teacher professional development in preparation for the implementation of the curriculum reform.

In 2017, the political decision was made to adjust the achievement date for Project 2020, extending the implementation period from 2020 to 2025 (Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, 2017). In the following year 2018, the project title was changed from Project 2020 to the Project (MOET, 2018a), and a new plan was proposed for the period 2017-2025 (MOET, 2018b). MOET has planned for the continued implementation of the pilot English language curricula although no official evaluation or revision of the curriculum policy has been made publicly available at the time of writing.

Chapter conclusion

In describing the context in which the study was situated, it has been necessary to provide an overview of the political, social and cultural backdrop to the education system in modern-day Vietnam. Vietnam has grasped the critical importance of engaging in the global marketplace for the economic benefits this can deliver, which

in turn can lift the living standards within the country and improve the life chances of all its citizens. English language is seen to be the vehicle for greater participation in international business and commerce and this has precipitated reform of English language curricula and pedagogy in recent years. From 1986 onwards, and with increasing focus in the new millennium, the Government has aimed to increase the scale, scope and quality of its English language education. However, some of the proposed changes, especially in regard to the communicative levels required for negotiation and meaning-making in the target language, have not met with easy success. The planned changes have encountered social and cultural beliefs which did not value highly the kinds of communicative practices required.

Project 2020 (now rebadged as Project 2025 and hereafter in the study referred to as Project 2025) has been a significant landmark, a direct response to the perceived low levels of English communicative capacity among young Vietnamese citizens. Within Project 2025, the Government has mandated curricular and pedagogic practices to enable the country to take advantage of the economic opportunities it envisions in global commerce which is conducted via the global lingua franca of English. The reform is the latest and most significant effort to intervene in the outcomes of English language education at the school level. Interventions have been initiated previously but, as noted, these have generally not been successful. The financial outlay within Project 2025 is an indication that the time for change has now come, that the economic imperative is too strong to ignore or to allow to bypass Vietnam.

Chapter III provides a closer examination of the approach to English language teaching and learning prescribed within Project 2025. This includes a review of literature related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and attendant matters of curriculum design, curriculum implementation and curriculum assessment. The chapter also looks more closely at the teachers who have been charged with the responsibility for delivering the national improvement at the classroom level.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

The point of departure for the literature review is a conceptualisation of 'World Englishes', which foregrounds the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers of English, and prefaces a discussion of the non-native-speaker teaching force in Vietnam which is to implement the Project 2025 curriculum reform. The chapter also describes English language policy and planning at the national level, including an overview of major approaches to curriculum reform. This is followed by a review of the literature on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is at the heart of the reform, its provenance, principles and development into the global 'default' approach to teaching and learning English language, as well as critiques at the theoretical and practical level.

3.1. Global English

Globalisation as an instrument of capitalism has become integrated into the fabric of a great number of societies across the world and has played a critical role in reforming global, political, economic, social and educational agendas (R. Kirkpatrick & Bui, 2016). Increasing trans-national travel, migration flows and changing demographic trends have altered global economic, social, cultural and linguistic landscapes. One clear consequence has been the global spread and influence of the English language as *the* international language, the lingua franca which has oiled the engine of global commerce (Jenkins, 2006; Nunan, 2001, 2003; Samarin, 1987). Support for the comment, "the sun never sets on the English language" (Fishman, 1992, p. 22) is that it has an official role in over 70 countries and territories and an estimated two billion people across the world now use or are learning to use English (Sharifian, 2013). This estimate means that close to 25% of the world's population uses or is learning English to communicate with others.

The global spread of English was visually represented by Kachru (1992) as three concentric circles, labelled as the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles. The Inner Circle referred to the original bases of English, including the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, while the Outer Circle covered the earlier phases of the spread of English via colonisation and its institutionalisation in non-native contexts, for example in India and Nigeria. The Expanding Circle included the rest of the world where English was utilised primarily as a foreign language. English, therefore, appears in at least three guises: as a native or first language; as a second, very

familiar language, or a foreign language; but over and above these three, and with the vast majority of users, it is the lingua franca for global communication. Whilst a great deal of criticism has been made of the aggressive expansion of English at the cost of other languages and cultural identities (Mühlhäusler, 2002; Phillipson, 2013), it cannot be denied that English now functions as the 'contact language' between those millions, perhaps hundreds of millions of users, who share neither a common native language nor a common culture, and for whom English is the chosen language of communication (Firth, 1996; Seidlhofer, 2005).

As global English has expanded, fuelled by the impacts of globalisation and new technologies, many Outer and Expanding Circle countries have felt the pressure to increase their numbers of competent English users in order to expand their global participation. Clearly identifiable as a country in the Expanding Circle, Vietnam has identified the need for competent English language users to facilitate greater participation in the global community and to gain benefits from global integration. At the community level, mastery of English has been strongly linked with better education, improved employment prospects and socio-economic mobility. The Vietnamese Government has reified English as "inherently useful and essential" (Le, 2019, p. 9) for socio-economic, technological and cultural exchanges. This pragmatic motivation, strongly couched in the discourses of economic development and wellbeing, has witnessed an "economic imperative" (Sayer, 2015, p. 50) to develop and implement Project 2025.

The globalisation of English and its rapid spread amongst communities of speakers around the world has resulted in the 'localisation' of English and the development of many dialectal varieties of the language (Sharifian, 2010, 2013) leading to a thriving field of study devoted to "Word Englishes" (Bolton & Kachru, 2006; Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1992; Melchers & Shaw, 2011). As a consequence of its global spread, non-native speakers of English far outnumber native speakers, which means that the great majority of interactions in English take place among non-native speakers and involve no participation of native speakers (Crystal, 2003). From this situation has emerged a discussion about the ownership of English, whether it belongs to the native speakers or to anyone who uses it, the status of different varieties of English as used in global communication, and also the variety of English to be taught and learned in preparation for increased global participation.

3.2. Native Speakers (NS) and Non-native Speakers (NNS)

Issues pertaining to native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) have been a consistent theme running through the discussion of English as a global lingua franca. Although traditionally considered two different and distinguishable categories, views about different types of English users have been challenged in recent years by a growing number of scholars who have questioned the relevance of this dichotomy. These debates, along with the concept of World Englishes, have brought with them significant implications for curricula and pedagogies in relation to teaching and learning English.

One argument relating to the distinction between NS and NNS concerns the ownership of English. The question is whether English should remain the property of the NS by virtue of “better proficiency and stronger cultural affiliation” (Medgyes, 2001, p. 431). This, in turn, raises the question of who qualifies as an NS. Among the criteria for “native speakerhood” (Medgyes, 2001, p. 431), the most often cited is the birthplace, or geographical location in an Inner Circle country. However, birthplace does not always determine language identity, for example, in the case of a child born in England who then moved to Japan at a very young age with her/his parents. As argued by Kramsch (1997), native speakerhood is neither a privilege of birth nor education, but rather, “acceptance by the group that created a distinction between native and non-native speakers” (p. 363). She further argued that NSs do not always speak standardised, idealised varieties of their language. Native speakerhood, according to Medgyes (2001), is a blurred concept because it involves many factors including education, occupation, the environment in which English is used, cultural affiliation, self-identification and political allegiance. Similarly, Braine (2013) argued against the notion of the NS on the ground that all the linguistic, social and economic connotations accompanying it are “troublesome and open to controversy” (p. xiv).

Given the role of English as a lingua franca and the birth and growth of multiple Englishes, the concept of a native speaker may appear to be neither important nor relevant. A lingua franca, by definition, refers to "any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues" (Samarin, 1987, p. 371). In other words, it is the selected means of communication amongst those from different first language backgrounds and across lingua-cultural boundaries. By this

definition, a lingua franca has no native speakers; it belongs to anyone who speaks it and is nobody's mother tongue (Rajagopalan, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2005, 2007).

Whilst these discussions have been of great interest to linguists and demographers, they also have important implications in the domain of English language teaching, especially in Expanding Circle countries. Vietnam, seen from this perspective, no longer needs to prepare students for intelligibility in relation to NSs in the Inner Circle (Marlina & Giri, 2014; Seidlhofer, 2007; Sharifian, 2013). Rather, what students need is the ability to achieve and sustain mutual comprehension in global contexts where English is "entirely and fundamentally an instrument of communication" (Kuo, 2006, p. 215). In a context of World Englishes, it is now important to avoid assumptions about the need to teach the same language to the same linguistic standards. The fact is that Received Pronunciation (RP), the prestige British dialect in the UK and the variety held as the 'gold standard' by the NNS world, is spoken by only 3% of the population in the UK (Jenkins, 2002). There has been a 'push-back' to the unquestioned status of RP as the best spoken variety of English. The effort has been in effect to 'move the goal-posts' of English language teaching in the NNS world, to become more in tune with the rapidly changing global landscape and to work on intelligibility and raising consciousness of intercultural understanding in cross-cultural communication as the most appropriate outcomes.

In the discussion about the status of one or a few specific varieties of English and the overwhelming proportion of interactions in English proceeding in contexts where the first language of the participants is not English, then an inevitable question arises about the usefulness of the terms NS and NNS for global communication in the 21st century. Predominantly, English language curricula in the Expanding Circle have remained tied to Standard British English, or in the case of USA curriculum writers and publishers, to Standard American English. An NS model, as argued by Kuo (2006, p. 213), can serve as a "convenient starting point" and it is then the decision of professionals in each context to decide to what extent they want to approximate to that model. The image of the NS has continued to function as "the yardstick" (Rajagopalan, 2004, p. 114) or a base for policy decision-making, authenticity of materials and learner's proficiency. A similar view was expressed by Davies (1991) that in spite of the claim that no proper definition of NS exists, the NS can still serve as "a fine myth that we may need as a model, a goal, almost an inspiration" (p. 157).

This has been the accepted norm in Vietnam, despite the fact that the entire English language teaching force at the lower-secondary level is NNS.

3.3. The non-native English (NNS) teacher

NNS teachers may be simply defined as the opposite of the NS teacher who speaks English as a native language. However, given the complexity of the notion of native speakerhood discussed above, Medgyes (2001) provided a narrower definition of NNS teacher as applied to those who work in ESL/EFL environments with students from heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds. To clarify ESL versus EFL, the general understanding is that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to a context where the target language is not the lingua franca in the broader community, for example English teaching and learning in Vietnam. English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts are those in which the target language is the prevalent language in the community, for example, migrants learning English in Australia. Accordingly, an NNS teacher is described as one (Medgyes, 2001, p. 433):

- for whom English is a second or foreign language
- who works in an ESL/ EFL (EAL) environment
- whose students are a monolingual group of learners
- who speaks the same native language as her/his students.

Medgyes first opened the door for discussion on NNS issues in challenging the assumption that that NS and NNS English teachers were “two different species”, and that an English teacher belonged to “either this or that category” (p. 25). In 1999, the establishment of a Non-native English Speaker Caucus in the global TESOL organisation marked a milestone of the NNS teacher movement as a new area of research. However, as Medgyes’ publications were largely unknown in the USA where the movement had its origin, it took another decade for more studies to emerge on this issue. This may have been because the topic is “unusually sensitive” and “often considered politically incorrect” (Braine, 2013, p. 3). Issues in relation to NNS English teachers have now emerged as legitimate areas of research. There have been empirical studies addressing issues in relation to the NNS teacher in different contexts in Asia, Europe, and North America. These investigations have mainly been classified into two categories:

- Self-perceptions of NNS teachers (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Braine, 2013, 2018; Hayes, 2009; Inbar-Lourie, 1999; Llurda, 2005; Llurda & Huguet, 2003;

Ma, 2012; Medgyes, 1994, 2001; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999)

- Student perceptions of their NNS teachers (Díaz, 2015; Gurkan & Yuksel, 2012; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Ling & Braine, 2007; Moussu, 2002; Watson Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009).

The commonly held view in the teaching world has been that the ideal teacher should be NS, with the outcome that NNS teachers from the Outer and Expanding Circles were generally regarded as 'second-class citizens' in the profession (Braine, 2013; Phillipson, 1992). This has been labelled by Phillipson (1992) as the "native speaker fallacy" (p.195) and ignores the fact that NNS teachers bring particular attributes to the classroom which are not available to NS teachers.

3.3.1. Strengths of the NNS English language teacher

Medgyes (1994, 2001) argued that while the NS teacher may make a better '*language'* model, the NNS teacher may provide better '*learner'* models since they themselves were previously successful learners of English as an additional language. Accordingly, the NNS teacher could teach language learning strategies more effectively, imparting their own learning experiences and helping students to discover strategies that worked for them (Gurkan & Yuksel, 2012).

Another positive of NNS teachers is that they hold more information about the structure of the English language. Language awareness involves explicit knowledge about the language that the NNS teacher has learned for years. Whereas NS teachers have better intuition about what is right and wrong in language use, NNS teachers may have deeper insights into what is easier or more difficult in the learning process (Medgyes, 2001). The NNS teacher also better anticipates difficulties with particular aspects of the language as well as being more empathetic to the needs of their learners (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Braine, 2013; Kramsch, 1997; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). Given the familiarity with the teaching and learning context and more in-depth understanding of their students' linguistic, cultural and personal backgrounds, NNS teachers are in a better position to set realistic targets for their students (Braine, 2013, 2018). NNS teachers are potentially more conscious of the constraints of the local curriculum, materials, and examinations than imported NS teachers (Cook, 2005). They can also make use of the learners' mother tongue for clarification (Hayes, 2009; Medgyes, 2001). This view is supported by Inbar-Lourie

(1999) and Kramsch (1997), who proposed that the bilingual capacities of NNS teachers enable them to switch back and forth between the first and the target language to meet the demands of the learning situation. In sum, there are several strong arguments in favour of the NNS English language teacher, particularly in relation to teaching and learning strategies.

3.3.2. Challenges for the NNS English language teacher

The major challenge for NNS English teachers has been linked to English language proficiency. As reported in a 2012 survey in Vietnam, approximately 87% of lower-secondary school teachers were not competent enough to teach the communicative curriculum (N. H. Nguyen, 2013). Findings drawn from studies on NNS teacher self-perceptions (Braine, 2013, 2018; Hayes, 2009; Llurda, 2005) revealed feelings of inadequate English language competence and professional inferiority. According to Medgyes (2001), language difficulties among NNS teachers were related to vocabulary, colloquial and appropriate use of English, followed by issues in oral fluency, pronunciation and listening comprehension. Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, and Sasser (2004) found that NNS teachers faced difficulties in communication skills, and, as a consequence, they often switched to the first language as the medium of instruction. Moussu (2006) reported a similar finding in which NNS teachers with “foreign accents” often lacked professional confidence. From a student perspective, research on student perceptions of NNS teachers found that students appeared to be largely tolerant of the differences between their NS and NNS teachers, and became more supportive of their NNS teachers over time (Braine, 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Ling & Braine, 2007). Despite such research on student perceptions, the issue of language proficiency has remained a critical factor and a criterion for teacher evaluation within the profession.

Teacher knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy has also been found to be a significant determinant of successful language teaching (Medgyes, 2001). It has been argued that language teachers need to have sufficient knowledge about the nature of language itself, about language learning and about language teaching in order to adopt and adapt pedagogies and strategies in response to the diverse needs of their learners (Bax, 2003; Kuo, 2006). However, few NNS teachers of English have theoretical understandings of language education as they commonly draw on their own experiences as learners and as teachers (Borg, 2015; Humphries & Burns, 2015). Unlike other professions, teaching is susceptible to the

‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Borg, 2015), with pedagogic preconceptions based on personal experiences which colour beliefs and understandings about the language classroom. On this basis, it is not surprising that Vietnamese English language teachers, who have largely learnt English primarily for success in grammar-based examinations, have built their practices on the processes which helped them to succeed in these examinations. This potentially poses challenges when these same Vietnamese teachers have been challenged to consider teaching and learning in ways that they were not taught themselves.

3.4. National English language education policies

It is hard to deny the economics of national English language proficiency, which has been closely associated with a persistent discourse of national socio-economic development and global competitiveness. Particularly in Expanding Circle countries, millions, perhaps billions of dollars have been invested with the aim of enhancing the scale and quality of English language education (A. Kirkpatrick, 2010; Moodie & Nam, 2016; Nunan, 2003; Spolsky & Sung, 2015).

3.4.1. The place of English in national schooling systems

The privileged position of English has given rise to its increasingly prominent role in national education systems. English language education has been seen as a critical and viable bridge to individual and national commercial goals. Reviews of English language education policies in the Asia-Pacific region and East Asia, for example by Baldauf, Kaplan, Kamwangamalu, and Bryant (2011),; Kam (2002); Nunan (2003), have all served to reinforce the place of English as the dominant foreign language in the national education systems in these locations.

For example, in China, English was considered vital to the country’s modernisation, revitalisation and participation in a globalised economy (Hu, 2005; Q. Wang, 2007; Zhang & Liu, 2014). The status of English was reflected in the Ministry of Education’s 2000 curriculum mandate for secondary schools (Hu & McKay, 2012, p. 348):

> In the modern world of today, scientific progress, represented by developments in information technology, advances by leaps and bounds. The informatisation of social life and the globalization of economic activities have made foreign languages, English in particular, an increasingly important tool to facilitate China’s opening up and interaction with other countries (p. 348).

Similar sentiments were echoed in Japanese educational discourse in which English was seen as an important strategy in the pathway towards internationalisation. According to Baldauf et al. (2011), more than 95% across all age groups in Japan chose to study English as a foreign language. The position and status of English was also evident in the Government policy statement “An action plan to cultivate Japanese with English abilities” published by Japan’s education ministry (MEXT) in 2003, cited in Hu and McKay (2012):

> English has played a central role as the common international language in linking people who have different mother tongues. For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language. In addition, English abilities are important in terms of linking our country with the rest of the world, obtaining the world’s understanding and trust, enhancing our international presence and further developing our nation (p. 355)

This surge of interest in English has also been evident in other parts of the world, in both Latin America and North Africa, where “English has established itself as a powerful language because it is a tool as well as a resource for social mobility, linguistic superiority, and educational and economic benefits” (Giri, 2010, p. 93). The examples cited here reinforce the perceived importance of English language education in many different contexts.

3.4.2. Current trends in English language education

The increasing importance of English in the global context has been reflected in three major trends:

- the “more and earlier” introduction of English to younger aged students;
- the increased prominence of English as a compulsory school subject;
- the concerted efforts for renovation and innovation of English language curricula and pedagogies in national schooling systems.

There has been a significant expansion of English education at the primary school level, lowering the starting age for formal English instruction (Hamid, 2010; Hu & McKay, 2012; Sayer, 2015; Spolsky & Moon, 2012). A systematic review by Baldauf et al. (2011) revealed that English was now introduced in Year 1 in several countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia and Timor Lester, while in others such as China, South Korea and Vietnam, English is to be taught from Year 3. The rationale for this “more and earlier” approach (Hamid, 2010; Sayer, 2015) was based on

assumptions of an optimal age, or a critical period for language learning during which younger learners could pick up a new language more quickly and easily.

The second trend in recent national English language policies is the increased prominence of English as a compulsory school subject (Spolsky & Sung, 2015; Hu & McKay, 2012; Nunan, 2003). English language study has been increasingly mandated across all schooling levels. There have also been significant increases in the number of classroom contact hours for English teaching and learning. Project 2025 in Vietnam is a case in point. In other contexts, for example in Shanghai schools, Hu and McKay (2012) reported that contact hours significantly increased by 80% between 1998 and 2011.

A third trend has seen concerted efforts to renovate and innovate both English curricula and pedagogies in the schooling sectors. In many countries in Asia, including Vietnam, there have been steps taken in recent decades to strengthen and improve the teaching and learning of English through large-scale reforms at a national level (Majhanovich, 2013; Spolsky & Sung, 2015). Common to such reform efforts has been a shift away from traditional pedagogies with their strong focus on form, which has been criticised as unsuited to the need for communication (Littlewood, 2014; Humphries & Burns, 2015). The innovations have been oriented towards practical competencies that enable students to use the language for communicative purposes.

3.4.3. National approaches to curriculum reform

English language curriculum development, in tandem with the worldwide demand for English proficiency, has spawned a global educational industry. In curriculum development, a primary issue is who the change agent is, or in other words, who decides to initiate change and for what reasons. This raises the distinction between two major approaches to curriculum reform, the top-down and the bottom-up, which differ significantly in relation to both the agents and the processes of change. In recent years, when national efforts have been undertaken in the area of curriculum and pedagogic reform, much discussion has centred on the merits of top-down and bottom-up reform. There has been no lack of both positive and negative argument for both models.

In the top-down model, the reform is centrally driven, and change is initiated and shaped for implementation by policymakers at the top of a hierarchy (Fink, 2003; Mellegård & Pettersen, 2016; Waring, 2017). Central authorities make decisions about what, when and how the change should be developed and implemented (Cummings, Phillips, Tilbrook, & Lowe, 2005; Waring, 2017). Fullan (2007) proposed that top-down reform is usually politically driven or the result of bureaucratic self-interest, political responsiveness or concern for solving an unmet need. This last reason clearly fits the Project 2025 initiative. The benefit of top-down reforms is that they can result in large-scale and systematic change at a national or state level (Fullan, 1994; Fullan & Scott, 2009). A centralised curriculum can ensure a consistent commitment to and coverage of what students should know or be able to do in order to attain prescribed performance standards (Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2002). An additional advantage of top-down initiatives relates to the time and cost necessary for the planning and implementation of change. As Fullan (2007) stated, innovations are impossible "without additional dollars" (p. 255); thus an advantage of the top-down model is that it provides the financial means for change to occur.

On the other hand, advocates of bottom-up innovation argue that only practically-driven reform can succeed because the need for change comes from the local level where the teacher is the real agent of change (Fullan, 1994; Morgan, 1992; Waring, 2017). Calls for change are voiced by teachers, often originating from a need for professional development or a response to changes in teaching and learning contexts (Goodson, 2003; Mellegård & Pettersen, 2016). Based on the realities of these classroom contexts, teachers and school administrators have the autonomy to create their own models of change (Mason, Mason, Mendez, Nelsen, & Orwig, 2005).

Each of these approaches, notwithstanding their individual strengths, poses potential challenges. The outcome of top-down initiatives is usually the imposition of educational standards, centralised curricula and mandated materials produced by specialised curriculum writers 'removed' from schools. The reality is that some or all of these may not always be feasible or practical at the classroom level (Fink, 2003; D. Macdonald, 2003). In many cases, educational policies are introduced by a Ministry with little or no consultation with the end-users and beneficiaries, namely teachers and students (Kennedy, 1987). Related to this issue is that policy planners

and decision-makers may be unaware of the constraints faced by local implementers, and/or do not provide preconditions for the change to take place. The attempt to force a top-down change may lead to resistance or perhaps 'surface-level' acceptance by teachers who ultimately hold power in the classroom (Ching-Ching & Kuo-Hung, 2018). Accordingly, centralised reform mandates often have a poor record of success in actual school improvement because of the discrepancies between the intended reform and their local implementation (Cummings et al., 2005; Fullan, 1994; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Okoth, 2016).

Bottom-up reform, on the other hand, may suffer from a different set of problems. They may not work on a large scale or be able to be sustained because they are locally or perhaps even individually inspired and conducted on a small scale (Fullan, 1994; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Mason et al., 2005). As a result, they are unlikely to spread across a jurisdiction or to connect to authority structures to make broader and longer-lasting impacts. On the basis of these issues, Fullan (1994) concluded that "neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies are effective" (p. 1), arguing instead that a blend of the two might be a more workable process. Similarly, Mason et al. (2005) and Mellegård and Pettersen (2016) suggested a reconciliation and combination of both top-down and bottom-up forces to create the connectivity required for effective change.

Given the socio-political context in Vietnam Project 2025 could only be a top-down reform with the decision to address an unmet national need made entirely on political grounds motivated by commercial interests (Le, 2015, 2019). It was assumed that via a centralised curriculum reform, all students across the country could attain the same standard of English proficiency irrespective of school, location, teacher or leadership. Nevertheless, the discussion around top-down and bottom-up reform is important, not least for the implications it raises for the future of English language reform in Vietnam.

3.5. English language pedagogy

While the term curriculum often refers to the overall plan of content to be taught and learnt over a set period of time, how that content "is transformed into a blueprint for teaching and learning which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved" is commonly embraced by the term pedagogy (Richards, 2013, p. 6). Pedagogy is often considered to be at the heart of a language curriculum (M. W. Gregory, 2001)

as it specifies how teachers should go about teaching the specified content described within the curriculum. Accordingly, whilst Project 2025 has been publicised as national curriculum reform, it is equally a reform of pedagogy, an explicit effort to move towards communicative competence as the desired outcome.

3.5.1. Methods and approaches in language pedagogy

In the field of language education, the terms '*approach*' and '*method*' are commonly used, although they are not precisely the same thing. Conceptualisation of these notions was first undertaken by Anthony (1963) who proposed that an approach involves specification of general assumptions and principles about language and language learning, whereas a method points to which specific theories are translated into systematic classroom practices.

According to more recent commentary, method refers to a specific instructional design based on particular theories of language, language teaching and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Rodgers, 2009). It provides a specification of the type of content, the roles of learners and teachers as well as the teaching procedures and techniques. Methods tend to have a relatively short shelf life as they are often associated with specific claims for prescribed practices and tend to "fall out of favour as these practices become unfashionable or discredited" (Richards & Rogers, 2014, p. 245). On the other hand, an approach is often understood more broadly, as a more general set of assumptions, beliefs and principles that can be used as a basis for language teaching (Fauziati, 2008). Unlike a method, an approach has no specific set of prescriptions and techniques to be used in teaching and permits a variety of interpretations about how the principles can be applied in classroom practice. Because of the flexibility and possibility of interpretation and application, approaches tend to have a longer shelf life and can be revised and renovated over time as new practices emerge.

Both of these concepts operate with their own limitations. The concept of method in teaching, as noted by Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 3), is "powerful though controversial". The main charge against it is the imposition of a set of prescribed teaching procedures in all classrooms. Opponents of methods (Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2003, 2006b) argue that they tend to be too narrow and too prescriptively rigid. Whereas a method is seen to be limited in that it is prescriptive and less open to interpretation, an approach, because of its general nature, is seen

as having no clear application of the underlying assumptions and principles in the classroom. As remarked by Richards and Rodgers (2014), the problem associated with an approach is that:

> Much is left to the individual teacher's interpretation, skills, and expertise. Consequently, there is often no clear right or wrong way of teaching according to an approach and no prescribed body of practice waiting to be implemented. This lack of detail can be a source of frustration and irritation for teachers, particularly those with little training or experience (p. 383)

Given this breadth of interpretation, if an approach to language teaching is adopted, then an intensive effort is required for teacher pre-service and in-service training to ensure that the teachers obtain a strong understanding of its nature and how it works (Carless, 1998; Lamie, 2000; Steele & Zhang, 2016). Only by doing so, do teachers have the capacity to translate the approach into productive classroom practice.

3.5.2. Developments in language pedagogy

Since language teaching became a recognised specialisation in the early part of the twentieth century, it has undergone a number of shifts and trends with a wide range of approaches and methods developed, used and then discarded in favour of the next trend.

The Grammar-Translation Method dominated European language teaching for the century from the 1840s to the 1940s, and continues to be used, in a modified form, in some parts of the world today (McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This method, inherited from the centuries-old tradition of teaching Latin and Greek in ‘grammar schools’, was characterised by a focus on form, deductive grammar teaching, and translation exercises with little or no systematic attention to speaking or listening (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Rodgers, 2009; Van Els, 1984). Accuracy was prioritised, and the students’ native language was the medium of instruction, used to explain rules and enable comparison between the students’ first language and the target language. Increased opportunities for commerce and migration, especially in Europe, eventually led to opposition to the Grammar-Translation Method, and the search for approaches and methods that put more focus on the oral proficiency needed for interaction.

The Direct Method was developed from contemporary first language acquisition theory. Its adherents argued that language could be learned in a naturalistic way, as in the way that a child learns his/her mother tongue. This method was characterised by an avoidance of deductive grammar teaching and an emphasis on native-speaker input and everyday vocabulary (Fauziati, 2008). Direct and spontaneous use of the target language in the classroom was encouraged, with a focus on correct pronunciation and grammar (Fotos, 2005; Patel & Jain, 2008). Although it offered innovations for teaching procedures, the method was criticised for lacking any rigorous methodological basis and for failing to consider the practical realities of foreign language classrooms compared to naturalistic first language learning conditions. The Direct Method was the first of the 'method' era, which saw the rise and fall of a procession of language teaching approaches and methods throughout the twentieth century.

The Oral Approach was developed in Britain between the 1920s and 1930s. Within the Oral Approach, language teaching began with spoken language, and new language points were introduced and practised situationally. Reading and writing were taught once a sufficient lexical and grammatical basis was established. This approach involved systematic principles of selection and gradation of the language items according to the level of difficulty. As noted by Richards and Rodgers (2014), perhaps the greatest legacy of the Oral Approach was the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) lesson format that continues to be used in a modified form today.

Subsequent developments then led to Situational Language Teaching in Britain and the Audiolingual Method in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Situational Language Teaching is seen as a revision of the Oral Approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Rodgers, 2009). The theory that linguistic structures must be linked to the situations in which they operate provided Situational Language Teaching with one of its distinctive features (Mart, 2013). The Audiolingual Method, developed in the USA, stressed the mechanistic aspects of language learning and language use. This method reflected the view that speech could be approached through structure and that practice makes perfect.

In the mid-sixties, educational linguists began to question the perceptions of language, language teaching and language learning which underpinned these methods. Practitioners found that teaching and learning outcomes fell short of expectations, as the students were often unable to transfer their skills to real-life

communication beyond the classroom, and the pattern of practice, drilling and memorisation did not actually result in competence. The view that language learning was treated as a process of habit formation was critiqued by Rivers (1964) in her argument that a habit was only developed when learners had a communicative need and were in a relaxed state. When the structuralist view of language and the behaviourist theory of learning underlying Audiolingualism were subjected to strong criticism and began to collapse, British applied linguists then began to doubt the theoretical bases of Situational Language Teaching. Howatt (1984, p. 280) noted that "there was no future in continuing to pursue the 'myth' of predicting language on the basis of situational events". A questioning of the theoretical bases and the disappointing results obtained from the classroom practices of Situational Language Teaching and Audiolingualism led to the search for a more useful teaching method or approach.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a period of adaptation, innovation and experimentation in new approaches to language teaching. Several new directions were pursued. One was to search for improvements through more attention to syllabus design, taking the view of language as a tool for communication. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the early 1970s and generated a great deal of enthusiasm. It aimed to serve as a corrective to the perceived shortcomings of previous approaches and methods (Bax, 2003; Savignon, 2002, 2005). During the 1980s and 1990s, approaches based on CLT principles, including Task-based Language Teaching and Content-based Instruction, attracted considerable interest. In the 1980s, the genre-based, or text-based pedagogy, based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was developed in Australia. It was developed primarily in the context of first language literacy teaching at the school level, and was also seen to have merit in an English language teaching environment for migrants and refugees. The SFL perspective on language perceives it as a resource for making meanings in social contexts, wherein language learning involves "learning how to mean and expand one's meaning potential" (Halliday, 1993, p. 13). The genre-based approach has gained some credibility in Australia and has been taken up in North America, Britain, Scandinavia, Israel and some Asian countries at different levels of school and tertiary contexts.

A different strand in language pedagogy in this period has been the influence of technology innovation. The recognition of the potential of technology as a language

teaching resource along with its rapid advances has opened up computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The use of computers and other electronic devices and media in the classroom offer a number of advantages to interactive learning, personalised instruction and the provision of different types of materials. Although language teaching has not changed radically as a result of technology, it has become clear that technology can serve as a useful aid in language classrooms. Linked to this is the fact that language is increasingly understood as just one semiotic mode of meaning making, and that other modes are used alongside language, and indeed often in place of language. The most obvious example is the visual image as a semiotic mode, whereby meanings are created and interpreted in images, both in tandem with language and also independently. Developments in computer technologies now facilitate the teaching and learning of language via other modes, including images, both still and moving.

Innovations in teaching methodologies have continued to flourish as applied linguists and English language teachers have continued to adapt and seek improved ways that bring learning success in language classrooms. Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2003) proposed the end of the 'method era', and suggested that the profession is now in a 'post-method era', with a gradual shift to more general pedagogic principles that are contextually sensitive and based on a thorough understanding of the local linguistic, socio-cultural and political contexts. If Kumaravadivelu is to be taken at his word, then the 'post-method era' has been marked by the global adoption of general principles of teaching and learning towards communication. CLT marked the beginning of a major paradigm shift within the field of language teaching in the late twentieth century, and has become the default approach globally in language classrooms. It could be argued that CLT is the foundation of teaching and learning in the 'post-method' era. It is the pedagogic approach at the heart of Project 2025, and on that basis it is important to scrutinise it in some detail.

3.6. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

3.6.1. The background to CLT

CLT origins are in concurrent developments in linguistics and in language teaching on both sides of the Atlantic dating from the 1970s when applied linguists and language teachers called into question the theoretical assumptions underlying Audiolingualism and Situational Language Teaching.

In Europe, there was a growing dissatisfaction among practitioners and applied linguists with prevailing methodologies and their focus on the structure of language. One leading figure, Widdowson (1972) drew attention to why 'structurally competent' learners remained 'communicatively incompetent' in their ability to use the language to perform communicative functions. He argued that there was a lack of focus on the nature of communication and the function of language in prevalent teaching methodologies. At the same time, the work of British functional linguists, first J.R. Firth and then his student M.A.K. Halliday, explored the functions of language as 'meaning potential' and highlighted the centrality of context in understanding system in language and how language could be modelled as a resource for making meaning. This perspective resonated with language teaching professionals who understood the need to focus on what a learner was able to 'do' with the language, that is to use it for the purposes of communication in different contexts. An explosion of research in second and foreign language learning gave weight to the conviction that learners needed not necessarily to follow a planned syllabus of learning grammar and vocabulary. The research also served to increase interest in alternative approaches that would address the functional dimensions of language and language use.

The impetus for change came additionally from the changing education realities in Europe where increasing possibilities for international travel and migration as a consequence of the creation of the European Economic Community (the European Union post 1993) demanded improvement in how European languages were taught. These changes were addressed within the Council of the European Union where work began on proposals for the teaching of languages based on the needs of adult learners (K. Johnson, 1982; McDonough & Shaw, 2012). Derived from the view of language as meaning potential in its social context and with an emphasis on 'speech acts' (Austin, 1962), the Council proposed a functional definition of language that served as a foundation for developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching. Wilkins (1972) contribution was the description of communicative functions and notional categories in syllabus design, revised and expanded in the landmark text Notional Syllabuses (Wilkins, 1976). The Council of Europe incorporated Wilkins' ideas into a set of threshold level specifications, which were defined with reference to specific communicative functions, e.g. *suasion* (orders, requests, suggestions), *evaluation* (agreement, judgement), *emotion* (pleasure, surprise, gratitude), and particular grammatical notions used to express these

functions appropriately, e.g. *modal categories*, *time* (past time, duration, frequency), and *quantity* (articles, numbers, quantifiers). Grammar was not considered an end in itself, rather a tool for the performance of these communicative functions (Van Ek, 1975; Wilkins, 1976).

At approximately the same time, Candlin (1978); Widdowson (1972, 1978) and others took the lead in the development of pedagogic procedures for classroom practices, taking into account the nature of communication coupled with ideas around learner autonomy. These influential works served as the foundation for ‘communicative’ language courses and textbooks across Europe. The term communicative was used to describe language courses that followed a notional-functional syllabus based on a needs analysis for establishing learning objectives.

Concurrently, in North America, in reaction to Chomsky’s (1965) description of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker as one “who knows [their] language perfectly and is unaffected by grammatically irrelevant conditions” (p. 3), Hymes (1972) proposed the term “communicative competence”, which referred to “both grammaticality but also acceptability” in language use (Byram & García, 2009, p. 493). Hymes’ criticism of Chomsky’s view of competence argued that Chomsky paid exclusive attention to “correctness” at the expense of “appropriacy” of language use, and, importantly, that he failed “to provide an exclusive place for socio-cultural features” (Hymes, 1972, p. 54). The term communicative competence was then used by Savignon in a research project at the University of Illinois in 1972 “to characterise the ability of classroom language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge” (Savignon, 2008, p. 3). The findings offered convincing evidence that the learners of French in her study who engaged in communication outperformed those who had no such practice.

Along with the emergence of the notion of communicative competence and functional-notional syllabuses, a number of course books began to appear, bearing descriptions of ‘functional’, ‘notional’ and ‘communicative’ and containing meaning-oriented activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Classroom activities shifted from mechanical drills and memorisation to learner participation in meaning negotiation and ‘learning by doing’ through trial and error. Games, role-plays and information gap-filling activities for pairs and groups were designed in order to involve learners in the experience of communication (Brandl, 2008; Byram & García, 2009;

Littlewood, 2007). This emphasis on message and meaning rather than language structure generated a great deal of interest and excitement within the language teaching profession. Practitioners found it “an automatic solution to all the problems of language teaching” (K. Johnson, 1983, p. 4). The rapid application of these new ideas to language curriculum and syllabus design by policymakers, textbook writers, and classroom teachers gave prominence and popularity to what came to be known as the Communicative Approach, or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

In this way, communicative competence developed into a framework for the teaching of English and languages more generally, with support from the most powerful voices in English language teaching on both sides of the Atlantic. CLT can be seen to be derived from different disciplinary perspective including different approaches within linguistics, notably anthropological linguistics via Hymes in the USA, functional linguistics via Halliday in the UK, language philosophy via Austin in the USA, and applied linguistics and educational researchers, including Wilkins, van Ek, Alexander, Widdowson, Candlin, Savignon, Brumfit and Johnson. An extensive literature on CLT has been developed over an extended period of time, describing the principles, developments and classroom practices within CLT, and at the same time, reflecting the constant developments within the approach and its applications.

3.6.2. Communicative competence

Communicative competence as a term was proposed by Hymes (1972) in response to Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence. Hymes provided a broader view of competence, taking socio-cultural factors into account:

> The goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be able to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour (p. 67).

In Hymes’ view, communicative competence was “dependent upon both knowledge and ability for use”, that is the ability to convey, interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within a specific context (p. 64). This became the core principle underlying and characterising the CLT approach (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a), whereby the goal was to promote the development of learners’ communicative competence by engaging them in the meaningful use of language as part of the negotiation of meanings (Brandl, 2008; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2008).

Since its introduction into linguistic and educational discourses, the concept of communicative competence has continued to evolve and be adapted to the context of its use. Models of communicative competence include those developed by Canale and Swain (1980), by Bachman and Palmer (1996), and also by The Council of Europe (2001) in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment, CEFR.

The framework for communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) is the most frequently cited in the field of language education. They defined communicative competence as a synthesis of the underlying system of knowledge about language with the skills needed for communication and so included distinctive grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competences. *Grammatical competence*, equivalent to Chomsky's linguistic competence, involves knowledge about the linguistic code, and includes all the features and rules of the language system. This competence is also referred to as *accuracy* in language use. Consistent with a view of language as social behaviour, *sociolinguistic competence* addresses the ability to use the language appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts, highlighting *appropriacy* in language use. *Strategic competence* incorporates verbal and non-verbal strategies to enhance communicative effectiveness or to compensate for communication breakdown. Later, Canale (1983, p. 9) added a fourth component, *discourse competence,* to refer to the ability to use the language in unified and coherent spoken and written texts. This is often understood as *fluency* in language use. *Sociocultural competence* was later proposed by Littlewood (2011). This involves the awareness of cultural knowledge and understanding that shapes the exchange of meanings in cross-cultural communication both with native and non-native speakers of English from the Outer and Expanding Circle countries. In this way, communicative competence was aligned with the paradigm of English as a global lingua franca and the concept of World Englishes as discussed earlier.

A second framework of communicative competence was proposed by Bachman (1980) in his model of 'communicative language ability', later modified by Bachman and Palmer (1996). In this interpretation, communicative language ability entails two broad areas: language knowledge and strategic competence. Whilst the definition of strategic competence is similar to Canale and Swain's, the language knowledge category consists of organisational and pragmatic knowledge, which complement each other in achieving communicatively effective language use. Yet another

description of communicative competence was provided in the CEFR by the Council of Europe (2001), and includes three basic components: language competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence.

There are strong similarities in the conceptualisation of communicative competence in each of the models, even though different components were named and specified. The common features foreground the appropriate and effective use of language both linguistically and contextually, and emphasise the social aspects of language and language use (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007; Savignon, 2017). These common features formed the basis for the approach to teaching and learning which came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The CLT approach has been prevalent amongst teachers of languages, especially the English language, across the world since the last years of the 20th century and continuing into the millennium. It is now the default approach to teaching English in the many different contexts, in child and adult education, in locations where English is the community language and also where it is a foreign language. Perhaps because of its origins and influences from different disciplines and differing motivations, and also because it is ubiquitous, CLT appears in many and varied guises. It is the approach prescribed in Project 2025, and as previously noted, it has been adopted by a range of national governments in their efforts to reform English language teaching and learning for entire school populations. Given its central place in Project 2025, it is important to look in more detail at the ways in which it is understood and implemented in Vietnam.

3.6.3. Core principles of CLT

In looking for the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, it is evident that the approach was not based in any single or unified model of language, nor of language teaching or language learning. A very general agreement is that CLT is based on the view that language is functional (Brandl, 2008); that is, language is seen as a tool for performing communicative purposes. Some of the specifications of this functional view of language serve as the basis for CLT, understood by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 161) as follows:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning
- The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication
- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses

- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

As an approach to language teaching, CLT consists of a fluid and dynamic set of principles that inform rather than tightly prescribe language teaching and syllabus design. The literature indicates there has been no unified set of principles clearly outlined and agreed to as a baseline, although there have been ongoing attempts to identify its characteristic features (Brandl, 2008; K. Johnson, 1982; Littlewood, 2014; Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Savignon, 2008; Spada, 2007). Common amongst these are the use of language as communication, the use of authentic texts, and the emphasis on learner-centeredness. Nunan (1991) identified five features that characterise the CLT approach as follows:

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language
- The introduction of authentic texts into language situations
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself
- An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning
- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activity outside the classroom

The literature also points to the fact that little has been written about learning theory which underpins CLT. It has been argued that elements of such theory can be inferred from typical CLT practices, such as activities that involve interaction and collaboration amongst learners, which are linked to Long’s Interaction Hypothesis (Spada, 2007). Another core element is the meaningfulness principle, wherein the language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process (Farooq, 2015; Ju, 2013). Other accounts of CLT support a creative-construction hypothesis, suggesting that learning is not simply a question of reproducing input but a creative process, and errors are seen as evidence of learning rather than faulty learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). A central tenet is that learners should be provided with opportunities for engaging in meaningful language use rather than the mechanical practice of language structures and patterns. It is also important to note the shift in the literature from learning theories to learning principles. CLT is evidently not strong on theories about language learning; rather, the focus is on learning principles which are linked with the approach.

In line with these principles, a range of classroom activities has been specified, which together point to the roles and relationships of teachers and learners in the CLT classroom. Importance is placed on activities that require students to negotiate meanings and develop fluency in language use, rather than on activities that demand the accurate repetition and memorisation of sentence structures and patterns. Opinion and information gap-filling activities are promoted with a view to arousing learner interest and making the language meaningful, while role-plays and improvisations aim to promote interaction within the classroom in a similar way to real-life situations. These types of activities require changes to the ways in which teachers and learners traditionally relate to each other. CLT classrooms are markedly different from traditional classrooms. Within CLT, the teachers are principally considered as facilitators supporting students to develop competence, setting up activities and facilitating authentic communication. They are also required to take on other roles such as needs analysts, counsellors and classroom monitors. They are expected to be communicatively competent in the target language. The learner in the CLT classroom is the central figure and is expected to actively engage in classroom activities, in effect to work towards autonomy. Teachers foreground each learner as an individual with unique needs, goals, interests and learning styles to be reflected in the design of the methodology (Savignon, 1991). Littlewood (2011) lists the following characteristics of a classroom with a focus on communication and learner-centredness (p. 549):

- Activities that require frequent interaction among learners or with other interlocutors to exchange information and solve problems;
- Use of authentic (non-pedagogic) texts and communication activities linked to 'real world' contexts often emphasising links across written and spoken models and channels;
- Approaches that are learner-centred in that they take into account learners' backgrounds, language needs and goals and generally allow learners some creativity and role in instructional decisions.

The emergence of the concept of communicative competence, which went beyond linguistic or grammatical competence, revolutionised language teaching by redefining its goal and the pathway to achieving that goal. It also offered some explanation as to why so many learners achieved poor levels of communicative ability after several years of English study through the traditional focus on language structures (Littlewood, 2011; Swan, 1985b). In separating out the different strands

of competence and specifying the content within each strand, it was evident that the traditional emphasis on linguistic competence was a necessary but not sufficient focus for language teachers. Communicative competence comprises linguistic plus socio-cultural plus strategic and arguably plus discourse competences, and a classroom focus on the first at the expense of the other components was seen to run the risk of producing students who remained communicatively incompetent.

3.6.4. The role of grammar

Discussions of CLT often lead to the question of grammatical accuracy, with fears aired that a focus on communication and communicative intent would be at the expense of a focus on structure or form. The perceived displacement of attention to communicative ability in some cases has led to the impression that grammar is not important. According to Spada (2007 and Thompson (1996), this was a common (mis)conception developed about CLT.

As noted above, the descriptions of communicative competence in Canale and Swain (1980) did include grammatical (or linguistic) competence as one of the fundamental competences, requiring knowledge about the language system, including the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic, structure of the language. As Canale and Swain (1980) stated:

> There is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence of strategic competence. The primary goal of a communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner, an outcome that is not likely to result from an overemphasis on one form of competence over the others throughout a second language performance (p. 27).

Other advocates of this view, e.g. McDonough and Shaw (2012); Richards (2006); Savignon (2005), highlight the fact that communication cannot take place in the absence of form and structure. Engagement in communicative events, while crucial for language development, necessarily requires attention to form. In other words, grammatical competence is required to produce grammatically correct texts. However, language ability involves much more than this competence alone. It has become empirically obvious that learners can master the rules of sentence formation, but still not successfully transfer such knowledge into meaningful communication. Therefore, the key to communicative success was seen as a

balance, wherein students learned how to use the grammar to appropriately perform different communicative purposes (Spada, 2007). Although the balance of form-focused versus meaning-focused activities remains a question of ongoing debate, research findings overwhelmingly support the integration of both within classroom experience. The combination is described by Savignon (2005, p. 640) as “a more effective way to develop communicative ability with no apparent decrease in morph-syntactic accuracy”. With a focus on the functional importance of language teaching and learning, and embracing all aspects of communicative competence CLT has evolved to become the globally accepted approach to English language teaching and learning.

3.6.5. Different manifestations of CLT

From the 1980s, communicative competence became “the intellectual anchor” (Leung, 2005, p. 120) for different versions of CLT which appeared as part of the array of teacher training, curriculum and materials development. Given the breadth of components, each of which translated into different classroom activities and strategies, it was not at all surprising that CLT was adapted in different ways in different contexts. From the outset, the literature has described two versions of CLT, often called ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ versions (Howatt, 1984), which differed significantly in their underlying assumptions. The variety evolving from the American context tended to support the ‘strong’ version of CLT in which the emphasis was on interaction, wherein students learnt the language through their experiences of communication in the language (Littlewood, 2014). This strong version was based on the premise of ‘using English to learn it’, the view that language was acquired through communication and that learners would implicitly acquire grammatical and lexical knowledge (Fotos, 2005). Language development was viewed as a natural process wherein learners self-reflected, self-analysed and self-experienced the language, processes that could not be controlled by the teacher. At the same time, European work tended to favour a ‘weak’ version in which strategies were based on both function and form. The weak version of CLT emphasised ‘learning to use’ the language by providing students with underlying linguistic knowledge, and then opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes. Weak versions of CLT, while keeping the same goal of developing communicative competence, accepted a more direct role for the teachers in the learning process and suggested

that teachers should introduce and organise structured, meaningful communicative activities in the classroom (Butler, 2011).

In the millennium, CLT has commonly been used as a “generalised umbrella term” (Harmer, 2007, p. 70) to describe teaching and learning sequences for improving student communicative competence in contrast to the learning of discrete bits of the language. Common to the evolution of CLT is that although different versions took different pathways to language learning, they all aimed to arrive at the same goal of achieving communicative competence. These included Content-based Instruction and Task-based Language Teaching which have been widely adopted in contemporary English curricula (Ellis, 2003, 2009; Nunan, 2004). What appears to distinguish one version from another is the content rather than the pedagogy (Spada, 2007). Despite differences in the instructional focus, these different versions of CLT share specific features that categorise them as CLT: the emphasis on communication and on classroom activities which place the learner at the centre of the communication.

3.6.6. The global uptake of CLT in school curricula

CLT and variations of it have emerged as the default approaches to language instruction globally. From its origins in Europe and North America, CLT has been “quickly exported” to countries with a pressing need for English proficiency (Littlewood, 2014, p. 352). In the millennium it is common to find the term “CLT” prescribed in national curriculum policies in many and varied contexts. Particularly in the Asia Pacific region, CLT has become a ‘slogan’ in English language teaching, and communicative competence has been adopted as a central component of government rhetoric (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2014; Nunan, 2003). Bax (2003) reported that many English language teachers, trainers and curriculum designers were operating with and adhering to a so-called “CLT attitude”, assuming that “CLT is the whole and complete solution to language learning” (p. 280).

Despite this uptake of CLT, the extensive research literature on its implementation suggests that clear evidence of CLT being successfully enacted in classrooms has been uncommon. Humphries and Burns (2015) in a review of CLT-oriented curriculum change concluded that moves towards CLT in many international contexts “have resulted in mixed outcomes, even failure” (p. 239). Reports by Nunan (2003), Butler (2011), Ho and Wong (2002), Littlewood (2007) on communicative

curriculum reform in different countries in the Asia-Pacific region, all concurred on the limited success it has brought at the level of practice. The expanding list of studies on the adoption of CLT in different geographical locations, includes the following:

- Japan (Abe, 2013; Nishino, 2011; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008; Thompson & Yanagita, 2015; Tsushima, 2012);
- South Korea (Jihyeon, 2009; Lee, 2014; Li, 1998, 2001; Moodie & Nam, 2016; Su, 2005);
- Hong Kong (Benson & Patkin, 2014; Carless, 1998, 2007; Chan, 2014; Coniam, 2014);
- China (Coniam, 2014; Fang & Garland, 2014; Hu, 2002, 2004, 2005; W. Wang, 2014; Zhang & Liu, 2014);
- Thailand (Darasawang & Todd, 2012; de Segovia & Hardison, 2009; Hayes, 2010);
- Malaysia (Hanewald, 2016; Pandian, 2002);
- Turkey (Coskun, 2011; Kırkgöz, 2008).

Findings from these investigations differ naturally, but they have commonly concluded that, despite affirming rhetoric at the policy level, there was little of CLT in evidence at the classroom level. The shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach had not taken place as planned. Hanewald (2016), for example, expressed her concern that after decades of implementing CLT in Malaysia, students there still entered university with “limited vocabulary, a weak understanding of difficult words and difficulty in understanding long sentences” (p. 15). In Japan, many secondary school teachers still adhered to traditional methods as they lacked training in communicative approaches, and the initiatives by the Government were not enough to transform conventional teaching practices across the nation (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). Nunan (2003) in a large-scale investigation into English language policies in Asia-Pacific nations emphasised the fact that “the efforts currently underway do not appear to be reflected in significantly enhanced English language skills” (p. 608). Even in Hong Kong, where there was more English used than in other countries in the region, many students left school “with only the most limited ability to communicate in the language” (Nunan, 2012, p. 168).

3.6.7. Issues pertaining to CLT

It has been important to provide some detail about CLT because Project 2025 has explicitly mandated the approach as best suited to Vietnam's need for a communicative workforce. Thus, in describing its provenance and development as the most popular, most well-known and globally accepted approach to teaching and learning English, it is also necessary to draw attention to the issues which have surfaced over the years with its use.

3.6.7.1. Problems of identity

A recurring comment about CLT is linked to the question of identity, and is perhaps the most common issue raised within the literature. There has been no single text or authority regarding a definition of CLT, nor any single model that has been "universally accepted as authoritative" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 155). Its core principles have been drawn from various sources, and there is no strong language theory underpinning CLT, except the general statement that language is functional. The outcome has been that many people remain somewhat confused about what CLT is exactly. According to Harmer (2003), the term CLT "has always meant a multitude of different things to different people" (p. 289). This comment was supported by Spada (2007) who at the beginning of a CLT review posed a rhetorical question of definition: "What is communicative language teaching?" His conclusion was: "The answer to this question seems to depend on whom you ask" (p. 272). For some, CLT meant little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching. For others, it meant using processes and activities through which learners worked collaboratively on problem-solving tasks. Littlewood (2011) reiterated the feeling of definitional vagueness in commenting about CLT that "nobody knows what it is" (p. 541).

Another explanation for the lack of certainty or clarity is that CLT is not a neatly packaged language teaching 'method' in the sense that content, syllabus and teaching procedures are clearly identified (Mitchell, 1987; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Rather, CLT is widely understood as an approach to language teaching, comprising a fluid and dynamic set of principles. It offers "not just a set of static principles set in stone", but is "subject to some tinkering as a result of one's observation and experience" (McDonough & Shaw, 2012, p. 11). The relatively varied way in which CLT has been interpreted and applied can be attributed in some

part to the fact that language teachers from many different educational traditions have been drawn to it and worked creatively within its broad framework.

3.6.7.2. The issue of authenticity

One criterion for the ideal CLT classroom is that it should reverberate with the authentic, meaningful communication that characterises interactions in real-life uses of language (Swan, 1985b). The common view is that activities in CLT classrooms should mirror the outside world, and authentic sources should be the material used for classroom learning.

This issue of authenticity has seen ongoing discussion among practitioners and researchers of language teaching. For Richards (2006), authentic materials include cultural information, providing exposure to real language and aligning closely with learner needs. The use of authentic materials, which make the classroom 'parallel' real-life, has been one of the consistent claims amongst proponents (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Berardo, 2006; Spelleri, 2002). However, opponents of authenticity argue that authentic materials routinely contain complex and irrelevant language (Gilmore, 2007). Sourcing authentic materials could become a burden for teachers, especially those who have to prepare their own resources (Gómez Rodríguez, 2010; Kilickaya, 2004). Others claim that authentic resources are not always more advantageous than constructed materials and that the latter may, in fact, be superior because they are generally built around a graded syllabus, tailored to the needs of learners, and therefore less demanding for the teacher (M. N. MacDonald, Badger, & Dasli, 2006).

With or without authentic materials, a communicative curriculum alone cannot guarantee meaningful communication in the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a). The fact is that the classroom is not the outside world, and learning a language is not the same as using that language (Swan, 1985b). The expectation that classroom exchanges should achieve the spontaneity and naturalness of real-life interactions could be over-ambitious, labelled by Swan (1985b) as "the real-life fallacy" (p. 82). This point was also noted by Widdowson (1987), who emphasised the selection of materials for their provocation of meaningful and real interaction rather than purely for their authenticity. His view was that it was not important if learning materials were derived from authentic texts and other forms of input, as long as the learning processes they facilitated were authentic. The key point, it appears, is a balanced

use of both authentic and pedagogically constructed input, which helps to achieve the intended goals of teaching and learning (Day, 2004).

3.6.7.3. CLT as ‘native-speakerism’

Another recurring critique of CLT is that it clearly reflects ‘native-speakerism’. CLT originated in the Western industrialised world, and its underlying premises were derived from the cultures of its origins – England, Europe and the USA. This has led to a number of concerns in transferring “the spirit of CLT” from Western to non-Western settings (H. H. Pham, 2007, p. 196). Su (2005) questioned if CLT as used in Inner Circle contexts was applicable to other contexts, especially in the Outer and Expanding Circle countries where there are fewer resources, fewer or even no NS teachers, and students do not have the same linguistic need for English use outside their classrooms. Constraints are also evident in the differences in the Western based values and principles inherent in CLT and those of the traditional views of teaching and learning in other cultural contexts. Butler (2011) warned of the danger of imposing Anglocentric ideologies on ways of teaching, learning and communication, and expressed her concern over “the obsession with communicative skills” (p. 40). It is important to avoid the assumption that approaches developed in Western contexts will also be suitable for application in other contexts of use (Littlewood, 2011, p. 542; Savignon, 2008). These issues are particularly salient in the present study and are addressed in some detail in later chapters.

3.6.7.4. Teacher attitude and understanding of CLT

Studies of teacher attitude in the context of educational reforms have reinforced the view that teacher attitude should be understood as a vital and inevitable part of any pedagogic innovation (Datnow, 2012; J. L. Gregory & Noto, 2018). Karavas-Doukas (1996) proposed that teacher attitudes have a strong influence on classroom practice and directly influence what the student learns in class. If there are incompatibilities between teacher attitudes and the philosophy underlying the curriculum, teachers are more likely to reject innovations and adhere to their routine practice, leading to zero change in their classroom practice (Humphries & Burns, 2015). In the case of CLT curriculum reforms, studies uniformly reveal that teacher attitudes are not always congruent with the communicative approach in terms of its feasibility in their local contexts (Ching-Ching & Kuo-Hung, 2018; Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). Li (1998) reported that the teachers in his study disregarded CLT

as they believed that this pedagogy could not prepare their students for the written, grammar-based examinations which had a great bearing on their futures. Hu (2002) reported that CLT failed to achieve the expected outcomes in China partly as a result of clashes between the interactive, learner-centred principles underpinning CLT and traditional Chinese classrooms, with the outcome being teacher resistance to using CLT. Similarly, H. Wang (2008) and Zheng & Borg (2014) highlighted that CLT has caused substantial confusion at the classroom level, wherein teachers hold different views with regards to ‘how to teach’ the communicative curriculum, and limited implementation at the classroom level.

Effective and sustained curriculum innovation or reform requires the capacity of teachers to understand the changes for which they are ultimately responsible. As commented by Morris (1995), the degree to which teachers adopt and implement change depends upon the extent to which they acquire an informed understanding of the pedagogic theories underpinning the reform. However, the literature on CLT curriculum reform has highlighted the fact that teachers in many different locations have not had a solid understanding of CLT principles. In Turkey, a study by Kırkgöz (2008) revealed that some of the teachers either did not understand or were unable to see the practical implications of CLT. Studies by Hardman and A-Rahman (2014) in Malaysia and by de Segovia and Hardison (2009) in Thailand offered evidence that many teachers had a fragmented understanding of CLT and were confused about how to apply it in the classroom. Similarly, in exploring teachers’ perceptions of CLT in Bangladesh, Rahman (2015) found that the teachers who claimed to be practising CLT in their classrooms did not have a clear idea of what it entailed. Vague teacher knowledge has also been reported in studies in various other contexts, including Libya (Orafi & Borg, 2009), Japan (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), China (Fang & Garland, 2014) and South Korea (Lee, 2014). Teacher understanding, or more precisely teacher lack of understanding of CLT, has highlighted the critical role of professional development in regard to the knowledge and skills necessary to implement change. However, Kam (2002) reported that many countries have introduced reforms which incorporate CLT without adequate training and preparation for the teachers.

Chapter conclusion

Project 2025 has been a Vietnamese government response to the pervceived need to reform English language education at the national level in order to produce

competent users of the global lingua franca. Initiated and planned by policymakers at the central level and in a clear top-down manner, the reform embraced CLT as the prescribed pedagogy to deliver the curriculum content to achieve the desired proficiency targets.

As the most influential and the most researched approach in the history of language education, CLT represents efforts to combine and balance the teaching of both form and meaning with the aim of achieving communicative competence. It has encouraged classrooms that rely less on mechanical, teacher-centred practices, and has directed more attention to the simulation of exchanges resembling real-life interactions. However, although “its heart is in the right place” (Swan, 1985a, p. 11), CLT, as documented, has not been without its problems. There has been a good deal of confusion about the approach which has been ‘light’ on theory about language or about language learning. The documentation of implementation issues in different locations has supported this perception, where an absence of foundational precepts has fostered a vagueness across the field. Given the centrally driven adoption of CLT as the prescribed pedagogy within the curriculum reform in Vietnam, the question arises as to what MOET actually intended in the development of the policy. Furthermore, what preparation was provided to the schools and the English language teachers as the implementers of the policy?

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Mixed-methods research design

Research methodologies are most often based in a either: positivist or constructivist tradition (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell, 2011, 2012). The positivist research philosophy underpins quantitative research, whilst the constructivist approach is associated with qualitative research.

A positivist paradigm and its modified version, the post-positivist paradigm, operates with the belief that material and social reality can be understood objectively; hence, these realities are quantifiable and measurable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). Informed by positivism, quantitative methodology is characterised by a deductive approach to research, and involves the measurement of variables or the testing of relationships between variables in order to reveal patterns, correlations or causal relationships (Creswell, 2012; Walter, 2010). At the other end of the research spectrum, constructivism, often also labelled as interpretivism, takes a more relativist and subjectivist stance, arguing that reality is multiple and typically socially co-constructed, being dependent on who is involved, what is being studied and the context in which a study is conducted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Silverman, 2016). Accordingly, qualitative research is generally characterised by an inductive approach to knowledge building, aimed at capturing the qualities or attributes of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative researchers use this approach in order “to explore, investigate and learn about a social phenomenon, or unpack the meaning people ascribe to activities, situations, events or artefacts, or to build a deep understanding of a dimension of social life” (Leavy, 2014, p. 9). Qualitative research privileges the significance of meaning and holistic concerns rather than discrete variables and statistics (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

These two approaches provide two fundamentally distinct ways of understanding and studying the world. A quantitative way of understanding views the world on the basis of “categorical data, featuring the comparison of frequencies and measurements across subjects and categories”, whereas a qualitative approach views the world “in terms of textual data, featuring the treatment of focal entities as singular wholes in context” (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003, p. 249). Traditionally, each of the two perspectives has been critiqued by advocates from the other tradition. Much

of the controversy has focused on the underpinning paradigm, described as the 'paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989), as well as on "the methods of study, the rigour of its procedures, and the validity of its outcomes" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. ix). Quantitative research is sometimes portrayed as being sterile and unimaginative while qualitative research is often criticised for lacking generalisation, being too reliant on the subjective interpretations of researchers and being incapable of replication by subsequent researchers (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Ivankova & Creswell, 2009).

The field of mixed methods research has evolved out of these debates and controversies, as a pragmatic way of using the strengths and offsetting the weaknesses of both approaches (R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Mixed methods research is often regarded as "the third methodological movement", in an attempt to "to combine as far as possible features of statistical, case and survey methods" (Hunter & Brewer, 2002, p. 579). However, it was not until the last years of the 20th century when more studies needed a methodology that could help to simultaneously explore the breadth and depth of broad multi-faceted questions that researchers began to name their methodology as mixed-method (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).

According to Creswell (2011), a mixed methods approach is useful in studies in which social phenomena cannot be fully understood by using either purely quantitative or qualitative techniques alone, and there is a need for a variety of data sources and analyses for a more complete understanding of multifaceted realities. The type of data used in mixed methods research, therefore, can be both numeric and verbal. The advantages of mixed methods research have been discussed at length (Creswell, 2011; Morse, 2009). There is now some consensus that mixing different research methods can strengthen a study based on the premise that all methods of data collection and analysis have their limitations. Proponents argue that employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can strengthen the quality of a study because each can support, complement or expand the other, creating a more complete picture of a research question. A mixed methods design creates a multifaceted view of the questions by allowing for the triangulation of data sources and potentially facilitating the creation of stronger inferences. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 33), mixed methods research is superior to the single approach design in that it can:

(i) simultaneously address a range of confirmatory and exploratory questions with both quantitative and qualitative approaches and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study;
(ii) provide better and stronger inferences;
(iii) provide better opportunities for divergent views.

In a mixed methods approach, there are two typical research designs: the parallel mixed design and the sequential mixed design (Creswell, 2011; Morse, 2009). In a parallel mixed design, also known as concurrent or simultaneous design, the quantitative and qualitative strands occur in a parallel manner, either simultaneously or with some time lapse. They are planned to respond to related aspects of the same research question and conclusions are based on results from both strands. In a sequential mixed design, the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study occur in chronological order. Research questions for the quantitative and qualitative phases are related to one another and may evolve as the study unfolds. The second strand of the study is conducted either to confirm or to provide further explanation for findings from the first strand. In a mixed methods research design, there is often one core component, which is described as the "priority" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010) or "backbone" (Morse, 2009) of the study. Dependent on the research objectives, this core component can be allocated to either the quantitative or qualitative strand. The core component and supplementary components are then linked to inform the research questions (Morse, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Mixed methods research has become a popular research approach in the field of language education and applied linguistics (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). It has offered a more multidimensional view of the processes and practices of teaching and learning a language as well as the social, cultural and political factors that influence language development, language teaching and language learning.

4.2. The present study

Investigations into curriculum issues, including teacher attitudes, educational knowledge and classroom practices as part of curriculum change, are often considered "a major methodological challenge" (Marland, 1995, p. 133). This is not only because attitudes and their realisation in practice are often "value-laden, tacit, systematic and highly context-sensitive" (Borg, 2015, p. 272), but also because curriculum reform necessarily requires the involvement of a number of stakeholders

who play different roles in the processes and practices within the reform (Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves et al., 2002). Therefore, it is of importance that data drawn from these multiple sources should be used, which, as commented on by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), are particularly significant in exploring and understanding attitudes, processes, practices and mandates in educational research.

In order to inform the issues inherent in the intentions and realities of Project 2025 reform, the study employed a mixed methods approach. This choice was based on the pragmatic and flexible qualities the approach offered. The clear potential for triangulation facilitated the construction of meaningful and coherent explanations from both quantitative and qualitative data, therefore enhancing the legitimation of the findings (Axinn, 2006; Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). As Mathison (1988, p. 14) commented in relation to a different study, “the use of a single method for investigation into these issues, is parallel to the view of a single individual, and will necessarily be subjective, partial and biased”.

Accordingly, a parallel mixed methods design was adopted, which enabled concurrent use of both quantitative and qualitative methods which were integrated into the interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). A major advantage of the parallel design was that it was time-saving; the different data could be collected and analysed at the same time. The design also allowed a smaller set of data to be embedded within a larger set to analyse different type of questions (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003; Morse, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The core component of the study was the qualitative strand, with the quantitative strand as supplementary. The quantitative element included an online survey targeting a large number of teacher participants across one province in northern Vietnam. Given the limitations of surveying which does not allow for deep insights into what teachers actually think, how they behave in the classroom, and how they rationalise their pedagogic activities, the qualitative study was used to gather more detailed insights into the different elements of the reform from the perspective of the teachers and other stakeholders. These qualitative data included the relevant curriculum mandates, the textbooks, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and video recordings in a number of classrooms. The findings were then generated through an integration of the evidence from the quantitative, numerical and qualitative verbal data. The sequence of the study is presented in the flow chart in Figure 4.1.

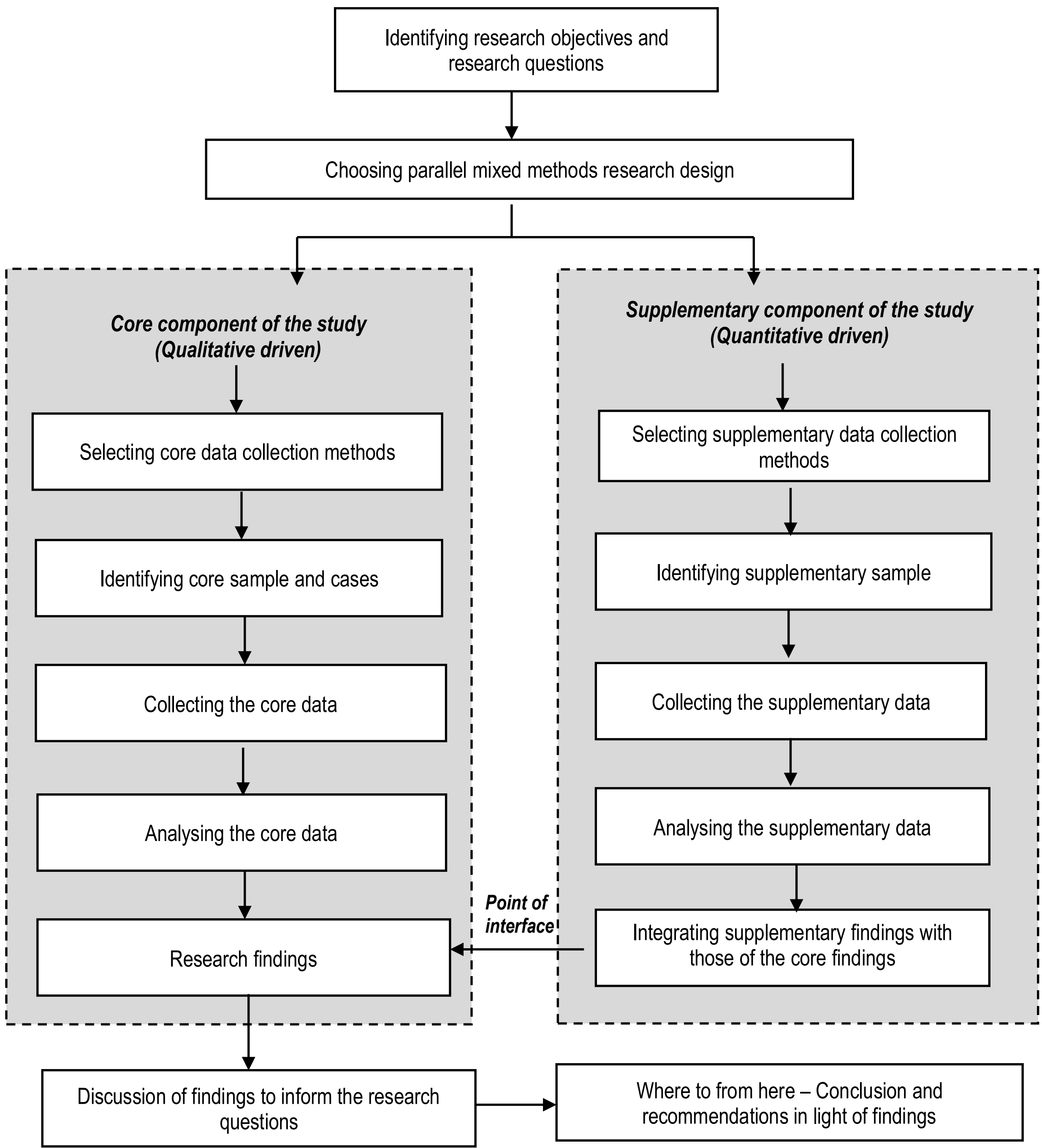


Figure 4.1. *The research procedure*

4.3. Data collection

A language classroom is holistic in nature and a curriculum reform requires the involvement of a number of stakeholders who play different roles in the change process, from the macro level of policymaking to the micro level in the classroom (Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves et al., 2002). Accordingly, multiple sources of data were important in the effort to seek convergence and corroboration. The participation of different stakeholders aimed to capture a clear picture of the range of issues relating to the curriculum change from policy, administrative and practitioner vantage points.

To understand the intent behind the reform, the official curriculum documents published about Project 2025 were collected and analysed. A selection of the curriculum textbooks was also analysed on the basis that these were manifestations of the curriculum intentions in material and tangible form. To explore the realities of the reform implementation, data were collected from a teacher survey and semi-structured interviews with teachers and their school principals. Beyond this, a number of English language lessons were recorded across different schools to gain practical understandings of the curriculum enactment at the classroom level.

4.3.1. The official curriculum documentation

Official documentation represented a valuable and reliable source of qualitative data, providing the advantage of being words which were "ready for analysis without the necessary transcription" (Creswell, 2012, p. 223). A corpus of the relevant national-level policy documents issued by MOET was gathered, as listed in Table 4.1. These documents were in the public domain, they were written in Vietnamese, and were obtained from the official websites of MOET (https://moet.gov.vn/Pages/home.aspx) and of Project 2025 (http://ngoainguquocgia.moet.gov.vn/). These policy documents made public the governmental decisions and guidance pertaining to the English language curriculum reform.

Table 4.1 *National English language policy documents at the lower-secondary level 2008-2016*

#	***Policy Documents***	***Types of Policy***
1	MOET (2012). *The Pilot National English Language Curriculum for the Lower-secondary Level*	Decision, 01/QD-BGDDT, 03 Jan 2012
2	MOET (2012). *Implementing the Pilot National English Language Curriculum for the Lower-secondary Level*	Guidance, 3456/QD-BGDDT, 05 Sept 2012
3	MOET (2014). *The Six-level Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam.*	Guidance, 01/2014/TT-BDHDT, 14 Jan 2014
4	MOET (2016). *The Format of Assessment for Language Proficiency at the Lower-secondary Level*	Guidance, 1475/QD-BGDDT, 10 May 2016

4.3.2. The curriculum textbooks

The curriculum textbooks constituted the concrete evidence of the curriculum intentions to be enacted at the level of the classroom (Byrd, 2001; Richards, 2001). Thus, the textbook analysis offered insight not only into the content of the English language curriculum at the lower secondary level, but also how CLT was made evident in the form of learning activities to achieve the curriculum goals. This analysis was combined with an analysis of the 'textbooks-in-action' – that is the use of the textbooks in daily classroom processes and practices. This second analysis of the textbooks provided an evidence-based way of understanding how the intentions of the reform, specifically its prescription of CLT, were enacted in the classroom.

The specific data set selected for the textbook analysis was drawn from the textbook series, the "*Tieng Anh"* (English) Years 6-9 for lower-secondary schools (Hoang et al., 2015a). As the extent of the materials made it impractical to analyse their entire contents in any depth, a proportion of the learning units was selected. As the same pattern of presentation was repeated across each of the learning units of the *Tieng Anh* series, so three units in each textbook were chosen, accounting for 25% of the total content in the series. This proportion, as suggested by Littlejohn (2011), is sufficient for "a snapshot impression of the general nature of a set of materials" (p. 186). The learning units were chosen on the same theme ('Our Communities'), which allowed for a systematic analysis of the thematic continuity and progress of that specific learning content. Of importance to note is that the textbook was analysed with a close focus on the language input and activity types "as they are" and "with the content and ways of working that they propose" (Littlejohn, 2011, p. 181). Details of the selected units of analysis are provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. *The units selected for the textbook analysis*

	Name of units	***Pages***	***Theme***
Tieng Anh 6 (Year 6)	Unit 1: My new school	6-15	Our Communities
	Unit 2: My home	7-25	
	Unit 3: My friends	26-35	
Tieng Anh 7 (Year 7)	Unit 1: My hobbies	6-15	Our Communities
	Unit 2: Healthy living	7-25	
	Unit 3: Community Service	26-35	
Tieng Anh 8	Unit 1: Leisure activities	6-15	Our Communities

(Year 8)	Unit 2: Life in the countryside	7-25	
	Unit 3: People of Vietnam	26-35	
Tieng Anh 9 (Year 9)	Unit 1: Local environment	6-15	Our Communities
	Unit 2: City life	7-25	
	Unit 3: Teen stress and pressure	26-35	

4.3.3. Research location

The location for collecting the survey, interview and classroom-based data for the study was Hai Duong, a northern province of Vietnam. The selection of this location was primarily for reasons of accessibility and convenience, where I had personal and professional connections and easy access to schools and teachers.

The total area of the province is 1,656 km2 (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2011). Administratively, the province is subdivided into a main city, Hai Duong, where the provincial administrative agencies are located, and eleven rural districts in which lower levels of administration are distributed. Educational affairs are administered by the provincial DOET whose responsibility is to implement national education policies, to allocate resources and to manage education in schools. At the district level, subordinate offices of education are accountable both to the DOET and to the local people’s committee. The DOET is responsible for direct oversight of upper-secondary education, whereas the district-level offices oversee lower levels of education, including early childhood education, primary education and lower-secondary education.

There are 268 lower secondary schools in the province. As described in Chapter II, the schools are typically Normal public schools complemented by a small number of Selective schools. At the lower-secondary level, there is one Selective school in each of the twelve districts. The selection criteria for entry to the Selective schools are based on academic merit so that the students need to demonstrate a consistently high level of achievement and also to pass an entrance examination. Students in these schools are typically highly motivated in their learning, and at the same time, under pressure to gain and retain high academic achievement.

There were 88 schools in the province working with the Project 2025 English curriculum in 2017 (Statistics provided by the local DOET). At the time of writing, the adoption of the new curriculum was not yet obligatory. It was originally expected that

by the year 2020, now extended to 2025, all lower secondary schools across the country would be working with the new curriculum and its mandated textbooks. A summary of schools trialling the new curriculum and the textbooks in the twelve administrative districts in Hai Duong province is presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3. *Number of districts and schools using the new curriculum in 2017*

#	District	Number of schools using the new curriculum	
		Normal schools	**Selective schools**
1	District A	6	1
2	District B	4	1
3	District C	4	1
4	District D	9	1
5	District E	3	1
6	District F	7	1
7	District G	6	1
8	City	10	1
9	District I	7	1
10	District J	5	1
11	District K	3	1
12	District L	12	1
Total	**12**	**76**	**12**

4.3.3. Research participants

The data for the study were generated in 2017. The initial stage of the process involved gaining official permission from the relevant levels of administration. Contact with the provincial DOET Head of Foreign Language Education Division was made both in writing via email and then in person, in which the aims, scope and involvement of the potential participants were clearly outlined. A list of contact details of teachers working in lower secondary schools in the province was provided by the DOET office, and was used for delivering the online survey via email. Permission was then sought from the school principals in person to gain access to their schools. Visits to the participating schools were made seeking consent from teachers for classroom observations and interviews and also importantly, to build a rapport with the teachers and students. All participants were informed of the research objectives, its scope and their involvement in the study.

In a practical consideration of the research contexts and types of data needed to inform the research questions, the study used purposive sampling strategies

(Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2014). From the population of 567 teachers of English working in the 268 lower-secondary schools in the province, 178 teachers who had been working with the new curriculum in the 88 public schools were invited to participate in a survey. Eleven teachers were then asked for their permission for classroom observations and recordings and in-depth interviews. Other interviewees included four school principals in four participating schools.

4.3.4. The survey

A major advantage of using a survey is that it can be delivered to a large number of participants in a short period of time and can yield "a maximum amount of data per research dollar" (Chadwick et al., 1984, p. 160). It allows for the collection of a breadth of data from a large sample, and these data can be generalised to larger populations (De Vaus, 2002; Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2016). It can ask for facts, including demographic information, and also is typically used for ascertaining individual perspectives, opinions, and the reporting of experience and behaviour (Leavy, 2014).

An online survey was used in the study for the reasons that it saved time in distribution, and in gathering and processing the data. The online survey was piloted with more than ten experienced Vietnamese teachers of English. After the pilot, modifications were made, mostly in terms of wording and question order. The final survey consisted of 10 questions, divided into three parts. Part 1 covered demographic information about the respondents; Part 2 posed attitude questions about the goals of the Project; Part 3 focused on teacher understanding and practice with the new curriculum including challenges they faced in the implementation process. Different types of closed questions included multiple-choice, checklists, Likert scale and rating scale. Open-ended questions were kept to a minimum, in order to avoid "respondent burden" which "occurs to the degree that respondents experience their participation as too stressful and/or time-consuming" (Leavy, 2014, p. 107). A heavy burden can result in respondent fatigue, a higher non-response rate and also a lower quality of response (Ruel et al., 2016). A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix A. A total of 178 teachers who had been working with the new curriculum in 88 public schools were invited to participate in the survey. In total, 172 emails were successfully delivered, and after a one-month period, 112 responses had been received, which equates to a response rate of approximately 65%.

Table 4.4 below presents demographic information of the 112 teacher participants in the survey and provides biographical details relating to their gender, education, teaching experience and current levels of English language proficiency.

Table 4.4. *Teacher demographics*

	Summary of Participants
Gender	Males: 7% (n = 8) Females: 93% (n = 104)
Formal Education	BA Degree (four-year undergraduate): 93% (n = 104) BA Degree (three-year undergraduate): 7% (n = 8)
Teaching Experience	2 - 5 years: 5% (n = 5) 6 - 10 years: 10% (n = 11) 10 - 15 years: 16% (n = 19) 15 - 20 years: 60% (n = 67) > 20 years: 9% (n = 10)
English Language Proficiency	B1: 6% (n = 7) B2: 84% (n = 94) C1: 10% (n = 11)

More than 93% of the teacher participants were female, reflecting the fact that English language education at the lower secondary level, and the school sector in general, is predominantly a female profession in Vietnam. All of the teachers had a relevant qualification in English language teaching, with 93% having a four-year undergraduate degree. These teachers had a great deal of experience in teaching English at the lower-secondary level, with 85% having more than 10 years' experience. Approximately 94% had achieved Proficiency Level B2 or above in English language, which met the mandated level set by MOET. The data indicate that the typical survey participant was a well-qualified female teacher with many years' experience of teaching English at the lower-secondary level.

4.3.5. Classroom observations

Classroom observation is defined by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p. 5) as "non-judgemental description of classroom events that can be analysed and given interpretation". The major strength of observation in language classroom research is that it offers a close-up description of events, activities and incidents happening in classrooms and, therefore, allows for the collection of evidence about teaching

and learning practices (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015; H. Simons, 2014). Observations allow investigators to obtain detailed information about how language is used, together with language activities, classroom interactions, instructions and other noteworthy events at close range (Nunan, 1992). With a focus on the teacher, observations can document a range of elements, from the amount of teacher use of the target language, to the use of curriculum materials, through to the types of feedback given to student responses. With a focus on students, these same observations can range from student questioning, their interactions with peers and participation in collaborative activities, as well as interactions with the teacher. Observations, therefore, allow a wide range of aspects of the classroom context and the classroom culture to be captured in a holistic way and are an effective data collection instrument to understand how a curriculum is actually implemented (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, as argued by Patton (2002), direct observation offers the chance to learn things that participants might be unwilling to talk about in interviews and can provide a more insightful understanding of what is going on in practice.

The study used a non-participant observation strategy (Axinn, 2006; Ivankova & Creswell, 2009), of observing without participating in the activities. This approach provides the researcher with an insight into the observed activities to gain a broader view of what is happening by freely observing, listening and taking field notes. As described by Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2010, p. 185), this type of observation aims to “blend into the background and not influence what you are observing”. However, it is noted that in reality, this researcher was part of the situation she observed, and it was inevitable that her presence or actions might influence the situation. The influence of the researcher in this way has been referred to as the “Hawthorne effect” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 66), referring to the changes in the behaviour of research participants because they are aware that they are being studied. The participants are liable to modify their behaviour when they know that they are part of an experiment or are under investigation. This was considered one of the inbuilt biases of observation that needed to be considered to minimise possible adverse effects.

In Vietnamese schools, classroom observations are common professional practice and are conducted on a regular basis, with the observers being colleagues, school principals or visiting bureaucrats. The purpose of these observations is often to

assess the quality of teaching and learning and is considered to be part of professional development. Despite this, teachers are often under pressure when being observed for fear of criticism and negative evaluation. Many Vietnamese teachers suffer from what Le (2011) called “observation phobia” (p. 97), which was another factor which required attention in this study. On account of both the “Hawthorne effect” and also the “observation phobia” of teachers, efforts were made to build rapport with the teachers by making visits to their classrooms and engaging in conversations so that they became comfortable with the researcher in the classroom.

It was critical to select schools as cases for exploring how the new curriculum worked in the classroom. The selected schools needed to have sampling representativeness, and at the same time provide a practical understanding of the implementation of the intended curriculum. Based on the assumption that there might be some disparities between schools in the urban and rural areas, and between Normal and Selective schools, four lower secondary schools in two different districts were selected. School A (Normal school) and School B (Selective school) were located in the city; School C (Normal school) and School D (Selective school) were located in a rural district in the northern part of the province. The choice of a range of schools, i.e. Normal and Selective, offered data across the ability range of students. The purpose was to understand the curriculum implementation across different school types and in different socio-economic contexts to develop an understanding of the variables that impinge on the implementation of the curriculum. The schools participating in classroom observations are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. *The selected schools for classroom observations*

School Name	Type	Location	Number of students	Number of English teachers	Number of observations
School A	Normal	Urban district (City)	1164 students	6	7
School B	Selective	Urban district (City)	1089 students	6	7
School C	Normal	Rural district (District J)	630 students	3	7
School D	Selective	Rural district (District J)	500 students	4	7

28 lessons were observed in the participating schools. An observation protocol was built to enable field notes (a copy of the protocol is included as Appendix B), and a video recorder was used to record lessons to be revisited and reviewed. The use of video was beneficial and limited the problems often associated with observations alone, which were noted by Chadwick at al. (1984, p. 96), to typically include:

(i) the sheer inadequacy of human sense organs,

(ii) the selective perception or tendency to pay attention to certain events at the expense of others,

(iii) the observations becoming less effective because of overfamiliarity, boredom or fatigue.

4.3.6. Semi-structured interviews

An essential part of the qualitative strand involved in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are often described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Hennink et al., 2010, p. 109) or "knowledge-producing conversations" (Hesse-Biber, Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006, p. 128). The interview is considered powerful data as it allows interaction between researchers and interviewees and offers opportunities for interviewers to ask for explanations or clarification of responses (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Purposive sampling was used as a non-probability sampling strategy to recruit participants for an interview (Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2014) and comprised eleven teachers and four school principals in one-to-one meetings. Semi-structured interview protocols were developed, in which many of the questions were open-ended and "allowed the respondents opportunities to develop their responses in ways which the interviewer might not have foreseen" (Campbell, McNamara, & Gilroy, 2004, p. 99). Before any interviews, the participants were asked for their preference for the language of the meeting (i.e. English or Vietnamese), and all chose Vietnamese. All of the interviews were audio recorded.

4.3.6.1. Teacher interviews

Eleven teachers from the four selected schools agreed to participate in an interview. The interviews were conducted after the classroom observations. The four overarching themes of the interview protocol, a copy of which is at Appendix C1, were:

(i) Teacher attitude in relation to the curriculum reform,
(ii) Teacher understanding of CLT
(iii) Teacher practices using the new curriculum, including perceived constraints to its implementation,
(iv) Professional development

Details of the teachers participating are summarised in Table 4.6 below, in which the names of the teachers are coded alphabetically for confidentiality.

Table 4.6. *Interviewed teachers*

#	Name	School	School type	Experience (years)		Location
				of teaching English	of the new curriculum	
1	Teacher A	School A	Normal	20	3	Urban district
2	Teacher B	School A		30	4	
3	Teacher C	School A		14	3	
4	Teacher D	School A		15	2	
5	Teacher E	School B	Selective	12	3	
6	Teacher F	School C	Normal	18	3	Rural district
7	Teacher G	School C		30	4	
8	Teacher H	School D	Selective	32	2	
9	Teacher I	School D		21	4	
10	Teacher J	School D		13	3	
11	Teacher K	School D		12	3	

The obvious point to note from Table 4.5 is that the teachers were collectively very experienced, each with an average of twenty years in the classroom. They were also practised in relation to implementing the new curriculum with an average of more than three years' experience.

4.3.6.2. Interviews with school principals

Besides the interviews with teachers, it was also critical to involve voices from the school leadership. At the local level, the school principal has a pivotal role in promoting or inhibiting educational change in the school (Fullan, 2015). The principal plays an important role in several areas: the bureaucratic process, curriculum leadership, strategic orientation, academic, administrative and resource support to "attack incoherence" in the process of implementing change (Fullan, 2015, p. 123). A semi-structured interview protocol for the principals (Appendix C2), was developed, focusing on three main themes:

(i) Understanding of and attitude towards the curriculum reform

(ii) Perceived constraints to its implementation
(iii) Teacher professional development

Details about the participating principals are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7. *Details of the school principals*

#	Name	School	Location
1	School Principal A	School A	Urban district
2	School Principal B	School B	
3	School Principal C	School C	Rural district
4	School Principal D	School D	

4.4. Data analysis

Since the study consisted of multiple data sources, the analysis of each type of data was conducted independently, employing separate analytic tools to treat the numerical and verbal data. Results obtained from both sets of data analyses were merged by using a joint inference strategy (Creswell, 2011; Morse, 2009), in which both congruent and divergent findings were triangulated and discussed.

In regard to the survey, because the aim was to describe rather than test a hypothesis or identify correlations between variables, a univariate method of analysis was used, which involved the description of the distribution of a single variable at a time (Bryman, 2012; De Vaus, 2002). Descriptive statistics was employed as the tool for the univariate analysis in which patterns and frequencies in the responses were calculated. As the survey was administered online, the frequency, percentages and standard deviation of variables deriving from participant responses were automatically generated. One of the advantages of using a web-based survey compared to the traditional paper form was that the representation of quantitative results was made available in tables, charts, and statistically in the form of concise numbers. This ready-to-use data analysis saved a great deal of time by inputting, classifying, categorising and calculating the data, which was traditionally handled manually, or via spreadsheets or computer-assisted software. The verbal data derived from the open-ended questions were treated as qualitative data.

Unlike the analysis of quantitative data, there are few clear-cut and well-established rules for analysing verbal data (Creswell, 2013; Hennink et al., 2010; Leavy, 2014).

There are no one-size-fits-all strategies for analysing qualitative data due to different research aims, the nature of the phenomenon under investigation as well as the experiences and interpretive skills of researchers (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Schreier, 2012).

Qualitative data, which formed the core component of the study, comprised data from different sources, including:

(i) Government-issued curriculum mandates;
(ii) Curriculum textbooks;
(iii) Interviews with the teachers and school principals;
(iv) Videos and field notes of classroom practices;

Given the diversity of these data, three methods were used for their analysis and interpretation:

(i) A qualitative content analysis method for analysing the curriculum documents and the interviews (see section 4.4.1)
(ii) An integrated framework for the analysis of the textbooks (see section 4.4.2)
(iii) Resources from SFL for the analyses of teacher attitudes and classroom discourse (see section 4.4.3)

4.4.1. Qualitative content analysis of the curriculum documents and interviews

Qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012) was used to examine the curriculum mandates and interviews. As a flexible method for analysing textual data, content analysis is defined as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Schreier, 2012, p. 1277). This method of analysis enables researchers "to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion" (Stemler, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, an advantage of this method is to allow a large volume of verbal data to be dealt with, analysed and interpreted in corroborating evidence (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). It is a widely used technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, aiming to generate new knowledge, insights, and practical guides to action (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Krippendorff, 2018). Qualitative content analysis is considered a well-suited method for studies which focus more on description and interpretation than on seeking to develop theory (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Neuendorf, 2016) and is

also "extremely well-suited for the analysis of multifaceted sensitive phenomena" with data from multiple sources and perspectives (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 114).

Qualitative content analysis is flexible in that it allows researchers to adopt an inductive (data-driven) or deductive (concept-driven) approach or a combination of both, depending on the purposes of the research (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The main difference between the inductive and deductive approaches is that the former involves generating codes, categories and themes directly from the original data, while the latter is used when the structure of the analysis is operationalised on the basis of former knowledge grounded in prior theories or models (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schreier, 2012). Typically, if there is not enough former knowledge about the phenomenon or the knowledge is fragmented, an inductive approach would be recommended (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Deductive content analysis is better suited to testing categories, concepts, models or hypotheses, or to retesting existing data in a new context (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Krippendorff, 2018; Mayring, 2004). Drisko and Maschi (2015) suggested a combination of both, generating predefined categories by employing a deductive strategy and then adding sub-categories by using an inductive approach to ensure the reliability of findings. In this study, a deductive approach was used as the starting point of analysis and then combined with complementary inductive strategies to add more categories deriving from the original data. The analysis was conducted in the three phases of preparing, organising and reporting on the data, as suggested by Elo and Kyngäs (2008).

4.4.1.1. Preparation phase

The official curriculum documents were placed in one folder, with the audio interview files in another folder. This consisted of multiple sub-folders for interviews with teachers in each school and with school principals. As the working language of all interviews was Vietnamese, the transcription was in Vietnamese. As a semi-structured protocol was used for conducting interviews, some overarching themes were already predefined by the interview questions. These themes were used deductively as the starting point for the content analysis.

4.4.1.2. Organisation phase

This phase involved data coding and categorising codes. A categorisation matrix was developed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) which included generic categories and sub-

categories of codes basing on the predefined overarching themes of the research. This process also involved checking for overlap and redundancy. Coding took place in Vietnamese as it helped to reduce the potential risk of misinterpretation and loss of meaning (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010).

The codes for the identification of participants and schools were alphabetical (e.g. Teacher A, Teacher B, School Principal A, School Principal B, School A, School B) and numerical order (e.g. Lesson 1, Lesson 2). This type of coding served the dual purposes of convenience and confidentiality.

Five generic categories were defined to analyse curriculum policies, with the aim of understanding the curriculum intentions for the lower secondary level. These were:

(i) Statements of curriculum goals
(ii) Communicative competence
(iii) The designated approach to pedagogy (CLT)
(iv) Testing and assessment
(v) Prerequisites for curriculum implementation

Four generic categories for analysing the interviews were identified:

(i) Attitude towards the curriculum change
(ii) Understanding of the curriculum principles
(iii) Practices within the curriculum, including the perceived constraints to its implementation
(iv) Teacher professional development and support

An example of how the data were coded into generic and sub-categories is provided in Table 4.8. Only the selected quotes were translated into English for the reporting of findings.

Table 4.8. *An example of data coding*

Example of raw data	***Generic category***	***Sub-category***
Curriculum policies		
"Communicative competence is the ability to use knowledge about the English language into communicative activities…"	Communicative competence	Definition
"The students should be put in the centre of learning and become active learners."	CLT	The role of learners
In-depth interviews		
"It [CLT] means student-centeredness. The teachers play the role of facilitators. The students will need to discover new information by themselves"	CLT	CLT means student-centredness
"Honestly speaking, I think training and workshops are not very effective. For example, when changing from the old curriculum to the new one, there was no training."	Professional training and support	Insufficient in-service training

4.4.2. Integrated framework for the analysis of the Tieng Anh textbooks

As the material manifestation of a curriculum, a textbook is often understood as "the visible heart of any ELT programme" (Sheldon, 1988, p. 237), and perhaps the most common form of teaching and learning resource used in language classrooms. This statement would be particularly true in Asian contexts. However, it is also generally accepted that no textbook or set of materials is likely to be perfect, and there is no agreed set of criteria for textbook evaluation (McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Meurant, 2010). This is possibly because "the needs, objectives, backgrounds and preferred learning styles of the participants differ from context to context" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 15).

Nevertheless, there have been various attempts to develop criteria for evaluating and selecting teaching and learning materials. These include the criteria proposed by Cunningsworth (1995), Sheldon (1988), McDonough (2003), and Littlejohn (2011), as well as checklists for evaluation by Byrd (2001), Garinger (2002), McGrath (2002), Tomlinson (2003), Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), and Harmer (2007). All of these provide detailed descriptions of materials with implicit assumptions of what a 'desirable' product should look like. Although they offer

guidelines for analysing textbooks, it is unlikely that a published checklist could be used without necessary adaptations to a local context and the purposes of the analysis (Richards, 2001). In other words, a textbook analysis needs to be conducted with a clear purpose grounding the criteria that are subsequently generated around the contextual specifics of the program, including the teacher, the learner and the pedagogy.

The *Tieng Anh* is a localised textbook series made for Vietnamese schools, developed by the local textbook writers in collaboration with Pearson, an international publishing company with a special interest in English language teaching and learning materials. The integrated framework used to examine the textbook was an amalgamation of the work of Littlejohn (2011), Richards (2006) and Royce (2007). The work by Littlejohn (2011) comprised two major aspects: *Publication* and *Design*, which provided a basis for building internal and external descriptions of the materials. Added to Littlejohn's (2011) *Design* category was Richards' (2006) classification of language practice types, and also Royce's (1998, 2007) focus on intersemiotic complementarity between visual and verbal modes in multimodal texts included in textbooks. Richards' (2006) classification of language practice types in a CLT classroom was used to categorise the language activities in the textbooks. Given the multimodal nature of the textbook series, the analysis also considered in some detail the complementary role of visual images within the learning activities, using Royce's (1998, 2007) framework on intersemiotic relationships between visual and verbal modes within a learning activity. The integrated framework is presented in Table 4.9 below and then described in more detail. A sample textbook analysis is presented at Appendix G1.

Table 4.9. *Materials analysis from Littlejohn (2011), * added from Richards (2006), ** from Royce (1998, 2007)*

Aspects of the textbook	***Specific focus of analysis***
Publication	▪ The materials package ▪ Published form of the learner materials ▪ Subdivision of the learner materials
Design	▪ Aims and objectives ▪ Principles of selection ▪ Principles of sequencing ▪ Type of language practice* ▪ Focus of language practice ▪ Participation

	▪ The role of visual images**

4.4.2.1. Publication and Design

For Littlejohn (2011), *Publication* relates to the "tangible" or material aspects of the textbooks and provides an external description. The analysis includes the materials package, how they appear as a complete set, and whether they were produced in hard copy or electronically. A description of the subsections of the materials is also included, together with their length, along with any standard patterns of recurring features in each learning unit.

The *Design* of the materials considers the stated aims, the selection and the sequence of content. Of central importance is the nature of the teaching/learning activities in the materials, which requires a close focus on the nature of each exercise and learning task. Richards' (2006) classification of the types of language practice as mechanical, meaningful or communicative was used for this purpose. The teaching/learning activities also suggested the process of classroom participation or working arrangement, for example, whether the learners were organised to work individually or in pairs or in groups, and from this, the roles that teachers and learners were to adopt. A categorisation of the functions of the visuals included in the textbooks drew on Royce's (1998, 2007) approach to intersemiotic complementarity analysis and offered a principled means of analysing and interpreting the textbook design. Further detail is presented on the types of language practice and the functions of visual design.

4.4.2.2. Types of language practice

Richards (2006, p. 16) provided a detailed description of the three main types of language practice commonly found in English instructional materials, which he labelled as mechanical, meaningful and communicative language practices. These categories were used to analyse the activities included in the *Tieng Anh* textbooks.

Mechanical practice refers to controlled activities, which involve a strong focus on language form. A focus on form may also be labelled a focus on grammar, structure or syntax. Such practice includes, for example, decontextualised grammar exercises, substitution drills and pronunciation drills. Students can successfully complete these exercises without necessarily understanding the language they are

using or transferring the language in the activities into communicative use. This kind of activity is often referred to as accuracy practice.

Meaningful practice refers to activities where language control is still provided, but students are required to make meaningful choices as part of the practice. The practice is oriented towards meaning, but learners still work with a predictable range of language. This would include, for example, an activity in which students are given a street map to talk about the location of a building in the map and a list of prepositions they have studied. The practice is now meaningful, as learners have to respond based on the context provided, i.e. the street map. These are activities organised around a specified situation or context so that students can cope using resources which are pertinent to that context.

Communicative practice refers to activities with a focus on the communication of messages, in which meanings are exchanged, and in which the language used is correspondingly unpredictable. Examples include using the language for open-ended discussions, role-plays, problem-solving and context-based tasks. Fluency is developed when students negotiate meanings, correct misunderstandings, use communication strategies to maintain comprehensible and ongoing communication, and work to avoid communication breakdown. This type of activity is the clear aim of CLT classrooms.

A sequence of mechanical, meaningful and communicative practices may be interpreted as a process of scaffolding. Students may need to go through a process of more mechanical activities, that is from exercises with a focus on form and accuracy, to meaningful and less scaffolded practice, before they can independently participate in fluent communicative interactions.

4.4.2.3. The role of visual images

A feature of contemporary textbooks is the pervasive use of both verbal and visual semiotic modes, essentially language and images. The *Tieng Anh* series was no exception. Promoted as “richly-illustrated” textbooks that focus on offering students “motivation, memorable lessons and joyful learning experiences” (Hoang et al., 2015b, p. iii), the *Tieng Anh* series incorporated an extensive range of visual images. The aim was to support language teaching and language learning with the use of visual imagery as part of the effort to develop communicative competence..

In considering the textbook both as a pedagogic resource and as a configuration of choices from both language and visual semiotic systems, it is argued that all of the semiotic choices made in the textbook design have a role in the teaching and learning activities. Therefore, a textbook analysis should examine the proposition that the verbal and visual semiotic modes within a text complement each other to add and project meaning to the learning activities. This is the proposition in Royce's (2007) framework for intersemiotic complementarity. Using the framework, the analysis focused on identifying the intersemiotic semantic relationships between the visual and verbal modes included in the learning activities in the *Tieng Anh*. Royce deployed the metafunctional categories within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and specified three types of intersemiotic complementarity between language and image within a multimodal text: ideational, interpersonal and compositional. This aligns with the meaning potential in language and image proposed within SFL through which all texts make ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings and images correspond via representational, interactive and compositional meanings. The ideational intersemiotic relation is determined by semantically related lexical items in the text and the corresponding representational elements of the image. This relationship is realised through the intersemiotic relations of Repetition, Synonymy, Hyponymy, Meronymy, Antonymy and Collocation, which function to create cohesion across the two semiotic systems of language and image. The interpersonal relationships that relate images to text refer to their function of addressing the reader/viewer and also with the congruence or dissonance of their attitudinal stance. The compositional relations involve features of the layout which enable the image and text to cohere in a single page.

An in-depth analysis of the visual-verbal complementarity within each of the images and the contribution of the image to the teaching and learning activities was not feasible as part of this study. Rather, the analysis of images in the texts firstly identified them and then evaluated them as either functional or not functional in relation to the teaching and learning activity to which it related. In this way, the analysis placed a particular focus on the ideational intersemiotic complementarity between the image and the language as part of an activity. The aim was to consider the use of images in the texts and if and how they contributed to the activities to which they were attached.

4.4.3. Resources from Systemic Functional Linguistics for the analysis of teacher attitude and classroom discourse

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is part of the functional tradition in linguistics and is, therefore, distinct from the formal tradition. Functional theories perceive the phenomenon of language functionally, that is the aim is to understand how language functions or what functions humans use it to satisfy. Formal theories, by contrast, are more interested in the form of language, that is the interest is in the constituent parts of a language and how these operate independently and in combination. The particular functional theory used in the study is SFL, developed from the 1950s onwards by MAK Halliday, firstly in the UK and then in Australia. The achievement of SFL has been to provide a model of language, so that its component parts can be seen and understood in relation to one another. The key premise of SFL is to propose that language is the fundamental human resource for making meaning. Language has evolved in humans to 'transform experience into meaning', whereby both inner and outer experiences become meaningful via language.

Language use is understood as choice, albeit unconscious choice for the main part. The idea of choice allows for the distinction between language as a system and language in use. Language as a system can be understood as an entity, an abstract phenomenon of many parts, all of which are related and combined into a unified system of language. Language in use is how the system is used by individuals as they go about their daily lives. Each instance of language in use is drawn from the system of language and can be understood as a text. Texts are instances of language use from the language system.

The SFL model of language is expansive and, as would be expected of any theory of language, it is required to provide great detail to create a satisfactory model of this complex phenomenon. It is not useful to attempt to provide all of that detail here. Instead, the focus will be on those parts of the model which have been used in the study and to account for how these specific aspects relate to the whole. One benefit of the process of developing a model of language is that the model is represented as a visual to support understanding of the relationships between the different components. In line with this approach, a visual model is provided here, one which is constructed to foreground the salient components in this study.

The starting point is that SFL is a stratified model, that is there are different levels within language. These are the level of phonology/graphology, the level of lexico-grammar and the level of discourse semantics. The distinction between phonology and graphology is that the phonology is related to spoken language and graphology to written language. Visually these are represented as co-tangential circles because the theory proposes that language at each stratum is expressed or realised at the stratum below. This also points to the fact that the process of modelling language is an artifice; it is not real. Whilst we can visualise different strata within language and then later theorise about how they operate, they are essentially parts of language and cannot be separated from each other. The three-level model of language is represented as follows:

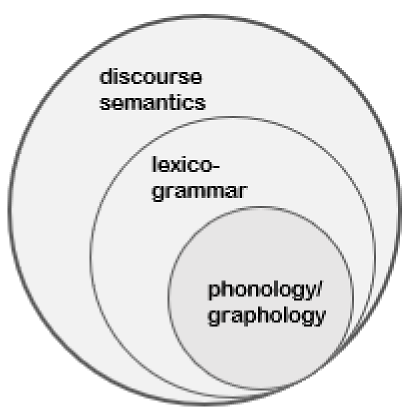


Figure 4.2. *Language as a stratified model (Martin, 1992)*

It is important to note that there are some variations in the modelling of language amongst different researchers working in SFL. It is not the place in this study to discuss the merits of variations within the modelling. It suffices to state that the specific model used in the study was developed by JR Martin and colleagues. Martin includes a stratum of discourse semantics and the specific subsystems from that stratum are used in the study.

The next important aspect to note is that the context in which language occurs is also stratified. There are two levels within the context, the context of culture and the context of situation. The context of situation is the immediate situation in which language occurs and is labelled as Register. The context of culture is the broader context. Martin labels this as Genre. The two strata within the context are important in this study and can be represented as follows:

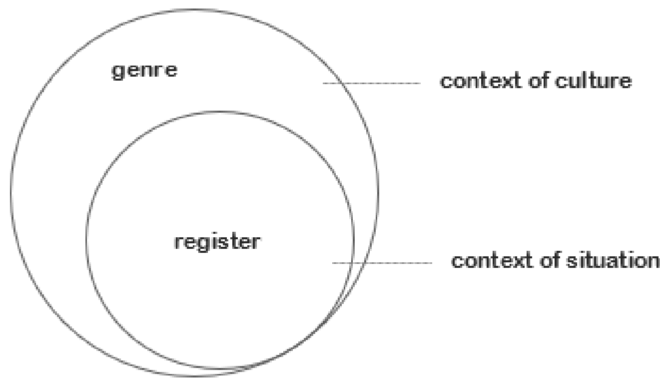


Figure 4.3. *Co-tangential contextual circles*

The theory then proposes that language and context are inextricably linked, and ties them together in a stratified model of language *in* context. The use of the preposition *in* is important for the fact that language is always used in a context and that the context is absolutely important in considering how language is used. The relationship is bidirectional, that is the context(s) shape language, and language also impacts on the context(s).

Given the proposal that language is a resource for making meaning, it is important to account for meaning as used in SFL. The theory proposes that there are three generalised kinds of meanings within language, and that every instance of language use can be looked at in relation to these three meaning types. These are labelled as the metafunctions within SFL, specifically the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual metafunctions. Ideational meanings are those which are made in relation to what is going on, who is involved in the activity or event and the circumstances surrounding the activity or event. Interpersonal meanings are those which are made about the roles of the participants involved and their relationships. Textual meanings enable both ideational and interpersonal meanings through the creation of text. This is a scant description of the metafunctions which will be elaborated upon in relation to how they are evident in the study. Suffice to say that there are three general kinds of meanings and that these are manifest in different subsystems at the levels of discourse semantics and lexico-grammar in the model of language. They are not seen as distinct systems as the level of phonology/graphology because they are expressed simultaneously in a spoken utterance or written words. The separation of meaning into generalised types of meaning can be represented visually as follows:

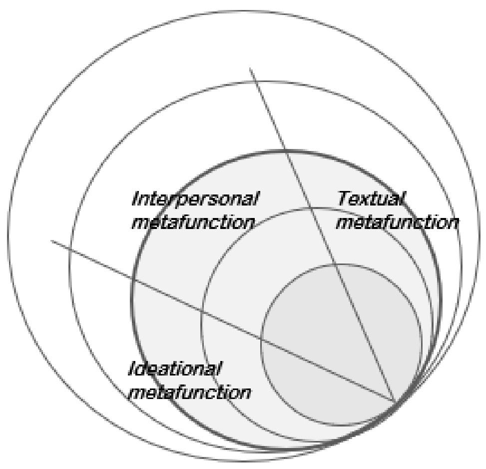


Figure 4.4. *The metafunctional organisation of language*

At the level of the context of situation, SFL proposes three distinct variables at play, theorising register as comprising the three variables of, the Field, the Tenor and the Mode. In every situation we can differentiate between who or what is involved and the specifics of the activity, that is the Field of activity. The Tenor pertains to the roles and relationships of those involved in the Field and the Mode is most easily understood as the channel of communication, most simply as the spoken or written language used. The stratum of register is important in this study for the fact that one specific register, that of pedagogy is used to understand the teaching and learning in the classrooms.

When the strata of context are mapped on the strata of language, the different variables and kinds of meaning align in a way that creates a unified model. The register variable of Field is aligned with the Ideational metafunction,Tenor is aligned with the Interpersonal metafunction and Mode correlates with the Textual metafunction. Thus, the variables in the context are aligned with the generalised kinds of meaning within the language. This is represented in the following figure:

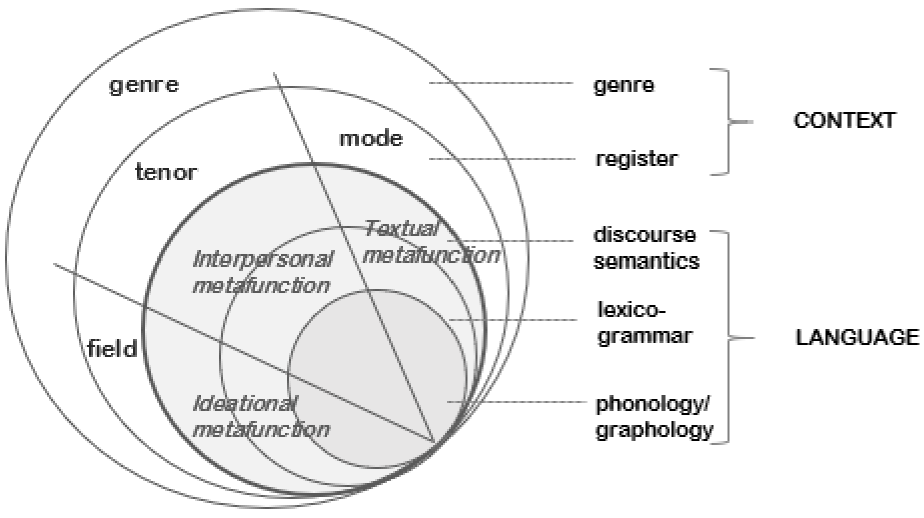


Figure 4.5. *Modelling language in context (Martin, 1992)*

As stated, the model presents different subsystems as expressing different kinds of meaning at different strata. There are subsystems which realise meanings at the level of discourse semantics and others which realise meanings at the level of lexico-grammar. These subsystems are specific to one of the three kinds of meanings or metafunctions, that is they are used to express ideational or interpersonal or textual meanings. Given that one important focus of the study is on the analysis of classroom discourse, then the roles and relationships between teachers and students are foregrounded. The role of the teacher in the broader socio-political system is also pertinent in the study. On both counts, interpersonal meanings are important and interpersonal sub-systems which realise these meanings are described and examined in some detail. The particular subsystems used for analysis are represented in the model in the following figure:

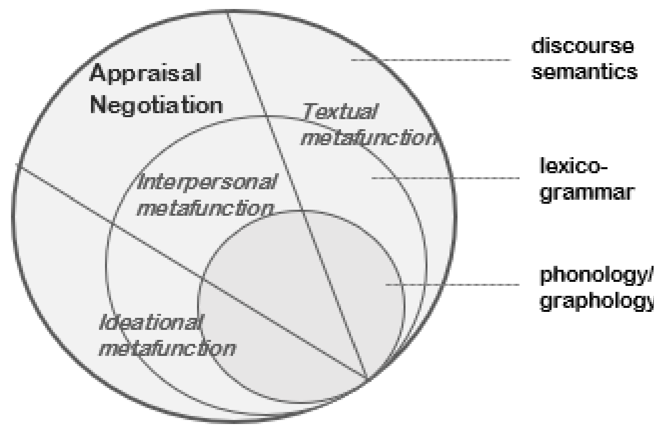


Figure 4.6. *The subsystems of discourse semantics used in the study*

4.4.3.1. Appraisal: the framework for understanding teacher attitude

To understand teacher attitudes towards the new curriculum, the study used the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) within SFL to analyse the teacher interviews and the responses to open-ended questions in the survey.

The system of Appraisal was developed in the 1990s and 2000s (Christie & Martin, 1997; Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2015). Appraisal is with the expression of the language of evaluation, the meaning-making resources by which speaker/writers express their emotions, judgements and appreciations of different entities, both human and non-human (White, 2015). Appraisal is an interpersonal system within the SFL model, which has evolved for "negotiating our social relationships, by telling our listeners or readers how we feel about things and people" (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 26). In this study, it was important to understand how the teachers evaluated the new curriculum as an important component of how they enacted it in their classrooms.

The Appraisal system distinguishes between three semantic categories, namely Attitude, Engagement and Graduation as represented in Figure 4.7 below. Attitude concerns the resources for expressing emotions and attitudes and was, therefore, particularly useful for the focus in the study. The sub-system of Attitude, consists of three elements, namely Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. Affect encompasses language resources for expressing emotions and feelings. Judgement deals with the resources for evaluating human behaviour and character by reference to ethics/morality and other systems of conventionalised or institutionalised cultural

and social norms. Appreciation pertains to the evaluation of objects, artefacts, states of affairs and processes with regards to how their values are assigned socially. Each subset of Attitude can be positive or negative, and can be expressed explicitly (inscribed), or implicitly (invoked).

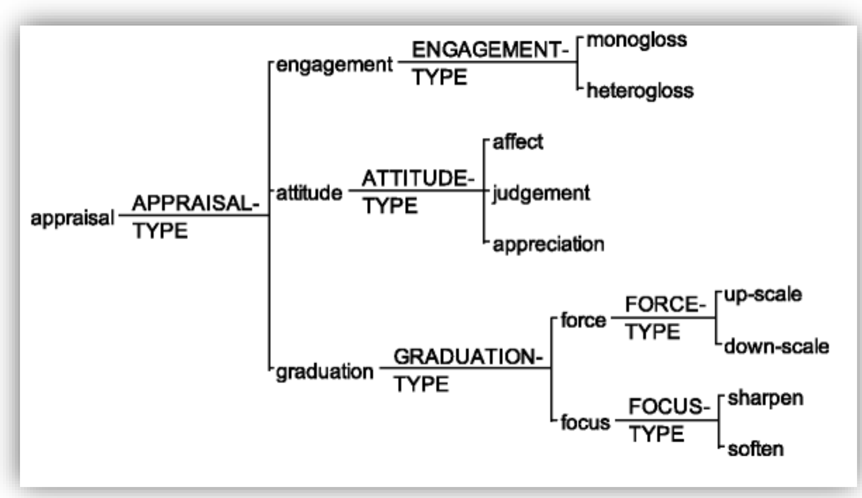


Figure 4.7. *Basic system for Appraisal (Martin & White, 2005)*

The Appraisal system was used to analyse how the teachers expressed their attitude in relation to the curriculum reform, as evidenced specifically in their language choices of Judgement, Appreciation and Affect, either positive or negative. The analysis included inscriptions of evaluation where it was explicitly stated, as well as the implicit invoking of evaluation where meaning was less clearly obvious or could not be simply tied to the choice of a lexical item, and where the evaluation was necessarily understood in relation to the context. As attitudinal meanings can be expressed by combinations of words above the level of the clause in particular textual settings (White, 2015), the analysis looked at both individual clauses, and also strings of clauses expressing the attitudinal meaning of the speaker/writer. It identified the Source of the Attitude, and also the Target of the Attitude, that is the appraised entity or human participant. In this way, an interpretation of the attitude of the teachers participating in the survey and in the interviews was based on the evidence provided by the Appraisal analysis. A sample analysis is included as Appendix G2.

4.4.3.2. Analysing classroom discourse

The framework for undertaking classroom discourse analysis was also SFL based, adapted from work on pedagogic register by Martin and Rose (2013), and Rose

(2014, 2018). Theorised from the standpoint of genre and register, Martin and Rose interpreted pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1990) in terms of "pedagogic register" (Christie, 2002), and in so doing were able to incorporate the register variables of field, tenor and mode into a framework for the analysis of classroom discourse.

The concept of pedagogic register

The notion of classroom pedagogic register, first proposed by Christie (2002), was based on the work of (Bernstein, 1990, 1996) and his observations about the nature of pedagogic discourse. Bernstein distinguished between two aspects of classroom interaction: the first that discourse is taken from its original source (esoteric knowledge) and recontextualised for the purpose of teaching and learning; the second relates to habits of thinking and forms of consciousness. The former he called instructional discourse, and is concerned with the 'content knowledge', or competences; the latter he labelled regulative discourse, which shapes the 'moral regulation' or conditions for instructional discourse to take place. The relationship between the two discourses is one of 'embedding' in that the instructional discourse is embedded in the regulative discourse. In his explication of these two distinctive features of pedagogic discourse, Bernstein (1990, p. 174-175) wrote:

> We shall define pedagogic discourse as the rule which embeds a discourse of competence (skills of various kinds) into a discourse of social order in such a way that the latter always dominates the former. We shall call the discourse transmitting specialised competences and their relation to each other *instructional* discourse, and the discourse creating specialised order, relation and identity *regulative* discourse.

SFL scholars, initially Christie (2002) and then Martin and Rose (2013) reworked Bernstein's sociological conceptualisation of pedagogic discourse from the perspective of SFL, a key element of which was to reconstitute it as pedagogic register. In this way classroom discourse could then be analysed and interpreted from within the stratified model of language at the heart of SFL, in which the strata of genre and register at the level of context were tied to strata within language, that is at the levels of discourse semantics and lexico-grammar. In this way, Martin and Rose (2013) proposed a model for classroom discourse to incorporate pedagogic activities *(Field)*, negotiated in pedagogic relations between teachers and learners (*Tenor*), and presented through pedagogic modalities – spoken, written, visual and manual (*Mode*), as shown in Figure 4.8. The cultural function of the pedagogic

register is to exchange knowledge, skills and values between teachers and learners, an exchange which is at the heart of educational practice.

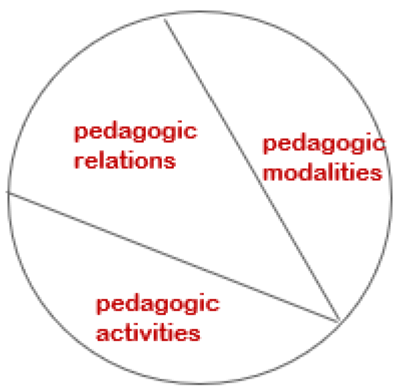


Figure 4.8. *Dimensions of pedagogic register (Martin & Rose, 2013)*

Figure 4.9 shows the location of pedagogic activities, relations and modalities at the level of register and how each ties to the strata discourse semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology within language.

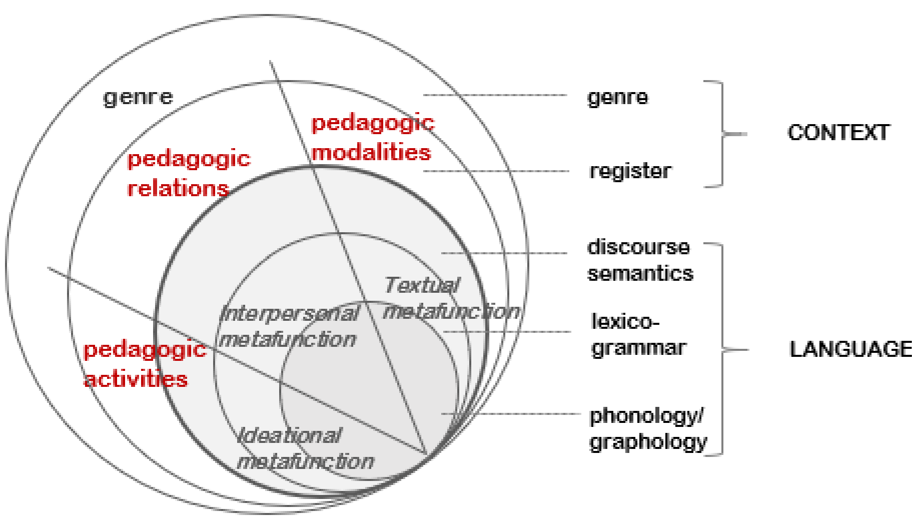


Figure 4.9. *Pedagogic register in an SFL model*

Martin and Rose's model has been particularly useful in considering classroom discourse for this study. It facilitated a 'global' understanding of the English language classroom, including the teaching and learning activities, the roles and relationships between the teacher and his/her students and the particular resources which were in use to support the teaching and learning. At a more detailed level, the framework

offered a theoretically supported means of analysing and interpreting specific aspects of the classroom discourse as it unfolded in the recorded lessons.

Table 4.10 lists the particular components of the English language classrooms which were the focus of discourse analysis in the study. A sample of classroom discourse analysis is included as Appendix G3.

Table 4.10. *Aspects of classroom discourse analysis*

Register variables	Resources for analysis	Aspect for analysis
Pedagogic activities (Field)	Types of language practice	▪ Types of language practice ▪ Classroom arrangement
Pedagogic relations (Tenor)	Appraisal Negotiation	▪ Patterns of classroom exchanges ▪ The role of teachers and students ▪ Classroom participation ▪ Student-to-student interaction ▪ The use of Vietnamese
Pedagogic modalities (Mode)	Textbook, images	▪ The use of textbooks ▪ The use of other modes of meaning, including images

Pedagogic activities

Pedagogic activities include all of the teaching and learning activities and tasks specified by the teacher either orally or in writing. The primary interest was to determine if and how students were provided with opportunities for the interpretation, negotiation and expression of meanings in the target language. The key interest was not so much in the content, but in how that content was taught and learnt. The focus of analysis centred on the types of language practice activities classified as mechanical, meaningful or communicative in line with Richard's (2006) classification of activity types within CLT, while the types of classroom arrangement drew attention to the students working in pairs, groups, or individually.

Pedagogic modalities

As the classroom lessons unfolded, various pedagogic modalities were enlisted by the teacher to enable the pedagogic activities and the pedagogic relations to support English language teaching and learning. These modalities included the spoken English language in the classroom and the written English language incorporated within the textbooks. Other modality included the use of images and their use

alongside written language in the textbook were analysed in some details in the study. All of these modalities came into play and were deployed in various ways. In fact, the means of understanding how classrooms were similar and/or different was to consider how pedagogic modalities were used to bring coherence to the pedagogic activity and pedagogic relations particular to each. Common instances of sources of meaning in the classroom included texts and images from the textbooks, photocopies, black/white boards, screens, audio and video recordings, through which resources for meaning making were engaged as part of the teaching and learning. The analysis of pedagogic modalities also provided evidence on the 'textbook-in-action', or how the teachers in the study deployed and adapted the textbooks in their teaching practices. The aim here was to triangulate with the textbook analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the textbook series as well as of teacher practices with the textbook in the classroom.

Pedagogic relations

The tenor of the classroom was evident in the prevailing pedagogic relations. This was the interpersonal dimension through which the roles of the teacher and the students were made evident, as well as their relationships, which were enacted in classroom exchanges and in patterns of classroom participation. This was at the heart of the analysis because the pedagogic relations were closely related to the prescribed pedagogy in the reform. The analysis of pedagogic relations provided evidence of if, how and in what ways CLT was enacted at the classroom level and was a central focus of the study. This analysis was possible because of the alignment between the variables within the pedagogic register and the metafunctions within the language strata. Specifically, the variable of Tenor in the pedagogic register was evident in the pedagogic relations between the teacher and his/her students, and at the stratum of discourse semantics this was enacted through the system of Negotiation. We see this both in classroom exchanges and classroom participation.

Classroom exchanges

Options within classroom exchanges are described within the discourse semantic system of Negotiation (Martin 1992, Martin and Rose 2007), developed from initial work by Berry (1981) and involving two dimensions: the type of exchange and the role of speakers.

Language exchanges are either of knowledge or of actions, and participant speakers in an exchange are either in primary or secondary roles. The goal of knowledge exchange, the prevalent type of classroom interaction, is to exchange knowledge or information. The participant in the exchange who provides knowledge is labelled as the primary knower (K1), while the secondary knower (K2) demands or receives the knowledge. In an action exchange, the goal is to perform an action. The participant performing the action is the primary actor (A1), and the participant demanding the action is the secondary actor (A2). The minimal knowledge exchange or action exchange comprises one K1 role or A1 action, without a K2 or A2 demand. In this case, K1 or A1 often initiates the exchange and takes on the primary role. K1 and A1 can also initiate by anticipating a secondary role. In this case, the primary role is delayed (dK1). Berry's model of exchange was developed from the 'Initiation – Response – Feedback' (IRF) cycle proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) on the basis of their pioneering classroom analysis, in which the teacher initiates the exchange and the learner displays knowledge by answering the initiating question. The teacher has the authority to evaluate the response, thus usually taking the role of the primary knower. Examples from the dataset are presented in Extract 1 (Knowledge exchange), and Extract 2 (Action exchange).

Spr.	*Exchange*	Role	
T	*And the last one* *Happy* *Nguyen Ngoc Anh please?*	dK1	Initiation
S2	*Happy and Unhappy*	K2	Response
T	*Unhappy* *Okay* *You are very good*	K1	Feedback

***Extract 1**. Knowledge exchange (Lesson 2)*

Spr.	*Exchange*	Role	
T	*So now who can come here and write the answers? Trang please?*	A2	Initiation
S4	*[goes to the board and writes answer]*	A1	Response
T	*Yeah thank you*	A2	Feedback

***Extract 2**. Action exchange (Lesson 3)*

Pedagogic exchanges are distinct from other types of exchanges in that the teacher often holds the knowledge which the learners need to acquire. The teacher asks questions for students to display their knowledge (dK1 role), and students' responses (K2) are commonly evaluated by feedback which indicates if the acquisition of knowledge has been successful. Moves can also be tracked to clarify understanding, or to challenge. These moves are labelled as tracking (Tr), or response to tracking (rTr), or challenge (Ch). Extract 3 below presents an example of an extended exchange in which the teacher asked a tracking question to clarify the answer with the whole class.

Spr.	*Exchange*	Role	
T	*Can you guess what food or what dish we are going to (…) today? What dish? Linh Trang?*	dK1	Initiation
S2	*Omelette*	K2	Response
T	*Omelette? Do you think so?*	Tr	Tracking
Ss	*Yes*	rTr	Response
T	*Good job*	K1	Feedback

Extract 3. *Extended knowledge exchange (Lesson 3)*

In language learning classrooms, especially within a CLT-based curriculum, the teaching and learning goal is for authentic communicative exchanges in the target language between the teacher and student, and among students. This means exchanges need to be extended beyond a basic three-move basic pattern (dK1^K2^K1 or IRF), such that achieving frequent instances of extended exchanges in the target language is seen as one criterion for evaluation of a successful communicative classroom (Nunan, 1992). The analysis of classroom exchanges provided a useful means of categorising both the extent and the kinds of exchanges negotiated in the classrooms in the study and provided an evidenced-based means to interpret the pedagogy.

Classroom participation

Student participation in classroom exchanges is also a significant dimension in pedagogic relations. According to Rose (2018), the analysis of participation is "critical to identifying how many and which students in a class are addressed and speak, and how they are evaluated" (p. 17) and brings to attention those students

who are actively involved in classroom exchanges and those who are not. This is often overlooked in the analysis of classroom discourse, where the transcripts of classroom talk do not feature non-participating students.

Rose (2014) schematised the relations between classroom participation and educational success as in Figure 4.10 following. Whilst Rose's data were from primary school classrooms in Australia, the argument is accepted as equally pertinent to English language classrooms in Vietnam. Simply, those students who participated most frequently tended to be the higher achieving and successful students, whilst those who participated less or reluctantly tended to be the less successful students.

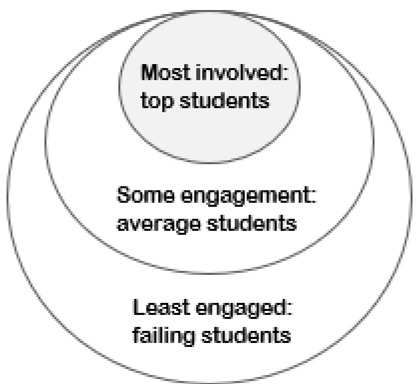


Figure 4.10. *Classroom participation and educational success (Rose, 2014)*

4.5. Legitimation of data quality and findings in mixed methods research

In order to ensure the quality of the data and the research findings, it was important to be accountable for the data collection, analyses and interpretive strategies. As noted by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), such accountability implies that a researcher aims to assess and document the validity of the research findings. This is important because an issue that arose initially in relation to mixed methods research was that there was no consensus about how to evaluate its design.

Legitimation (Morse, 2009) evolved as the term for validity in mixed methods research studies. It is proposed that mixed methods data analyses can offer a more comprehensive means of legitimating findings than do either quantitative and qualitative data analyses alone by allowing access to and triangulation of information from both data types (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). When the quantitative and qualitative data are valid and credible, then the mixed study will

have strong data quality. Data quality in mixed methods research is determined by the standards of quality in both the quantitative and qualitative strands. Each of the two strands requires different standards for the measurement of data quality and adopts different terms (Table 4.11). However, common to both approaches, these standards serve the same purpose of evaluating the quality of the data, their interpretation and the findings.

Table 4.11. *Types of criteria for trustworthiness (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 296)*

Quantitative criteria	Qualitative criteria
Internal validity	Credibility
Reliability	Dependability
External validity	Transferability
Objectivity	Confirmability

Internal validity/ Credibility is the critical quality of any empirical research to ensure the 'goodness', or trustworthiness of the research findings: Do the findings make sense? Do we have an authentic portrait of what is being examined? The truth value of the study, therefore, is closely associated with the adequacy of the data collected and the triangulation of the data and results. To ensure the quality of the data collection in this study, efforts were made to build up rapport with the teacher participants. With knowledge of the culture and of Vietnamese teachers, it was assumed that they may exhibit 'observation phobia' and a fear of being negatively evaluated, with the consequence that they might report compliance with MOET requirements whilst continuing with their own ways of teaching. Before conducting interviews and observations, time was invested in visiting the schools and talking to the teachers, to establish relationships as a colleague and a researcher who had a genuine interest to understand the curriculum reform from the teachers' perspective. These efforts brought positive outcomes as the teachers were comfortable in talking about and sharing their personal stories with the researcher. For those who participated in the online survey, as the distance made it impossible for face-to-face conversations, connection and rapport was established via emails sharing personal experiences as students and teachers, the interests of the researcher and the purpose of the study. Many of the teachers responded to emails, and several requested to stay in touch and to discuss further the realities of teaching and learning English in their schools. Such connections provided the opportunity to develop relationships with the teachers, which made it possible to collect credible

data, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the local context where teaching and learning were operating.

The research location was decided on the basis of personal and professional connections. As socio-economic conditions varied across different regions in the country and a single province could not perfectly represent the whole country, attempts were made to maximise the adequacy of the data and data analysis procedures and data triangulation. The selection of both urban and rural districts in the province and the selection of different school types allowed a broader insight into any potential gap amongst students of different levels of achievement and different home backgrounds. The collection of data from several sources enabled the triangulation of data and findings. Each type of data was analysed using the methods outlined above, including descriptive statistics for the survey data, thematic coding for the interviews, and different frameworks for analysing teacher attitude, the textbooks and classroom discourse. The overall plan was made with a view to treat each type of data in an appropriate way and to generate credible findings that best reflected the investigation. Although the use of different analytical frameworks made the study lengthy, this was seen as necessary to inform the research questions in the most reliable way.

Reliability/Dependability refers to whether "the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). In the study, the use of videotaped recordings ensured that the classroom events could be revisited and reviewed later on. Additionally, the interviews with teachers were conducted after the classroom observations, providing the opportunity to address some of the teacher strategies when they were still fresh. The participation of different stakeholders in relation to the curriculum reform (i.e. teachers and school principals) enabled a comparison of data and findings.

External validity/Transferability refers to the generalisability of the research findings and if they can be transferred to other contexts. The study was based in one province of Vietnam, and could not be an absolute representation of the other 62 cities and provinces in the country. However, the findings from the study offered 'particularisation' (van Lier, 2005) of the location in the research, which offers useful evidence for "comparative information to a wide variety of other cases" (p. 198). Although generalisation of the research findings should be treated with caution,

many concurrent features and issues in relation to the reform could be shared across Vietnam and in other EFL contexts where curriculum change was the goal.

Objectivity/ Confirmability concerns the degree of replicability possible in other studies by different researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This criterion is to be ensured by explicit descriptions of the research design, data collection procedures and data analyses to have a complete picture including 'backstage' information about the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, objectivity was achieved through a descriptive analysis of the survey data, which was presented in the form of tables and concrete statistics. Attempts to achieve confirmability of qualitative data were made by providing samples of data coding, analyses, quotes and quantifying tables and figures to support the interpretations. Appendices A, B, C, D and G provide samples of the data collection instruments and samples of analyses.

4.6. Ethical considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethics approval (H-2017-027, 09 Mar 2017) granted by the Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions, The University of Adelaide), and was deemed to meet the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). Ethics approval is included as Appendix D, with the consent form and participant information sheets included as Appendix E and Appendix F.

4.6.3. Level of risk

This study was considered to be low risk by the Human Research Ethics Review Group, with minimal risks for the research participants, such that the:

- Teacher participants would have to spend time completing the online survey and/or interviews.
- Participants might feel uncomfortable talking about their personal attitude, understandings and practices.
- Participants might feel reluctant evaluating a centrally planned curriculum and/or their managers and colleagues.
- Teachers and students might feel pressure when being observed.

The researcher was aware of the potential risks to the participants and proposed measures to minimise the risks, including:

- All of the information pertaining to the research aims, its scope and procedures was made clear to the participants so that they could decide whether to take part in the project. Participation was totally voluntary regarding the online survey, the interview and the classroom observation.
- Participants were informed that their identities would be kept confidential and data would be made non-identifiable before being reported.
- Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the project at any time they wished.
- Teacher participants were informed of the number of observations and the schedule of observations was made through discussion with the teachers in advance.
- The time for the interviews and observations was arranged at each participant's convenience.
- Teacher participants were asked for their permission to make audio and video recordings before use.

4.6.4. Confidentiality

In accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), the identity of the participants was treated with strict confidentiality during data collection and during the reporting of the research findings to ensure that their identity would not be disclosed.

The survey was administered online, in which the participants remained completely unidentified. Information such as gender and teaching experiences could not be identified at source. In interviews and observations, the names of the participants and schools were coded and pseudonyms were used. The researcher ensured that information relating to the participants would remain confidential and that only the researcher and her supervisors would have access to this information.

4.6.5. Storage of data

The research complied with the regulations for data storage at The University of Adelaide. Digital materials, including survey, transcripts, field notes, audio and video recordings, were stored in the researcher's computer and password-protected portable drives. Printed and analogue materials were stored in a secure locker in the specified office to be retained for five years after the submission of the thesis.

4.7. Limitations of the study

The study used a mixed methods research design, exploring the curriculum renewal in Vietnamese lower-secondary schools, using data from several sources collected over an extended period of time. The study was located in one northern province of Vietnam, and whilst this province was typical of Vietnamese provinces, it was not representative of all other provinces and all lower-secondary schools in the country, especially those in remote mountainous areas catering to ethnic minority students. Therefore, generalisations from the findings have been made with caution. For the purposes of generalisation, there is a need to conduct further studies in different geographical locations and socioeconomic regions.

Another limitation of the study was in the number of classroom observations. A total of 28 observations were made in four schools, making the number of visits and time spent in each school relatively limited. Only one camera was available and was placed at the back of the classroom, making it hard to record the voices of students when working in pairs and group activities. Although attempts were made to take notes during such collaborative activities, it is accepted that there is a need for multiple recorders to record all interactions to qualify as optimal data for classroom discourse analysis.

Chapter conclusion

Given the holistic nature of language learning classrooms and the dynamic, multi-dimensional process of curriculum change, the study adopted a mixed methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The strength of a mixed methods research design was to allow the triangulation of data and findings, and, therefore, to facilitate stronger findings. As multiple sources and types of data were involved, different methods of data analyses were used. Each of the analytic methods was matched to each of the data types to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings. The total data set and data analyses used in the study are summarised in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12. *Summary of data and methods of data analyses*

Research strand	Type of data	Methods of analysis
Quantitative	Survey data	Descriptive statistics
Qualitative	Official curriculum documents	Qualitative content analysis
	Textbook analysis	Framework adapted from Littlejohn (2011), Richards (2006), Royce (1998, 2007)
	In-depth interviews	Qualitative analysis using SFL resources; 1. Appraisal to analyse teacher attitude (Martin & White, 2005)
	Classroom discourse analysis	2. Pedagogic register (Martin & Rose (2013) to analyse the teaching and learning context 3. Negotiation (Martin & Rose, 2007) to analyse teacher and student classroom exchanges

These data and their analyses are the focus of the following chapters and constitute the findings of the study.

CHAPTER V: INTENTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM

The Pilot English Language Curriculum for Lower-Secondary Education was promulgated by The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2012) as the launch of Project 2025. The curriculum and accompanying textbook series, *Tieng Anh*, have been trialled in a number of schools since 2012, in parallel with the existing 2006 curriculum. MOET gave schools the right to choose either of the programs in consideration of their local capacities. Some schools used the new curriculum with all students, while others introduced it to a number of classes, and still others worked with the old curriculum until they were ready for the new program. The aim in the following is to offer insight into the intentions of the curriculum reform via an examination of the official policy documentation relating to the project that has entered the public domain.

5.1. Statements of aims and objectives

The intentions in relation to Project 2025 curriculum reform were made explicit through the statement of goals and assessment of learning outcomes, the prescribed pedagogy, and the prerequisites for its implementation. Consistent across the curriculum policy was a discursive positioning of Vietnamese citizens as proficient English users who would contribute significantly to the country's competitive edge in the global market. The role of English was emphasised in the new curriculum as "an important communicative tool for the economic and technological development of the nation" (MOET 2012, p. 3). This is the first time English language education was situated within the broader social context of a vision for national, regional and global development. English language education in schools was expected to serve as the viable bridge for young Vietnamese learners to develop their competence in the global lingua franca. This reasoning which prompted the curriculum reform is clearly seen in the stated goal of the new curriculum:

> English language education at lower-secondary schools aims to help students practise and develop their communicative competence in English. This develops a foundation for the use of English as an instrument for study in school and in life, develops the habit of life-long learning, and becomes socially responsible citizens in the context of globalisation (MOET, 2012, p. 5)

In this statement, the idea of communicative competence is situated alongside globalisation. The curriculum characterised English as a significant and compulsory school subject at the lower secondary level of schooling. Viewed as a continuation of the primary English program, the proficiency goal for lower-secondary schools was to “develop student communicative competence with a target of Proficiency Level 2, equivalent to Level A2 in the European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR” (MOET, 2012, p. 5). For the first time, a specific level of proficiency was explicitly set out to assess learning outcomes and standards, and also for the first time the term ‘communicative competence’ was explicitly prescribed in the official curriculum.

Table 5.1 lists occurrences of specific lexical items in the official curriculum document. ‘Communicative competence’ appeared 21 times along with 34 uses of ‘communicative/communication’. Less attention was given to formal linguistic features, with 26 occurrences in total, compared to 101 occurrences of the macro skills ‘speaking’, ‘listening’, ‘writing’ and ‘reading’ together, of which speaking was mentioned most often. These numbers offer some indication that the focus in the new curriculum was on the use of the language as a means of communication, as distinct from the learning of linguistic structures. It also points to the broad thinking about language adopted in the new curriculum; language was understood to be functional and to be used as an instrument to perform communicative functions. In this way, the curriculum was aligned with CLT as the underpinning view of how English language would be taught and learned.

Table 5.1. *Lexical search terms and occurrences*

Search terms	Occurrences
‘Communicative competence’	21
‘Communicate/Communication’	34
‘Linguistic Knowledge’, ‘Grammar’, ‘Vocabulary’	26
‘Speaking’	33
‘Listening’	27
‘Reading’	22
‘Writing’	19
‘Culture’	13

In terms of the classroom contact time, there was a slight increase in the timetabled hours for English within the new curriculum as shown in Table 5.2. Across the four

years of lower-secondary schooling, English was allocated 420 lessons of 45 minutes each, three times per week, over 35 weeks per year. This was equivalent to 315 hours in total. There was an increase of 27 hours of teaching time in Year 9, which was the only change compared with the previous iteration.

Table 5.2. *Instructional hours within the new curriculum*

Year level	**Lessons and time (1 lesson = 45 mins)**	
	Old Curriculum	**New Curriculum**
Year 6	105	105
Year 7	105	105
Year 8	105	105
Year 9	70	105
Total	**385 lessons (288 hours in total)**	**420 lessons (315 hours in total)**

5.2. Communicative competence

Communicative competence was prescribed as the goal and guide for the process of teaching and learning within the new curriculum. The concept of communicative competence was defined by MOET as:

> the ability to use knowledge about the English language (i.e. phonetics, vocabulary and grammar) to participate in communicative activities by listening, speaking, reading and writing appropriately in a meaningful context of situation (MOET, 2012, p. 13)

Attention was to be given to providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to use linguistic knowledge appropriately to achieve a range of communicative purposes. This marked a significant shift from the mastery of grammar and vocabulary in traditional methodologies to the mastery of skills required for communication in different contexts. Grammatical and lexical knowledge now played an enabling role "to support students to form and develop communicative competence" (p. 14). The repertoire of knowledge about language including grammar, vocabulary and phonetics was described as follows:

- Knowledge about phonetics: vowels, semi-vowels, diphthongs, consonants, consonant clusters, word stress, rhythms, basic sentence stress.
- A reservoir of lexis: about 800 – 1000 words, excluding those learnt in the primary English program.

- Knowledge about grammar: declaratives, interrogatives, negatives, exclamatives, simple, compound and complex sentences, word classes, verb tenses, passive voice, direct and indirect speech, comparatives and superlatives, relative pronouns, prepositions, determiners, etc. (MOET, 2012, p. 14).

Based on MOET's definition, the path to communicative competence was in providing students with linguistic knowledge, which could then be utilised to achieve communicative intentions. This was clearly a 'weak' interpretation versus a 'strong' view of CLT. Comparing the MOET description of communicative competence to the frameworks developed by Canale (1983); Canale and Swain (1980), discussed in Chapter III, it is evident that MOET addressed two of the components they describe, that is 'grammatical competence' (accuracy) and 'sociolinguistic competence' (appropriacy). Other competencies, such as 'discourse competence' (fluency), 'strategic competence' (efficacy), along with the emerging concept of 'sociocultural competence' (Littlewood, 2011), were not explicitly mentioned. It is also clear that MOET did not adopt the framework of 'communicative language competence' in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001).

5.3. CLT as the prescribed pedagogy

Along with the promotion of communicative competence, MOET prescribed CLT as the designated pedagogy to achieve the targeted levels of proficiency. MOET offered its rationale for the selection of CLT as follows:

> The approach to teaching English at the lower-secondary schools is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is suitable for the students' psychological development from early childhood to adolescence (MOET, 2012, p. 16)

This was the first time that the term CLT was explicitly prescribed in an official curriculum document in Vietnam and there was no explanation for the statement that CLT was "suitable for the students' psychological development" (ibid.), Although, as described earlier in Chapter II Section 2.2, the previous curricula had attempted to shift from the traditional language classroom to a more communicative orientation, they did not name CLT as the prescribed pedagogy and provided no detailed guidelines for teaching and learning within a CLT approach. The new curriculum was seen as a deliberate effort by MOET to provide a mandated and unified approach to language teaching. Hoang (2015), the general editor of the new curriculum textbook series, stated:

> The design of the new curriculum drew on insights of the Council of Europe's CEFR and Van Ek and Alexanders' *Threshold Level English*. In particular, it was based on the principles of communicative language teaching in combination with a consideration of the social and cultural realities of Vietnam, using selectively and creatively the insights of several curricula of English as second/foreign language of countries in the region and in the world such as the USA, the UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Thailand, South Kora, and Japan (p. 13)

Although MOET did not cite any specific authors or researchers in the conceptualisation of CLT, they did provide two general principles of the approach in the curriculum document, including student-centredness and the use of language for communication. There was an expectation that the teachers should treat students as the 'central figure' in the teaching and learning process, along with the outcome that students would demonstrate high levels of involvement, participation and autonomy, as opposed to passive and rote learning as in their traditional classrooms. The new roles of the teacher and student were made clear in alignment with the communicative approach:

> The students should be put in the centre of learning and become active learners. The teacher should treat students as the central figure in the learning process. The role of the teacher is to organise the learning activities and guide the students in the process of learning (MOET, 2012, p. 16)

The use of the target language for communication through different kinds of classroom activities would require students to interact with their teachers and peers:

> Learning activities should be designed with some degrees of flexibility and individualisation, and should be relevant to students' social lives; therefore, they can relate to their background knowledge and understanding in their language practice. Learning activities should be designed to improve students' responsibility of their own learning, at the same time, enhance their collaborative learning in pairs and groups (MOET, 2012, p. 17)

In line with the emphasis on the interactive aspect of language use as a crucial factor in developing competence, MOET gave prominence to the increased use of the target language in the classroom where "students should be encouraged to use English as much as possible" (p. 17). The teacher challenge was to create opportunities for language use in various ways such as language games, role-plays and quizzes to stimulate motivation through relevance to the external world in which the students lived:

The key learning strategy in the communicative classroom was to be “learning how to learn”. Whilst there was no guidance in relation to the teaching of this strategy is was explicitly what MOET expected students to build and develop:

> ‘Learning how to learn’ is a combination of learning strategies which help students establish and develop their communicative competence in English inside and outside the classroom in an effective way (MOET, 2012, pp.14-15)

As autonomous learners, MOET expected young students to become “the independent learner in the future” (p. 15). The Ministry encouraged increased interaction in the target language between teachers and students and amongst students in pairs and teams in problem-solving activities. This implicitly suggested a theory of language learning adopted by MOET – that learning would take place through an emphasis on learning by *doing* things with the language in authentic interactions – and was clearly aligned with a communicative approach.

The championing of CLT as the approach to teaching and learning, along with an emphasis on student-centred learning with the goal of Proficiency Level A2, indicated MOET’s strong desire to encourage radical change in English language classrooms. MOET also made its intentions clear to move to an interactive and engaging language classroom, as opposed to the entrenched traditional grammar-focused classroom. It expected to change the learning style of students, from “more passive, less vocal” (Butler, 2011, p. 40) to create active, critical and autonomous learners. MOET’s intentions were ambitious, focused on making changes to improve the quality of language teaching and learning. CLT was the nominated vehicle through which the improvements in communication would take place.

5.4. Testing and assessment

In line with changes to the language achievement goals and in the pedagogic approach, changes in relation to testing and assessment were also highlighted. According to MOET, the purpose of the testing and assessment was to:

> Provide feedback about students’ learning during and after a learning period, encourage and orient students during their learning process, provide tools to help teachers and schools evaluate and direct the English teaching and learning at the lower secondary level more effectively (MOET 2012, p. 18)

MOET suggested that both formative and summative assessment were required, including quantitative measures via testing, and qualitative via comments and feedback. Formative assessment was to be conducted on a regular basis as part of classroom teaching and learning, on the basis of which the teacher would review the progress of the students. Summative assessment was to be in the form of mid-term and end-of-term tests, and was designed to determine what the student was able to do with language after a given period of classroom time. MOET required that testing should not only reflect what had been taught but also that it should correspond with the CLT approach. Given the goal of communicative competence, MOET suggested the inclusion of oral proficiency tests, along with the more traditional paper-and-pencil format. The intention was to place more weight on developing oral proficiency amongst students, indicating some coherence between the stated goal of teaching and learning and the method of assessment:

> The test should correspond to the methodology used in the classroom, which includes an oral test (dialogues, monologues) and written tests integrating skills and linguistic knowledge. This is combined with objective multiple-choice testing items, open-ended items and other forms of assessment (MOET 2012, p. 15)

As this statement indicated, MOET's requirements for testing and assessment were clearly aligned with the communicative approach. However, guidelines on the communicative test format and criteria to measure learning outcomes were provided for the first time in 2016 (MOET, 2016), pointing to the fact that in the first four years of the reform implementation process, there was no guidance or benchmarks against which to measure learning outcomes. Accordingly, no information was available in regard to how well students functioned and performed in English, or how many actually attained the Proficiency Level A2 as intended.

MOET's guidance on communicative testing did not extend to the competitive national examination for school graduation and university admittance, which remained written-based. The rationale was that it was not practical to produce and administer a performance-based oral test for approximately one million students on the same day. Such performance-based assessment would be time-intensive and not easy to administer. The pragmatic decision was made to adhere to the traditional format of paper-and-pencil testing. However, paper-and-pencil testing is limited to content-based skills (e.g. grammar, lexis, reading and perhaps writing), and does not lend itself well to performance-based assessment. It is safe to surmise that

teachers and students might minimise or possibly neglect any strong focus on untested skills and spend more time preparing for the examination rather than pursuing more ideal than real goals of communication. In this way, the examination would continue to have a washback effect on teaching and learning and would encroach on the potential of the communicative curriculum.

5.5. Prerequisites for curriculum implementation

To ensure adequate preparation for the successful implementation of Project 2025, MOET specified a number of prerequisites. Although these requirements appeared to be highly relevant to ensure successful curriculum implementation, there were a number of unresolved issues.

The first prerequisite was that students needed to attain proficiency level A1 at the primary school level before embarking on the new program in the lower secondary school. Although listed as an essential prerequisite, this was not achievable in practice. Primary education in Vietnam is universalised, which means that students automatically move from primary school to lower secondary school without the need to pass formal examinations. The responsibility for determining whether students are ready for the lower secondary English program rests with schools. If a placement test was organised to determine students' level of English, it is unclear what would happen if one or more students did not achieve the prerequisite level. Should they be refused the right to study with the new curriculum at the lower-secondary level? Furthermore, as noted above, guidelines for achievement testing were only made available four years into the trialling of the new curriculum. In the first four years of implementation, there was no consensus among schools about selecting students at an appropriate level for study within the new curriculum.

In relation to teacher qualifications, MOET stipulated that teachers should attain Proficiency Level B2 or above, and that they should participate in professional development to qualify to teach the new curriculum. It was understood that the teachers, all of whom were non-native speakers of English, needed to be competent users of English. However, a 2011-2012 nationwide review of teacher proficiency showed that 87% of lower secondary teachers failed to meet the desired level of proficiency (N. H. Nguyen, 2013), indicating that language proficiency had been a major challenge for Vietnamese teachers of English..

MOET also made explicit a preferred class size as part of the curriculum reform. Specifically, the number of students should not exceed the MOET recommendation on maximum class size for lower-secondary classrooms as specified in Circular 12/2011/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2011). According to this mandate, the maximum class size was 45 students.

Finally, each classroom was expected to be adequately equipped with audio-visual and other devices to support English language teaching and learning. According to Circular 51/2018/TT-BTC from the Ministry of Finance, the funding for these classroom resources was to be allocated from the local budget of each province. The aim was for well-equipped classrooms, especially in disadvantaged areas where it had been previously reported that “a decent classroom with basic furniture remains desired” (Le, 2015, p. 186).

Chapter conclusion

MOET’s clear intention was to develop student communicative competence equivalent to Proficiency Level A2 after four years of study in the lower secondary school. The imperative to transform traditional, grammar-based classrooms into interactive learner-centred classrooms via the implementation of CLT was made explicit, along with some changes to testing and assessment. Support for the change was also indicated in relation to teacher proficiency levels, classroom size and classroom equipment. However, as noted, the high-stakes examination for university entry remained written-based and unchanged. The next stage of investigation was to look more closely at exactly how the intentions of the new curriculum were made concrete in the *Tieng Anh* textbook series, which served as the classroom resource for developing communicative competence.

CHAPTER VI: THE NEW TEXTBOOK SERIES

The policy documents which accompanied the Project 2025 reform made a broad comment about the direction MOET set for English language education in the school sector. The intentions of the Government were evident in the policy, but there was a lack of any specific information about implementation at the micro level of the classroom. [see my email] This lack of specificity is to be expected in policy documents and is balanced by greater detail at the level of implementation. The detail of the curriculum reform was in the new textbook series designed as part of the policy, and it was expected that the *Tieng Anh* series would reveal more about the how the policy intentions were to be implemented in classrooms.

The analysis focuses on how features of CLT are evident in the input and learning activities which aim to help students develop communicative competence. Using Littlejohn's (2011) two categories of Publication and Design presented in Table 4.8, Section 4.4.2.1, the analysis begins with an external description of the textbook. This is followed by an internal examination of the textbook design with a focus on the learning objectives, principles of selection and the sequencing of content. The specific types and focus of language practice activities as described by Richards (2006) are detailed, as well as the function of the visual images which accompany or which are included in these activities (Royce, 1998, 2007).

6.1. Textbook publication

Publication primarily deals with the 'tangible' or material aspects of the textbook series, including a description of the textbook package, its published forms and recurring patterns within the learning units.

6.1.1. Textbook package

The *Tieng Anh* was published as a ten-year curriculum textbook series, extending from Year 3 to Year 12. The *Tieng Anh* for lower-secondary students covers Year 6 to Year 9, serving as a continuation of English study from the primary level and providing a foundation for the senior secondary years. The series includes Student Books, Teacher Books, Work Books and CDs, offering materials for classroom teaching and learning, homework and additional resources for teachers.

Each Student Book spans one year of schooling and contains 12 topic-based units, with each unit to be taught in seven 45-minute lessons. The CD contains the audio recordings used in the learning activities, and are part of the Student Book. The Workbook mirrors and reinforces the content of the Student Book, offering homework practice for the language and skills addressed in class, with additional tasks for student self-assessment. The Teacher Book offers teachers full procedural notes for teaching the different elements of each unit. It also contains additional materials for the teacher, including transcriptions of audio recordings and exercise answer keys.

The Student Book forms the focal point for classroom work, and is the primary focus of the textbook analysis in the study.

6.1.2. Published form of the textbook

The *Tieng Anh* and all other components in the materials package are monolingual in English, except for the cover name "*Tieng Anh*" (translated as "*English*"). The textbook is published with high-quality printing in colour on good quality paper for durability. The Student Book is also published in an electronic form, which can be accessed online, or used offline. This e-book incorporates an interactive platform enabling answer-checking functions and is intended for self-study.

6.1.3. Subdivision of the textbook

In terms of structure, each of the *Tieng Anh* series is subdivided into 12 learning units with a standardised number of pages for each unit. A review section follows each set of three learning units, providing revision and further practice. After each review lesson, students undertake a formal written test to assess progress.

All of the twelve learning units follow a standard pattern. Each consists of eight sections, providing the content for seven classroom lessons of 45 minutes each. The learning unit begins with a dialogue in a *'Getting Started'* section, followed by a range of exercises presenting the vocabulary items and the grammatical features to be learnt and practised within the unit. This section occupies two pages and is allocated one 45-minute class lesson.

'A Closer Look 1' presents and targets practice of (a) vocabulary, which is often illustrated and accompanied by visual resources, and (b) pronunciation, which

comprises two or three sounds being introduced and practised in isolation or in context. *'A Closer Look 2'* deals exclusively with grammar, with a focus on grammatical rules and meta-linguistic items, followed by a series of exercises and tasks for practice. A *'Remember'* box appears where necessary to highlight common errors in use that students should avoid. '*A Closer Look 1'* and '*A Closer Look 2*' cover three pages in total; each is designed to be taught in one 45 minute period.

The *'Communication'* section is intended to help students use the language in everyday contexts and consolidate what they have learned in previous sections. The aim is to give students an opportunity to learn and apply the language to their lives, and provide cultural information about Vietnam and other countries. Additional vocabulary necessary for engaging with the activities in this section is included. This section is to be covered in one 45-minute period.

'Skills 1' comprises Reading and Speaking. The reading text is closely linked to the topic of the unit, and provides input for the speaking activities that follow. *'Skills 2'* consists of Listening and Writing. Similarly, these activities provide students with the opportunity to listen to the language from the recording, and also provide input for the writing activities. Writing tips and samples are provided to guide student writing. The target in the writing section is a complete piece of writing to be marked by peers or teachers. Skills 1 and Skills 2 each covers one page and is designed for one 45-minute period.

The *'Looking Back' and 'Project'* sections cover two pages and are designed for one period of study. *Looking Back* recycles the language from previous sections to help students consolidate and transfer what they have learnt into additional language production. The unit ends with a *Project*, which offers students the opportunity to work by themselves or in a team and to extend their imagination by engaging in a problem-solving task. The teacher has the option to use this section as an extra-curricular activity or as homework.

The Student Book also includes a glossary of new vocabulary in alphabetical order at the back of each book, specifying word classes, pronunciation and the Vietnamese translation of the new lexical items.

The clearly-divided subsections with explicit attention to the grammar and other formal features of the language, coupled with skills practice, provide evidence that

the *Tieng Anh* favours a 'weak' version of CLT (Howatt, 1984). The 'weak' version places emphasis on learning to use the language based on a foundation of learning about the language, rather than focusing entirely on communication as in a ''strong' version of CLT. In this way, the textbooks clearly express the intention of the curriculum policy.

As stated one focus in this study is to consider if and how CLT is evident in the textbook. This question asks if there is sufficient opportunity for students to practise and to have sufficient communicative experiences in English to develop their communicative competence. A closer look at the design of the textbook aims to offers insight into how the communicative approach is developed and organised to exploit communicative activities.

6.2. Textbook design

The exploration of the textbook design centres on the objectives set for classroom teaching and learning, how the content and the activities are selected and sequenced, what types of language practice are included, and then what kind of visual images are included to support classroom teaching and learning.

6.2.1. Learning objectives

Tieng Anh articulates a route to the goal of developing communicative competence via a set of specific learning outcomes after each unit of instruction. Accordingly, each learning unit is designed with specific performance objectives for students at the end of the unit. These are set out in the form of language-based objectives, which serve as a guide for the design of learning activities, give direction to the student experience, and become the basis for evaluation. Figure 6.1 provides an example of the learning objectives in *Tieng Anh* 7, Unit 2 My Hobbies.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, Ss can:

- pronounce the sounds /ə/ and /ɜː/ correctly in isolation and in context
- use lexical items related to hobbies
- use the present simple, the future simple and verbs of liking + V-*ing* correctly and appropriately
- describe and give opinions about hobbies
- read for specific information about an unusual hobby
- listen to get specific information about a hobby
- write a paragraph about a classmate's hobby

Figure 11. *Learning objectives in Unit 2 Tieng Anh 7, Teacher Book*

The learning objectives include pronunciation, topical vocabulary, verb forms, and performance outcomes in the macro skills. However, they do not describe the conditions under which the objectives are expected to occur. Nor do they set out standards of acceptable performance, or any criteria to determine an acceptable level of performance. So, whilst the objectives can serve as a guide for the teacher to know 'what to teach', they do not offer criteria or benchmarks for assessing student progress, or any means to determine the extent to which the objectives are achieved.

3.3.3. Principles of selection

Tieng Anh purports to follow a theme-based, functional-notional approach to syllabus design, in a deliberate attempt to integrate topical and notional items with grammatical and functional elements. This general principle runs consistently through the whole series and gives direction to the design of the textbook content.

A book map from *Tieng Anh* 7 is shown in Figure 6.2. The book map shows a list of learning topics developed from the macro-theme 'Our Communities', a description of the specific micro-skills in each of the macro-skills, and an inventory of grammar, lexis and phonology to enable communication.

BOOK MAP

	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Language Focus
Unit 1: My Hobbies	- Reading for specific information about an unusual hobby	- Listening for specific information about one's hobby	- Talking about types of hobbies	- Writing about one's hobby	- Present simple and future simple: review - Verbs of liking + V-*ing* - Sounds: /ə/ and /ɜː/
Unit 2: Health	- Reading for specific information about number of calory take-in	- Listening for specific information about health problems and advice	- Talking about calories used for everyday activities	- Writing about health advices	- Compound sentences - Imperatives with *more* and *less* - Sounds: /f/ and /v/
Unit 3: Community Service	- Reading for specific information about young people doing community service	- Listening for specific information about the volunteer work of a student	- Talking about how to contribute to community activities	- Writing about community services/ volunteer work	- Past simple and present perfect: review - Sounds: /g/ and /k/
REVIEW 1					

Figure 12. *An extract from the Book Map in Tieng Anh 7*

Whilst it is presented in a simple, comprehensive way, the table of content is not arranged in terms of any specification of functions and notions, nor in relation to the textbook subdivision. It appears to be more a skills-based rather than a functional-notional arrangement.

The underlying principle of selection of the functional and notional components is not always predictable because there is no one-to-one relationship between form and function. Apparently, some forms and functions naturally suggest themselves and are predictable. For example, talking about ‘My Hobbies’ in Unit 1 (Figure 6.1) hardly seems feasible without knowledge of *liking* and *disliking* verbs, which are often followed by a gerund (V-ing*, e.g. I like swimming).* On the other hand, the introduction of compound sentences, as in Unit 2, has a less obvious relation to the topic of ‘Health’. This leads to arbitrary decision-making by the textbook writers about which forms to introduce with which functions, many of which appear to be produced through intuition. This is a common issue underlying the design of functional-notional syllabi, as noted by McDonough (2003).

With regards to continuity*, Tieng Anh* maintains strong continuity across the year levels. This is evident in the selection and development of the themes selected. The principle of theme selection and subdivision of themes into topics is based on an increasing degree of complexity, starting with everyday, familiar themes, progressing to broader and more complex issues as the students progress in years. Table 6.1 below presents the development of the topics drawn from the two themes ‘Our Communities’ and ‘Visions of the Future’. While *Tieng Anh* 6 and 7 focus on familiar topics associated with life in the community such as ‘My Home’ and ‘My Hobbies’, *Tieng Anh* 8 and 9 cover topics with broader and more complex issues, such as ‘Local Environment’ and ‘Peoples of Vietnam’ where the students are challenged to engage at the community and then the broad societal level.

Table 5.1. *Development of themes and topics*

Tieng Anh	***Theme***	***Topic***	***Theme***	***Topic***
***Tieng Anh* 6**	‘Our Communities’	‘My Home’	‘Visions of the Future’	‘Robots’
***Tieng Anh* 7**		‘My Hobbies’		‘Sources of energy’
***Tieng Anh* 8**		‘Peoples of Vietnam’		‘Life on other planets’
***Tieng Anh* 9**		‘Local Environment’		‘Space travel’

Continuity is also evident in the selection of texts. In the *Tieng Anh* these include a range of text types, e.g. dialogues, emails, narratives, with cross-curricular content of geography, history and so on. The length and complexity of texts increase as the students change year levels. Longer texts are found in *Tieng Anh* 9, while in *Tieng Anh* 6, the texts are shorter with less complex linguistic structures. At this level, the

majority of texts are constructed. Authentic texts are rare, with only three examples found in the sample units. The remainder of the texts, including scripted dialogues and written teaching texts, are constructed for particular language practice activities, essentially for students to encounter the high-frequency lexical items deemed necessary. Since they are constructed, the places and entities in these texts do not exist in reality. For example, a reading text in *Tieng Anh* 6 is about a fictionalised international school, VinaBrita; similarly fictionalised is the teenager magazine named 4Teen.

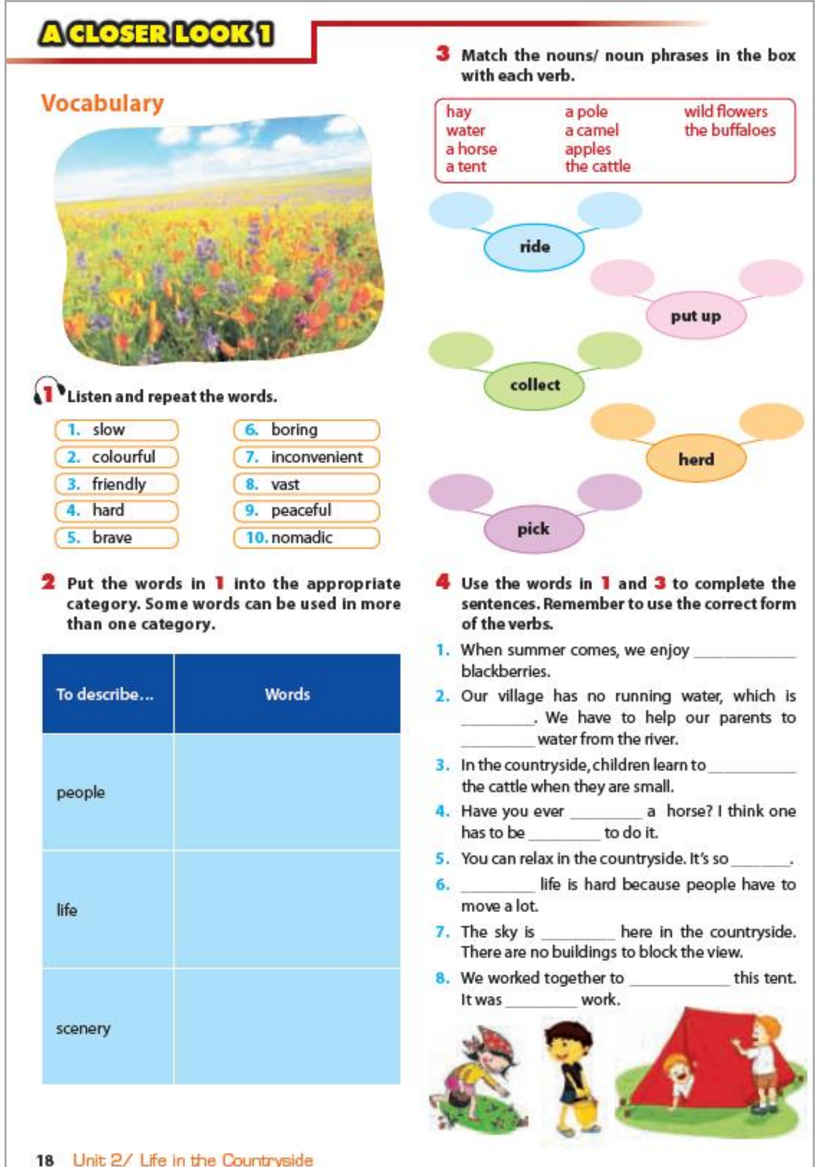
The variety of English used in the recordings is Standard British English. Evidence of British English is also seen in the spelling of lexical items, such as "organise" (*Unit 3 Tieng Anh 6*), "recognise" (*Unit 3 Tieng Anh 8*)". The rationale underlying this selection is that British English is "the parent variety" and "no matter how diverse and open it is in the modern world, education in general and general education in particular of any country must teach its pupils things which are standard" (Hoang, 2015, p. 13).

6.2.2. Principles of sequencing

The *Tieng Anh* series follows a cyclical progression in which the goals are for students to develop their knowledge about language as well as the ability to use the language. As the selection of textbook items is not based on linguistic criteria, its sequencing principles are not based on the degree of complexity of grammatical form. Rather, progression within the series can be identified by at least three underlying principles, which remain consistent throughout.

Sequencing is firstly reflected in the recurrence of the language practices. Practices involving knowledge about language are inserted into various exercises, including matching, multiple choice and blank filling, both in texts or as discrete-point items. Repetition of language skills practice is also seen across the learning units and across year levels. For example, the skills of scanning for specific information or skimming for main ideas reappear in a number of the reading lessons. Similarly, listening for the main ideas and listening for detail are repeated across numerous listening activities. This pattern aims to encourage students to incrementally develop their language abilities over the years.

Sequencing is also evident in the content and learning activities in which previously introduced elements serve as entry points for the next element. The sections in each learning unit are consistently designed with a standardised number of pages in each, starting with topic introduction ('Getting Started') then vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation practice ('A Closer Look 1' and 'A Closer Look 2'), followed by language skill practice ('Communication', 'Skills 1' and 'Skills 2'), a revision ('Looking Back'), and ending with collaborative work ('Project'). This organising principle is sustained throughout the textbook series, indicating a high degree of structure, progression and consistency in the design. However, it is of importance to note that the introduction of linguistic items in some places is not in the form of texts in contexts as promoted within the curriculum. Rather, it seems to promote the accumulation of separate blocks of 'static' knowledge with an extensive focus on discrete-point item practices which are isolated from potential contexts of use. Figure 6.3 provides an example of *A Closer Look 1* in *Tieng Anh* 8 where all the language items are practised in isolation from any meaningful contexts.



A CLOSER LOOK 1

Vocabulary

1 Listen and repeat the words.

1. slow
2. colourful
3. friendly
4. hard
5. brave
6. boring
7. inconvenient
8. vast
9. peaceful
10. nomadic

2 Put the words in **1** into the appropriate category. Some words can be used in more than one category.

To describe...	Words
people	
life	
scenery	

3 Match the nouns/ noun phrases in the box with each verb.

hay	a pole	wild flowers
water	a camel	the buffaloes
a horse	apples	
a tent	the cattle	

ride
put up
collect
herd
pick

4 Use the words in **1** and **3** to complete the sentences. Remember to use the correct form of the verbs.

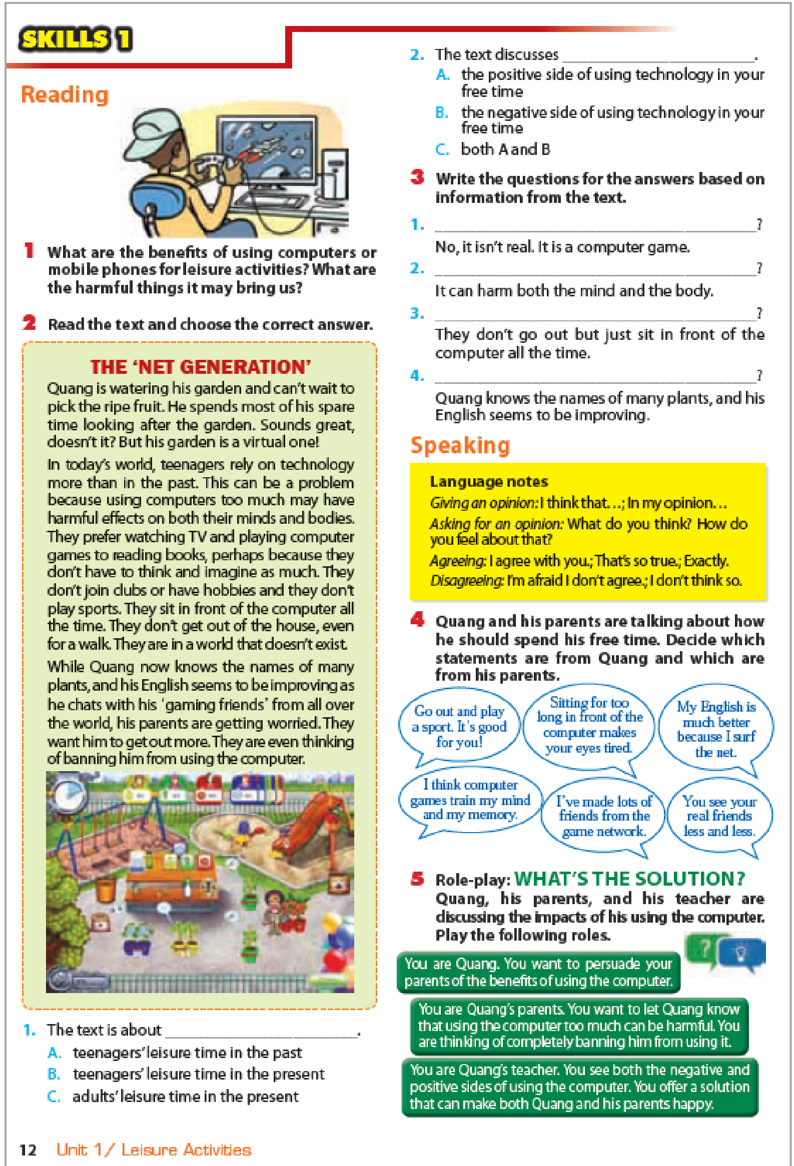
1. When summer comes, we enjoy ____________ blackberries.
2. Our village has no running water, which is ________. We have to help our parents to ________ water from the river.
3. In the countryside, children learn to __________ the cattle when they are small.
4. Have you ever ________ a horse? I think one has to be ________ to do it.
5. You can relax in the countryside. It's so _______.
6. ________ life is hard because people have to move a lot.
7. The sky is ________ here in the countryside. There are no buildings to block the view.
8. We worked together to ____________ this tent. It was ________ work.

18 Unit 2/ Life in the Countryside

__Figure 6.3.__ A Closer Look 1, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 2

Despite the appealing physical design, the exercises in Figure 6.4, essentially repetition drills, categorising, matching and blank filling, are mechanical, constituting a separate block of discrete-point practice. Following this lesson are pronunciation and grammar, which are again mechanical and decontextualised. While it is claimed that the use of vocabulary and grammar should be in meaningful contexts, it appears that the textbook design does not always achieve this intention. This traditional treatment of grammar is more aligned with a traditional grammar-based classroom rather than a CLT classroom. Explicit attention is placed on form at the expense of meaning and communicative function, and grammar appears as a product rather than a process.

The third principle of sequencing is identified in the ordering of skills. The productive skills, including speaking and listening, invariably follow on from the receptive skills of reading and listening, providing language input for students to produce their own output. Figure 6.4 is an extract from Unit 1, *Tieng Anh* 8, where the implicit logic of the content and progression of the learning activities is made apparent.



SKILLS 1

Reading

1 What are the benefits of using computers or mobile phones for leisure activities? What are the harmful things it may bring us?

2 Read the text and choose the correct answer.

THE 'NET GENERATION'

Quang is watering his garden and can't wait to pick the ripe fruit. He spends most of his spare time looking after the garden. Sounds great, doesn't it? But his garden is a virtual one!

In today's world, teenagers rely on technology more than in the past. This can be a problem because using computers too much may have harmful effects on both their minds and bodies. They prefer watching TV and playing computer games to reading books, perhaps because they don't have to think and imagine as much. They don't join clubs or have hobbies and they don't play sports. They sit in front of the computer all the time. They don't get out of the house, even for a walk. They are in a world that doesn't exist.

While Quang now knows the names of many plants, and his English seems to be improving as he chats with his 'gaming friends' from all over the world, his parents are getting worried. They want him to get out more. They are even thinking of banning him from using the computer.

1. The text is about ______________.
   A. teenagers' leisure time in the past
   B. teenagers' leisure time in the present
   C. adults' leisure time in the present

2. The text discusses ______________.
   A. the positive side of using technology in your free time
   B. the negative side of using technology in your free time
   C. both A and B

3 Write the questions for the answers based on information from the text.

1. ______________?
No, it isn't real. It is a computer game.
2. ______________?
It can harm both the mind and the body.
3. ______________?
They don't go out but just sit in front of the computer all the time.
4. ______________?
Quang knows the names of many plants, and his English seems to be improving.

Speaking

Language notes
Giving an opinion: I think that...; In my opinion...
Asking for an opinion: What do you think? How do you feel about that?
Agreeing: I agree with you.; That's so true.; Exactly.
Disagreeing: I'm afraid I don't agree.; I don't think so.

4 Quang and his parents are talking about how he should spend his free time. Decide which statements are from Quang and which are from his parents.

5 Role-play: WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?
Quang, his parents, and his teacher are discussing the impacts of his using the computer. Play the following roles.

You are Quang. You want to persuade your parents of the benefits of using the computer.

You are Quang's parents. You want to let Quang know that using the computer too much can be harmful. You are thinking of completely banning him from using it.

You are Quang's teacher. You see both the negative and positive sides of using the computer. You offer a solution that can make both Quang and his parents happy.

12 Unit 1 / Leisure Activities

Figure 6.4. *Skills 1, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1*

The reading section begins with an image and a lead-in question on the use of computers for leisure among teenagers. This pre-reading activity offers a lead-in discussion around the topic, aimed at preparing the students for the reading text. What follows are two reading comprehension tasks, involving a multiple choice and an information-gap exercise. Post-reading activities include two speaking tasks where students are required to offer a personal opinion, agreeing or disagreeing, in

preparation for a follow-up role play. The selection of the topic and the content of the reading text are familiar and relevant to lower-secondary students. The challenge is to work through all of these activities in a single forty-five-minute lesson.

6.2.3. Types of language practice

As a way of quantifying the content of the textbooks, the learning activities across textbook sections were classified in relation to the type of language practice they encouraged: mechanical, meaningful or communicative as described by Richards (2006). This classification also provided a means of considering these types of practices as important elements of the pedagogic activities within the qualitative analysis of pedagogic register.

Figure 6.5 presents the percentage average allocated to the different language practice types in the textbooks. The largest proportion is meaningful practice, taking up approximately 45% of time, followed by mechanical practice (32%) and communicative practice with the smallest proportion (23%).

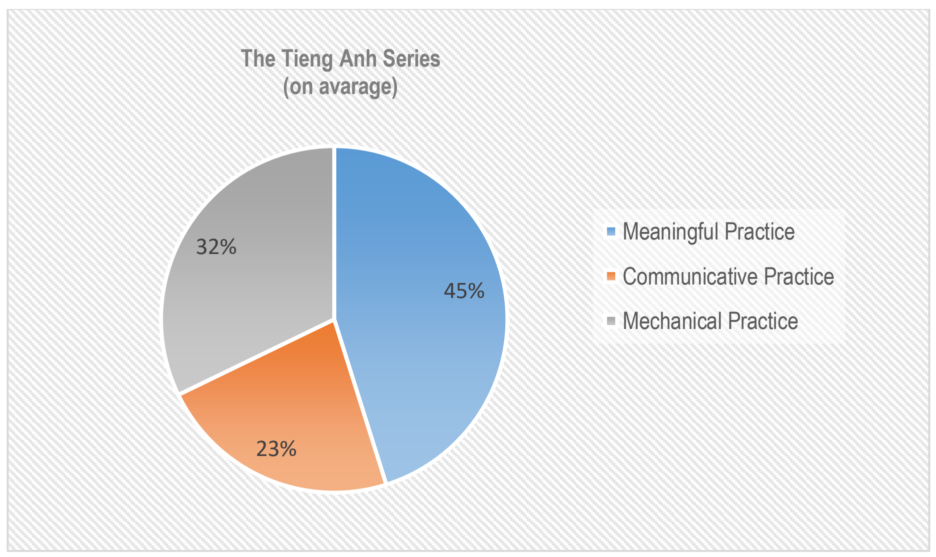


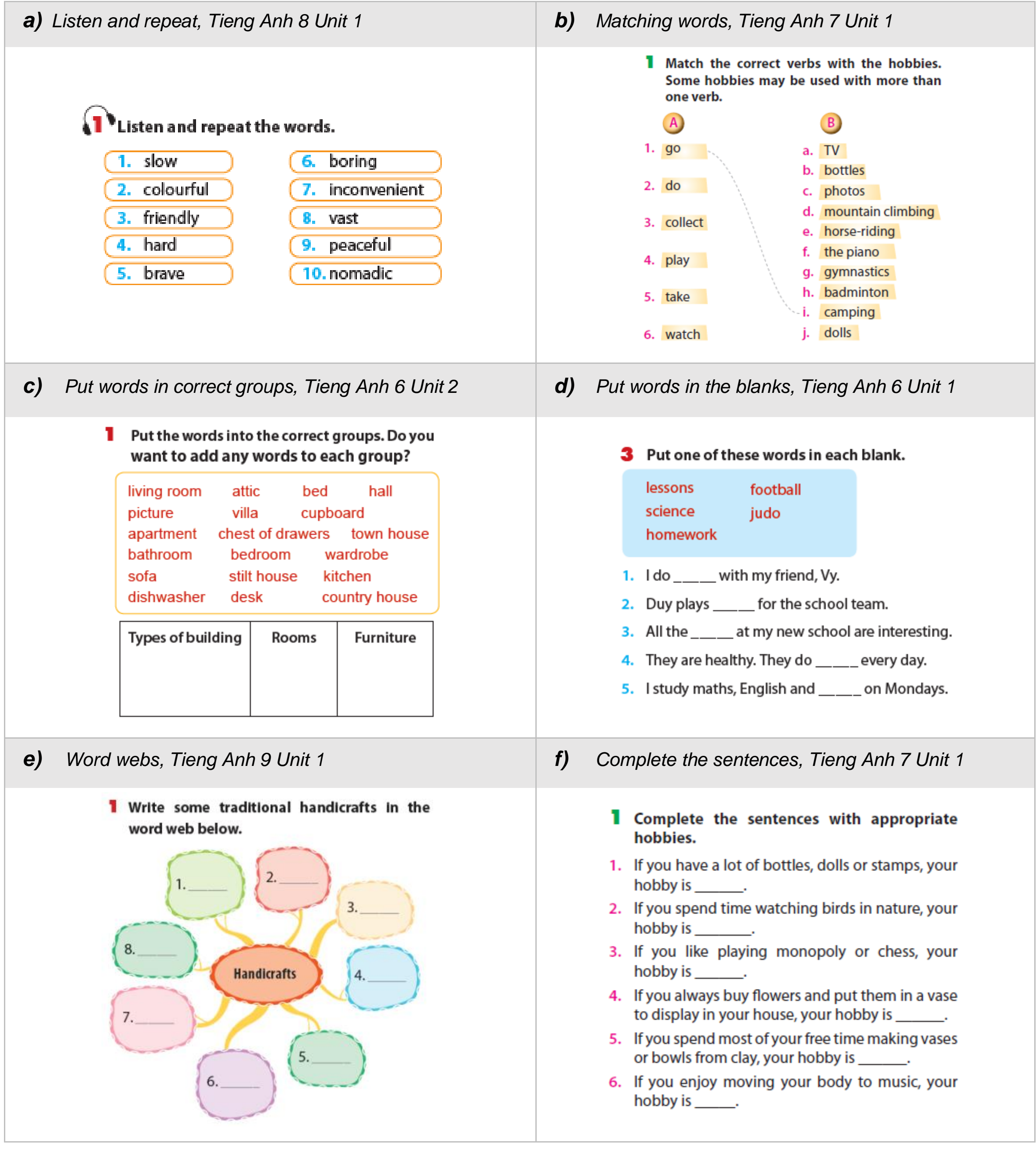
Figure 6.5. *Types of learning activity in the Tieng Anh series*

6.2.3.1. Mechanical practice

Mechanical practice activities account for approximately 32% or one third of the total learning activities across the textbook series. Practice of this type aims at accuracy in language use, involving a primary emphasis on form, often presented as explicit grammar rules in discrete-point exercises. Activities include highly mechanical exercises, such as repetition and substitution drills in isolation from specific contexts

of language use. Other common mechanical exercises are matching, filling in blanks, or completing sentences in which student attention is explicitly drawn to specific lexical or grammatical items.

Figure 6.6 presents some typical examples of mechanical exercises focusing on vocabulary. Exercises range from listening and repeating words (Figure 6.6a), word matching (Figure 6.6b), putting words into correct categories (Figure 6.6c), and selecting words to fill the blank space (Figure 6.6d). More difficult exercises include completing a word web (Figure 6.6e) and completing sentences (Figure 6.6f) where students have to use their own words to complete the exercise.



a) *Listen and repeat, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1*

1 Listen and repeat the words.

1. slow
2. colourful
3. friendly
4. hard
5. brave
6. boring
7. inconvenient
8. vast
9. peaceful
10. nomadic

b) *Matching words, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 1*

1 Match the correct verbs with the hobbies. Some hobbies may be used with more than one verb.

A	B
1. go	a. TV
2. do	b. bottles
3. collect	c. photos
4. play	d. mountain climbing
5. take	e. horse-riding
6. watch	f. the piano
	g. gymnastics
	h. badminton
	i. camping
	j. dolls

c) *Put words in correct groups, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 2*

1 Put the words into the correct groups. Do you want to add any words to each group?

living room, attic, bed, hall, picture, villa, cupboard, apartment, chest of drawers, town house, bathroom, bedroom, wardrobe, sofa, stilt house, kitchen, dishwasher, desk, country house

Types of building	Rooms	Furniture

d) *Put words in the blanks, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 1*

3 Put one of these words in each blank.

lessons, football, science, judo, homework

1. I do ____ with my friend, Vy.
2. Duy plays ____ for the school team.
3. All the ____ at my new school are interesting.
4. They are healthy. They do ____ every day.
5. I study maths, English and ____ on Mondays.

e) *Word webs, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1*

1 Write some traditional handicrafts in the word web below.

f) *Complete the sentences, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 1*

1 Complete the sentences with appropriate hobbies.

1. If you have a lot of bottles, dolls or stamps, your hobby is ______.
2. If you spend time watching birds in nature, your hobby is ______.
3. If you like playing monopoly or chess, your hobby is ______.
4. If you always buy flowers and put them in a vase to display in your house, your hobby is ______.
5. If you spend most of your free time making vases or bowls from clay, your hobby is ______.
6. If you enjoy moving your body to music, your hobby is ______.

Figure 6.6. *Examples of mechanical vocabulary exercises in the Tieng Anh*

Grammatical exercises are also a strong focus in mechanical practice. These activities, focusing on language form, aim to raise student awareness about discrete grammatical features and meta-language in the form of explicit grammatical tables and ‘remember’ boxes as in Figure 6.7.

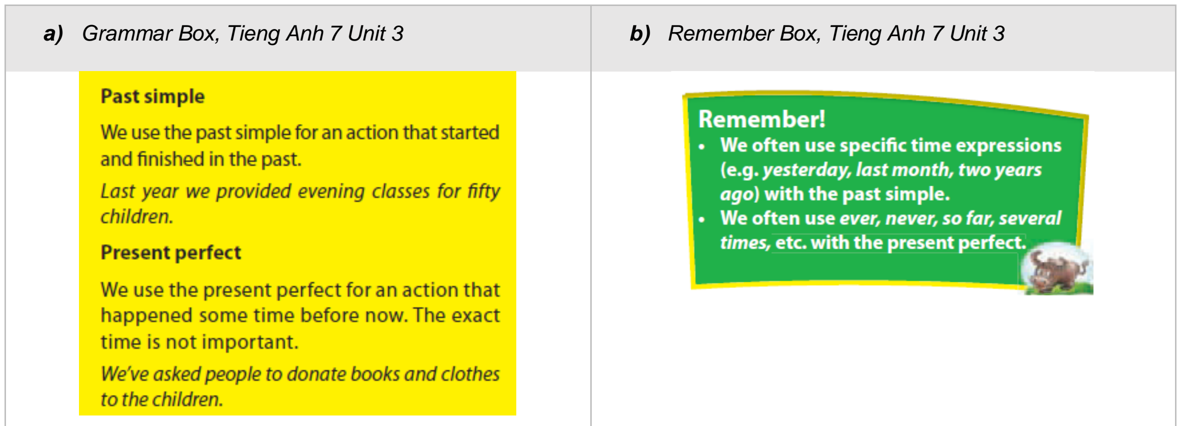
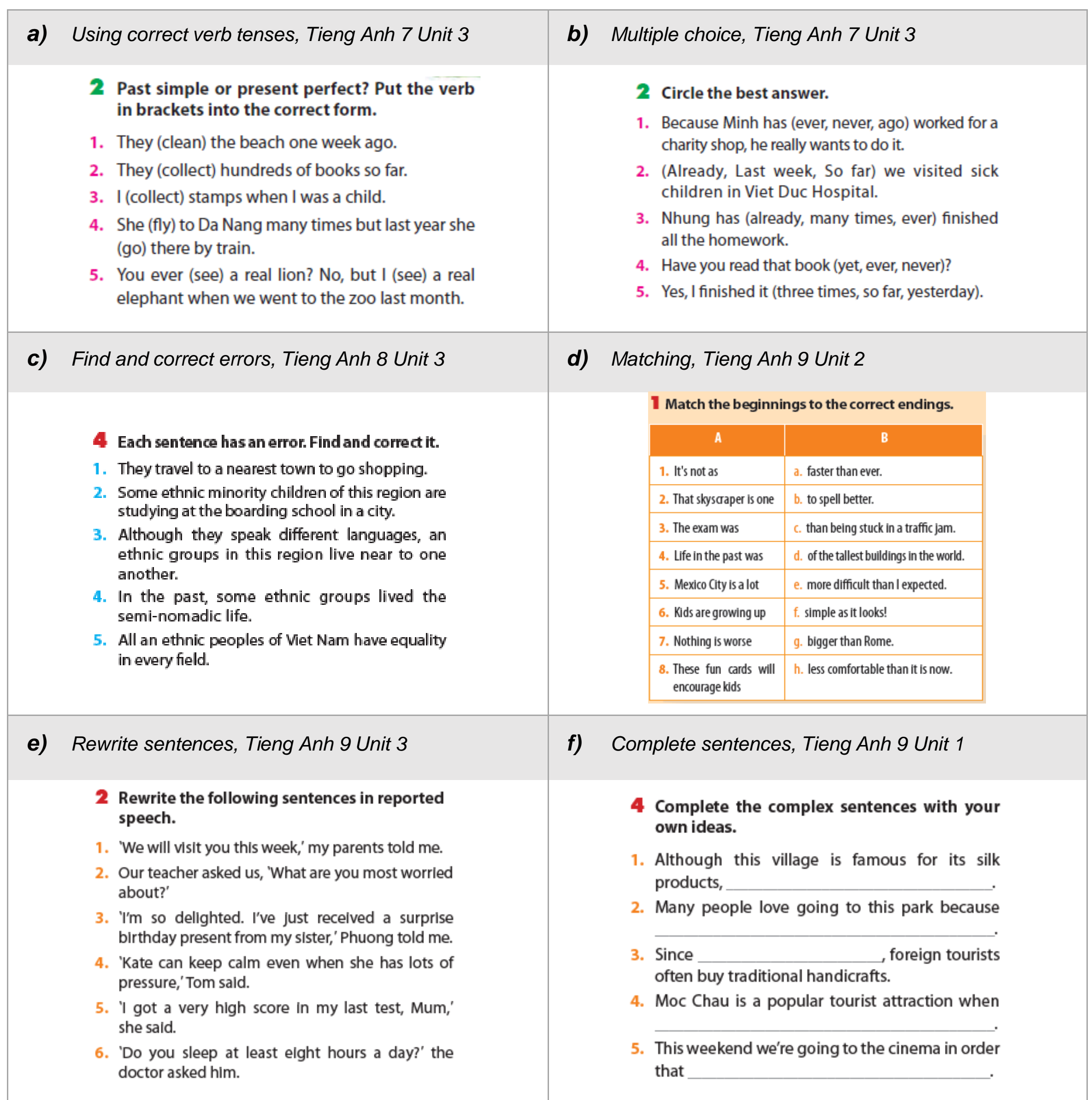


Figure 6.7. *Examples of mechanical vocabulary exercises in the Tieng Anh*

The introduction of grammatical rules is often accompanied by strictly controlled practice in various exercise types, exemplified in Figure 6.8. These include using correct verb tenses (6.8a), multiple-choice responses (6.8b), correcting errors (6.8c), matching parts of sentences (6.8d), and rewriting sentences (6.8e). More challenging exercises require students to complete sentences using their own ideas as in 6.8f.



a) *Using correct verb tenses, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 3*

2 Past simple or present perfect? Put the verb in brackets into the correct form.

1. They (clean) the beach one week ago.
2. They (collect) hundreds of books so far.
3. I (collect) stamps when I was a child.
4. She (fly) to Da Nang many times but last year she (go) there by train.
5. You ever (see) a real lion? No, but I (see) a real elephant when we went to the zoo last month.

b) *Multiple choice, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 3*

2 Circle the best answer.

1. Because Minh has (ever, never, ago) worked for a charity shop, he really wants to do it.
2. (Already, Last week, So far) we visited sick children in Viet Duc Hospital.
3. Nhung has (already, many times, ever) finished all the homework.
4. Have you read that book (yet, ever, never)?
5. Yes, I finished it (three times, so far, yesterday).

c) *Find and correct errors, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3*

4 Each sentence has an error. Find and correct it.

1. They travel to a nearest town to go shopping.
2. Some ethnic minority children of this region are studying at the boarding school in a city.
3. Although they speak different languages, an ethnic groups in this region live near to one another.
4. In the past, some ethnic groups lived the semi-nomadic life.
5. All an ethnic peoples of Viet Nam have equality in every field.

d) *Matching, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 2*

1 Match the beginnings to the correct endings.

A	B
1. It's not as	a. faster than ever.
2. That skyscraper is one	b. to spell better.
3. The exam was	c. than being stuck in a traffic jam.
4. Life in the past was	d. of the tallest buildings in the world.
5. Mexico City is a lot	e. more difficult than I expected.
6. Kids are growing up	f. simple as it looks!
7. Nothing is worse	g. bigger than Rome.
8. These fun cards will encourage kids	h. less comfortable than it is now.

e) *Rewrite sentences, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 3*

2 Rewrite the following sentences in reported speech.

1. 'We will visit you this week,' my parents told me.
2. Our teacher asked us, 'What are you most worried about?'
3. 'I'm so delighted. I've just received a surprise birthday present from my sister,' Phuong told me.
4. 'Kate can keep calm even when she has lots of pressure,' Tom said.
5. 'I got a very high score in my last test, Mum,' she said.
6. 'Do you sleep at least eight hours a day?' the doctor asked him.

f) *Complete sentences, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1*

4 Complete the complex sentences with your own ideas.

1. Although this village is famous for its silk products, ________________.
2. Many people love going to this park because ________________.
3. Since ____________, foreign tourists often buy traditional handicrafts.
4. Moc Chau is a popular tourist attraction when ________________.
5. This weekend we're going to the cinema in order that ________________.

Figure 6.8. *Examples of mechanical grammar exercises in the Tieng Anh*

Mechanical practice also targets pronunciation. Such practice is largely in the form of repetition drills where students are asked to listen and then repeat specific sounds or words (Figure 6.9a), or listen to recognise words (Figure 6.9b). However, although the textbook introduces and provides practice with the sound system in English, it is generally seen as beneficial if Vietnamese students are exposed to additional emphasis on the practice of the sounds that do not exist in the Vietnamese sound system and which present a challenge for students.

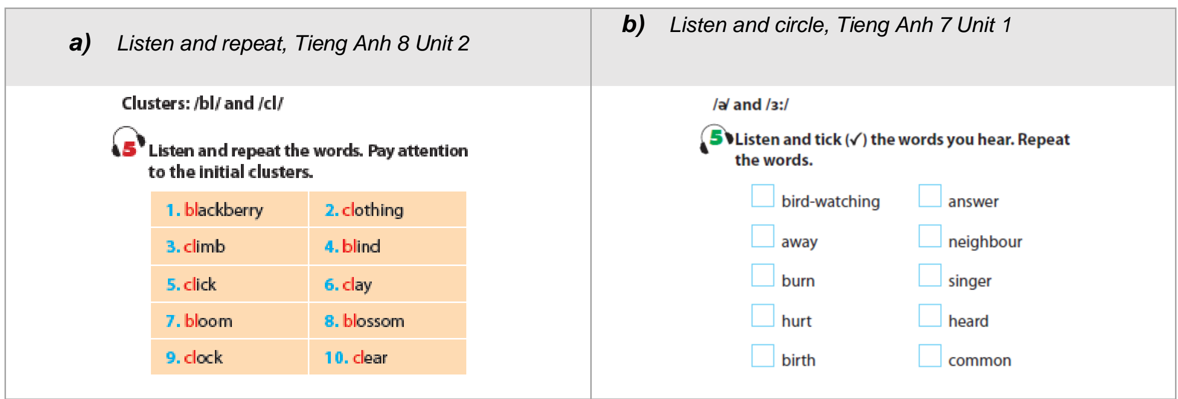
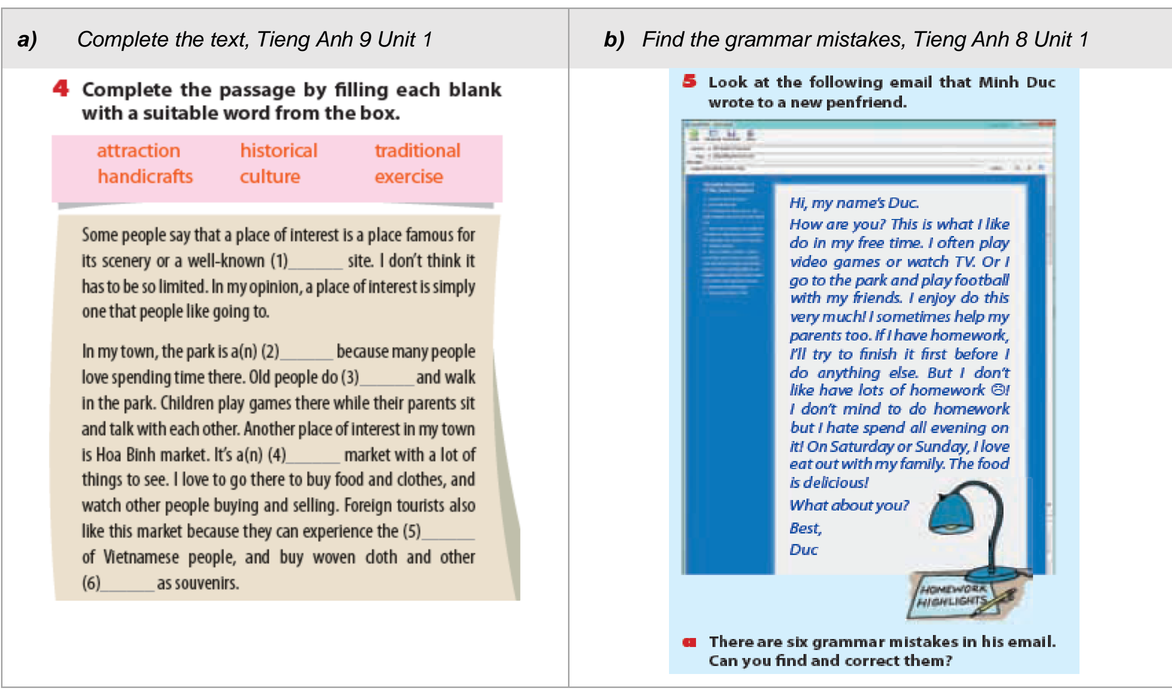


Figure 6.9. *Examples of pronunciation exercises in the Tieng Anh*

6.2.3.2. Meaningful practice

Nearing a half, at 45%, of the learning activities in the *Tieng Anh*, meaningful practice is the most frequently prescribed type of language activity. Meaningful practice activities are less controlled, are more oriented towards meaning-making and require a higher level of engagement with the target language than mechanical activities. Meaningful learning tasks require students to work with a predictable range of language in a provided situation, or to work with a complete spoken or written text. Unlike mechanical practice with its primary focus on form, meaningful practice ranges from the practice of specific language items to a variety of tasks involving speaking, listening, reading and writing. Figure 6.10 presents two examples of meaningful practice, the first with a focus on vocabulary and the second on grammar.



a) *Complete the text, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1*

4 **Complete the passage by filling each blank with a suitable word from the box.**

attraction historical traditional
handicrafts culture exercise

Some people say that a place of interest is a place famous for its scenery or a well-known (1)______ site. I don't think it has to be so limited. In my opinion, a place of interest is simply one that people like going to.

In my town, the park is a(n) (2)______ because many people love spending time there. Old people do (3)______ and walk in the park. Children play games there while their parents sit and talk with each other. Another place of interest in my town is Hoa Binh market. It's a(n) (4)______ market with a lot of things to see. I love to go there to buy food and clothes, and watch other people buying and selling. Foreign tourists also like this market because they can experience the (5)______ of Vietnamese people, and buy woven cloth and other (6)______ as souvenirs.

b) *Find the grammar mistakes, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1*

5 **Look at the following email that Minh Duc wrote to a new penfriend.**

Hi, my name's Duc.
How are you? This is what I like do in my free time. I often play video games or watch TV. Or I go to the park and play football with my friends. I enjoy do this very much! I sometimes help my parents too. If I have homework, I'll try to finish it first before I do anything else. But I don't like have lots of homework ☹! I don't mind to do homework but I hate spend all evening on it! On Saturday or Sunday, I love eat out with my family. The food is delicious!
What about you?
Best,
Duc

a **There are six grammar mistakes in his email. Can you find and correct them?**

Figure 6.10. *Meaningful practice with a focus on vocabulary and grammar*

These tasks involve meaningful language practice in that students are provided with the opportunity to work with whole texts, challenging them to understand the text to be able to complete the tasks. Practice of this type is more demanding than mechanical practice but also more engaging because students are exposed to meaningful texts rather than discrete, decontextualised language items. The provision of whole texts is beneficial to language learning since the text is purposive and cohesive. It also contains linguistic structures that can be used to highlight formal features of the language as they appear in authentic contexts.

Given the inherent value in activities which work with whole texts, it is salutary to note that the number of text-based activities is much fewer than that of non-text-based activities as shown in Table 6.2 below. There is an average of 2.5 spoken texts and 5.5 written texts at each level of *Tieng Anh*, used in an average of 12.5 text-based activities. These text-based activities constitute approximately 31% of the total number of learning activities.

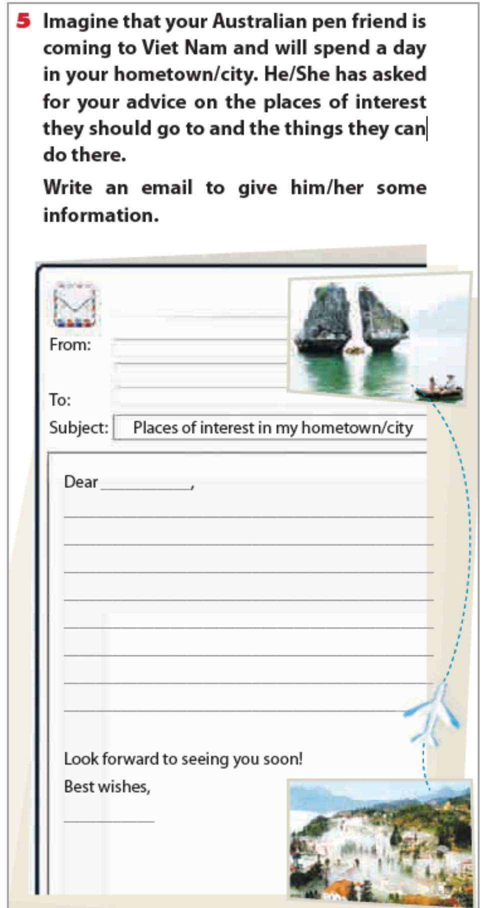
Table 6.2. *Texts and text-based activities in the Tieng Anh*

	Number of texts		***Text-based activities***	***Total activities***	***% of text-based activities***
	Spoken texts	***Written texts***			
***Tieng Anh* 6**	3	6	13	41	32%
***Tieng Anh* 7**	2	5	9	41	22%
***Tieng Anh* 8**	2	6	15	40	38%
***Tieng Anh* 9**	4	5	13	41	32%
Average	**2.5**	**5.5**	**12.5**	**41**	**31%**

6.2.3.3. Communicative practice

Communicative practice accounts for 23% or less than one quarter of the total learning activities in the *Tieng Anh* series, the least of Richards' three categories of practice. Communicative practice includes activities such as discussion, gap filling and role plays, where real information is exchanged and the language use is not totally predictable. Such activities are in the form of free practice, which means there is no constraint on language use. Students are expected to use their existing resources and strategies to actively participate in these interactions to achieve communicative competence in cooperative negotiation, joint interpretation and the expression of their own ideas. Practice of this type is often targeted at fluency and genuine communication that bears a close resemblance to English language use outside the classroom, which is the ultimate goal of a communicative focus. Accordingly, it is argued that if communicative competence is the ultimate goal of the English language curriculum, then more communicative practice should be in evidence in the textbooks, as this is the type of practice which offers students the best opportunities to participate in the sharing and negotiating of meanings on a genuinely communicative basis.

Examples of communicative practice are shown in Figure 6.11 where students are asked to write an email to an 'imagined' pen pal, and a role play in Figure 6.12, where students are required to take on a role and participate in a discussion from within that role.


5 Imagine that your Australian pen friend is coming to Viet Nam and will spend a day in your hometown/city. He/She has asked for your advice on the places of interest they should go to and the things they can do there.

Write an email to give him/her some information.

From:

To:

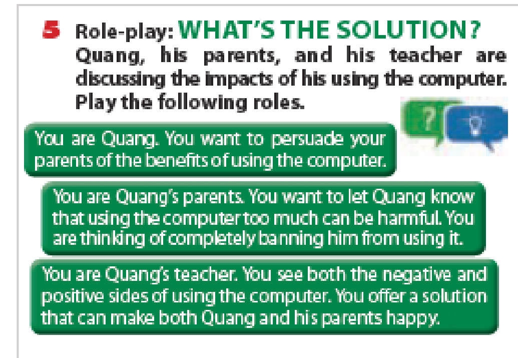
Subject: Places of interest in my hometown/city

Dear ________,

Look forward to seeing you soon!

Best wishes,

Figure 6.11. *Write an email, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1*


5 Role-play: WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Quang, his parents, and his teacher are discussing the impacts of his using the computer. Play the following roles.

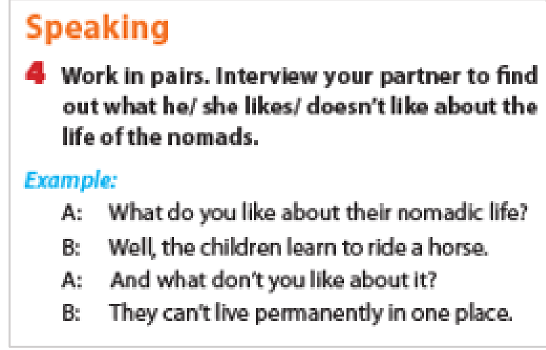
You are Quang. You want to persuade your parents of the benefits of using the computer.

You are Quang's parents. You want to let Quang know that using the computer too much can be harmful. You are thinking of completely banning him from using it.

You are Quang's teacher. You see both the negative and positive sides of using the computer. You offer a solution that can make both Quang and his parents happy.

Figure 6.12. *Role play, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 1*

In the *Tieng Anh,* learning activities are built around particular topics, an outcome of the theme-based approach. On a positive note, students benefit from the recurrence of frequently used vocabulary in a topic. However, the challenge in this type of practice is that the language, the context and the activities are designed to fit the specific topic of the learning unit rather than to meet real-life interactional needs. The outcome is that some activities appear to have only weak connections with the students' life and experiences. The example shown in Figure 6.13 below from *Tieng Anh* 8, Unit 2 ('Life in the Countryside') highlights this issue.


Speaking

4 Work in pairs. Interview your partner to find out what he/ she likes/ doesn't like about the life of the nomads.

Example:

A: What do you like about their nomadic life?
B: Well, the children learn to ride a horse.
A: And what don't you like about it?
B: They can't live permanently in one place.

Figure 6.13. Discussion, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 2

In the task, students are asked to work in pairs and interview their partner about his/her opinion of the life of nomads. The topic of the discussion is likely to be unfamiliar to 13-year-old students. Life in the countryside of Vietnam is typically of fixed habitation in villages rather than nomadic. The task is in danger of not meeting any real communicative needs either inside or outside the classroom, and, therefore, it may not provoke discussion among these young learners who have little understanding of and, more importantly, little connection with nomadic life experiences. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that the learning tasks should be designed with an achievable challenge, essentially to challenge the learners to make and create meanings in interaction. On the other hand, school learners are more at ease with texts, contexts and illustrations that relate to their own cultural experiences.

6.2.4. *The targets within language practice*

Figure 6.14 provides information about the specific focus within language practice activities. As evident in the pie chart, speaking and grammar are the two prominent foci, accounting for 51% of all the different kinds of practice.

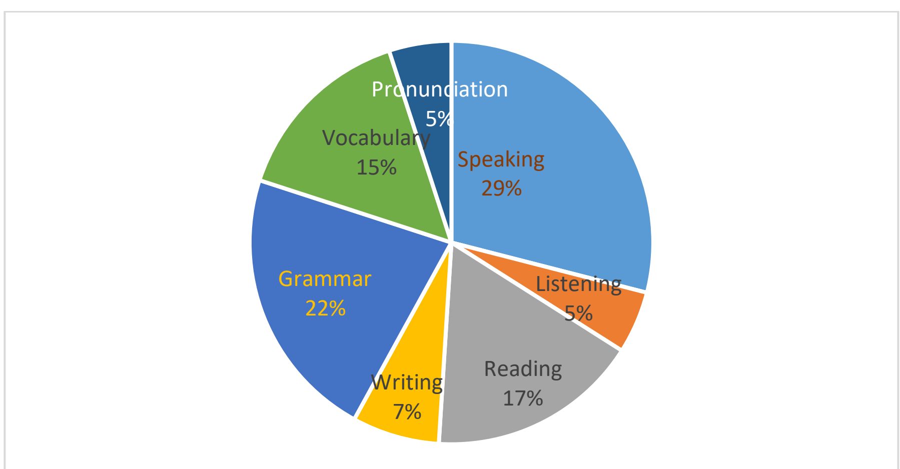


Figure 6.14. *The focus of language practice*

Speaking skills activities account for 29% of practice in the textbook series. These speaking activities are largely part of meaningful practice and communicative practice. This is an innovative feature of the textbook series, and aligns with the communicative intention of incorporating more spoken elements to "encourage students to use English as much as possible in the classroom" (MOET, 2012, p. 15).

This is understood as a conscious effort to foreground oral proficiency that has been largely overlooked in the past.

Grammar focused activities also have a prominent place in the classroom, featuring in 22% of activities. The emphasis on speaking and grammar practice in the textbook is evidence of the explicit intention to improve students' speaking skills, and, at the same time, increase student awareness of language form. Again, the focus on both form and function adds strengths to the view that the textbook is aligned with a 'weak' version of CLT.

6.2.5. Participation

Table 6.3 presents the average number of learning activities categorised according to the classroom arrangement, that is whether students are asked to work in pairs, in groups or individually. Individual activities here also include those involving 'teacher-with-class', in which the teacher addresses a question to the whole class and then invites one or two students to provide the answer. In such activities, interactions only take place between the teacher and the one or two chosen students, but not with the majority of students. The pattern of interaction is directed through and by the teacher at all times.

Table 6.3. *Classroom working arrangements*

	Pair work activities	Group work activities	Individual activities	Total activities
Tieng Anh 6	4	3	34	41
Tieng Anh 7	5	6	30	41
Tieng Anh 8	4	4	32	40
Tieng Anh 9	3	5	33	41
Average	**4**	**4.5**	**32.3**	**40.75**
%	**10%**	**11%**	**79%**	**100%**

There is a strong consistency across the lower-secondary year levels in terms of the total number of activities as well as the arrangements made to engage in these activities. The great majority of the learning activities in the textbooks, 79% of the total, are designed for individual work, which far outweighs arrangement for teamwork at 11% and pair work at 10% respectively. There is some acceptance that particular activities and topics may be best suited to one particular style of work, and

that each type of activity has its place in the language classroom. However, where the goal is to give students opportunities to learn from and interact with others in the target language, then more pair and teamwork would be expected to provide students with such opportunities. The clear focus on individual work is only likely to promote more traditional ways of teaching and learning, at odds with promoting the more informal and spontaneous interaction among students that is essential to the development of communicative competence.

It is important to note that the raw numbers and percentages were based on the textbook suggestions only. The expectation was that teachers would or could adapt individual-based activities to more collaborative modes of working. The analysis of the classroom discourse presented in Chapter VII provides more information about how arrangements for classroom teaching and learning were actually made within a number of classrooms.

6.2.6. Visual images in Tieng Anh

In line with all contemporary language materials, a feature of the *Tieng Anh* series is the large number of visual images accompanying the teaching and learning activities. The visuals are typically in the form of static photographs and graphics involving drawings, sketches and symbols. Table 6.4 lists the number of visuals found in each learning unit of the textbook series.

Table 6.4. *Images included in the Tieng Anh*

	Tieng Anh 6	Tieng Anh 7	Tieng Anh 8	Tieng Anh 9
Unit 1	46	32	40	38
Unit 2	45	36	51	22
Unit 3	39	37	44	42
Average	**43**	**35**	**45**	**34**

Tieng Anh 8 contains the most visuals with an average of 45 images per unit, followed by *Tieng Anh* 6 (43 images), *Tieng Anh* 7 (35 images) and *Tieng Anh* 9 (34 images). These figures indicate an approximate 20% variation in the use of images in different years. More noticeable is the variation in the number of visuals incorporated in a single unit across the textbook range. For example, there are 51 images in Unit 2 of *Tieng Anh* 8, more than doubling the 22 in the parallel Unit in *Tieng Anh* 9.

The examination of images used in the *Tieng Anh* drew on Royce (2007), as described in Chapter IV, Section 4.4.2.3, in which he proposed an SFL motivated framework to interpret what he labelled as the intersemiotic complementarity between images and language. In line with SFL, the work focused on the intersemiotic semantic relationship between the visual and verbal modes in multimodal texts within learning activities.. The analysis indicated that a number of images demonstrated some degree of intersemiotic complementarity with the language in the text and added to meanings within the learning activities. In this study such visuals have been categorised as functional images. However, some images had almost no intersemiotic complementarity with the verbal elements in the text. These images were considered non-functional or as having an unclear function, raising questions about the underlying rationale for their use.

6.2.6.1. Functional images

Functional images displayed ample evidence of intersemiotic complementarity with the verbal text in the learning activities and were categorised in the study as images for tasks, images for illustration or images for decoration.

Images for tasks

Some images served as the primary source of meaning essential for the completion of a task, displaying a strong ideational intersemiotic relationship with the language. Here the image provided students with essential visual clues to access the meanings needed to complete an exercise. Students were engaged in negotiation of the meaning conveyed by the visuals alone, or sometimes by an integration of the visual and verbal cues.

Figure 6.15 is an example taken from *Tieng Anh* 6. Although the exercise was highly mechanical, the images demonstrated strong ideational intersemiotic complementarity through reinforcement of the meaning in the visual and the verbal items. These visualshad an essential role in giving students visual clues for ideational meaning. Figure 6.16 presents an example of an image description task where students were required to read the meanings represented by the images. This activity was in the form of a communicative practice which required the student to engage with the images, and to transfer this into oral production.

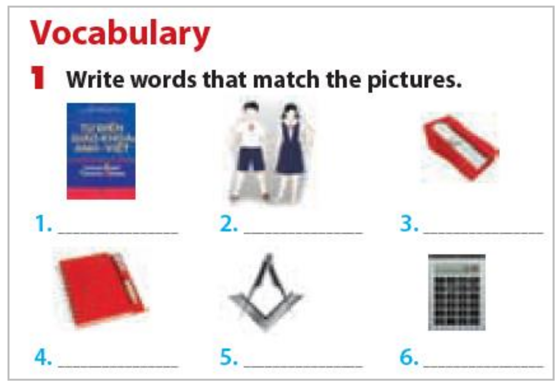


Figure 6.15. A vocabulary exercise, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 1

Figure 6.16. Image description task, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 1

Images for illustration

Visuals also served illustrative purposes. This was the most common function of the images in the textbooks. Illustrative visuals displayed some degree of intersemiotic complementarity with the language in the text, performing a complementary role to the meanings encoded in the verbal text. The visual contextualised the background environment, and/or gave visual clues to access ideational meaning. The illustrations also added interest and potential learning motivation by making the texts colourful and engaging. This type of image was found in several learning activities, ranging from discrete-item mechanical practice, to meaningful and communicative practice.

Figures 6.17 and 6.18 present two examples of such images used in meaningful practice activities, including a form-focused task in *Tieng Anh* 9 and a reading text in *Tieng Anh* 6. There was ample evidence of intersemiotic complementarity between the visual and verbal modes of meaning in the texts. For example, the images of a bridge and lanterns in Figure 6.17 were repeated in the text, displaying a cohesive relation of repetition between the visual and the verbal. Similarly, in Figure 6.18 the visuals representing two ethnic minorities in Vietnam were also repeated in the text, a repetition of meaning projected in both semiotic modes. Furthermore, these images were real-life photographs, serving as an authentic source of input in the language classroom.

Figure 6.17. *Real-life photographs used for illustration, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 2*

Figure 6.18. *Real-life photographs used for illustration, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3*

Images for decoration

The third category of images comprised those used for decoration. Unlike those for illustration, these decorative visuals added little or no content to a verbal text or support task completion. However, they did display some ideational intersemiotic complementarity with the language in the text.

Figure 6.19 presents two examples in which the images were decorative. Both depict hands, photographed in one and graphically produced in the other. The images of hands symbolised 'helping' or 'supporting', perhaps even 'lending a hand' holding some relevance to the topic of 'volunteering'. The images displayed a low level of ideational intersemiotic complementarity through a relation of synonymy. However, apart from being decorative, they played no role in the completion of the tasks. These images made the textbook more colourful and arguably more visually

interesting, and in this way, they may have added some extra attraction to the task. However, the use of visuals purely for decorative purposes is not always desirable due to the space constraints in a textbook. Images which serve a meaningful function in a learning activity are potentially more useful. For example, real-life photographs showing young people helping with volunteering work or community support activities may have had a higher level of intersemiotic complementarity with the language in the text. They could add reality and serve as triggers for students to think and talk about volunteering and what it means.

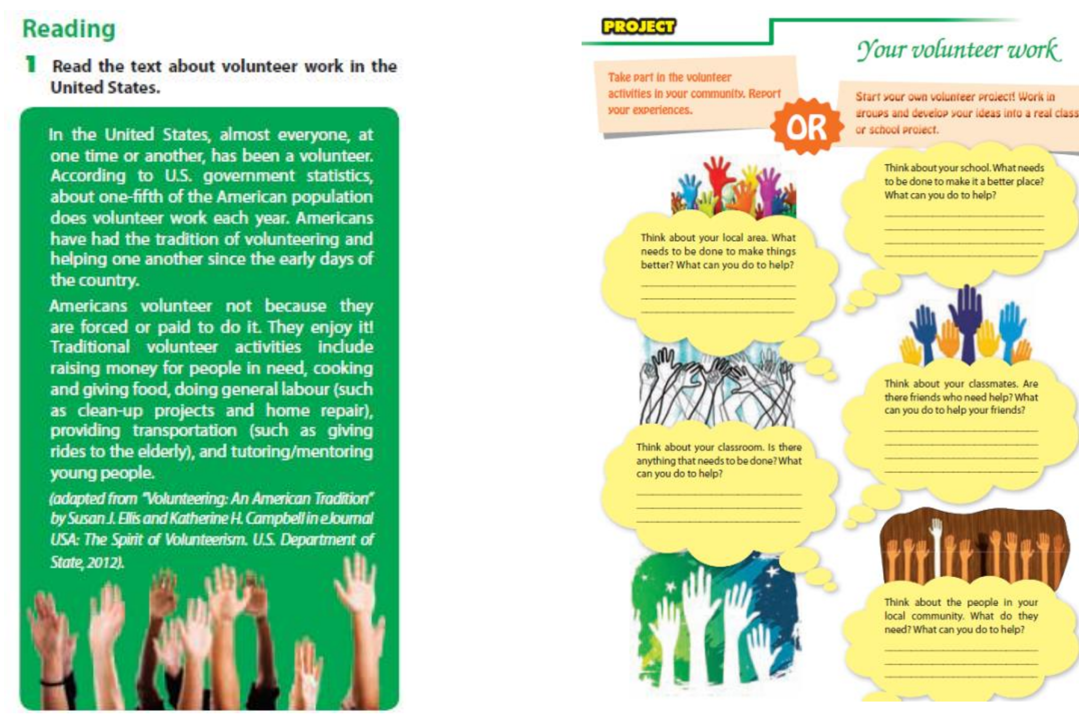
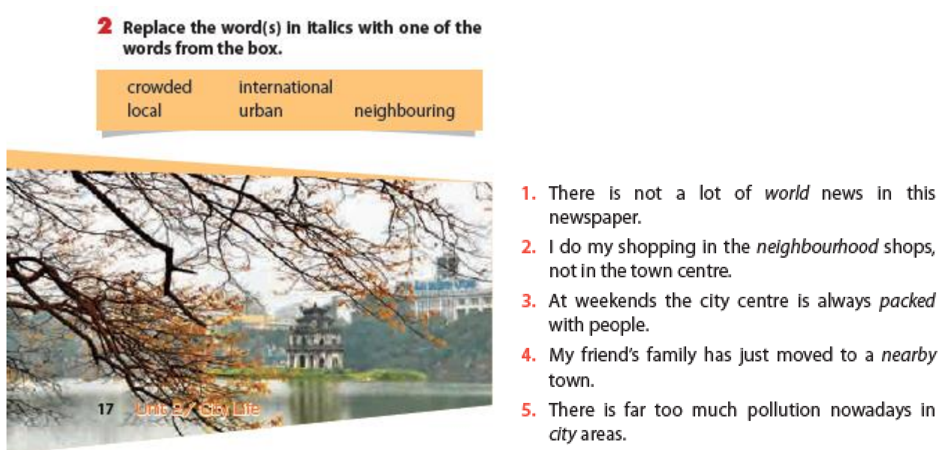


Figure 6.19. *Examples of the images used for decorative purposes, Tieng Anh 7 Unit 3*

6.2.6.2. Images with questionable function

Alongside those images functioning as the primary source of meaning or complementing meaning in the verbal texts, there were a number of visuals with limited or no clear function in relation to the learning activities. These images displayed very little or no intersemiotic complementarity in relation to the verbal elements in the text. They had little relevance to the learning task, and an unclear connection with the written text. Some were poorly designed or were included without appropriate labelling.

The image in Figure 6.20 has no connection to the verbal text and plays no role in the learning activities. The image displays a photograph of *Hoan Kiem Lake* in Hanoi. It was at best redundant and was possibly even non-functional if the students looked to the image to support their understanding of the task.



2 **Replace the word(s) in italics with one of the words from the box.**

crowded	international	
local	urban	neighbouring

17 Unit 2 / City Life

1. There is not a lot of *world* news in this newspaper.
2. I do my shopping in the *neighbourhood* shops, not in the town centre.
3. At weekends the city centre is always *packed* with people.
4. My friend's family has just moved to a *nearby* town.
5. There is far too much pollution nowadays in *city* areas.

Figure 6.20. *Visual with no connection to the learning task, Tieng Anh 9 Unit 2*

Incorporating real-life photographs to boost the authenticity of language use was not always well achieved in the *Tieng Anh*. Despite the inclusion of photographs to bring life to a task, the *Tieng Anh* did not consistently label these photographs, creating a 'knowledge gap' in relation to the entity or place mentioned.

An example of a well-labelled photograph is presented in Figure 6.21, labelled as the traditional dress worn by Lolo women, an ethnic minority group in Vietnam. However, another photograph in the same unit (Figure 6.22) appeared with no labelling. The photograph also had unclear ideational intersemiotic complementarity with the verbal elements in the text. Given the fact that Vietnam is a country of ethnic diversity with 54 minority groups, it is difficult for students to know which ethnic minority was represented in the photograph while the verbal text offered little clarification.

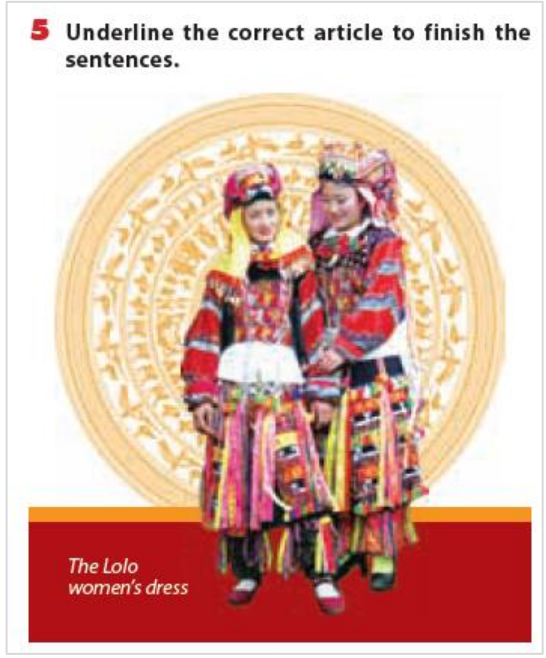


Figure 6.21. *A well-labelled photograph, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3*

Figure 6.22. *A non-labelled photograph, Tieng Anh 8 Unit 3*

A lack of labelling was a common feature across the textbook series where a large number of photographs were included without any labelling. Photographs do not always need labelling if they display some degree of complementarity with the verbal elements, for example if they are closely related to, clarified or reinforced by verbal information. However, labelleing frequently did not occur where it was difficult, if not impossible, to identify the photograph and/or its relationship to the written text. The inconsistency in labelling raises two issues. It indicates an underestimation of the potential of real-life photographs as rich and authentic sources of meaning and knowledge that can support teaching and learning. It also raises the question of whether there was any educational basis for the selection of such photographs and any rationale for their inclusion.

The *Tieng Anh* also included an extensive number of drawings and sketches of different characters and objects. This was a cost-effective way of producing visual materials, as it reduced the cost for copyrighted images, or taking photographs specific to a particular learning activity. However, some images required a better design, as in the images shown in Figure 6.23 taken from *Tieng Anh 6*.

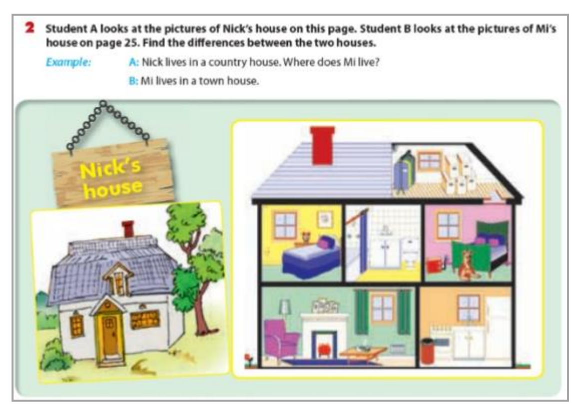


Figure 6.23. *Examples of images that need better design, Tieng Anh 6 Unit 2*

The task required students to look at the four images and to articulate their differences. The two conceptual drawings depicted Nick's country house and Mi's townhouse. The floorplans were also included to provide more detail for students to compare and contrast features of the two houses. However, while the floorplans were carefully drawn, the drawings of the houses from the outside seemed to be carelessly sketched. Neither floorplan matched well the external drawing of the houses, lacking any intersemiotic complementarity with the verbal mode. In particular, the drawing of Nick's house on the left appeared to be a single storey house, while its floorplan showed a double-storey house, causing confusion as to whether the two drawings depicted the same building. Where images are the only sources of meaning for completing a task, their poor design may be confusing.

The broad conclusion is that there was a lack of strategic selection of images, and a lack of educational rationale for the design and selection of images. This perhaps is some indication that there was insufficient attention to semiotic modes beyond language in both the curriculum documents of intent and the textbooks as manifestations of those intentions. It appeared that there was a limited appreciation of the meaning-making potential of images and their potential in complementing verbal language in teaching and learning in the classroom.

Chapter conclusion

The *Tieng Anh* textbook series is seen as a cost-effective way of providing the teachers and students with structure, continuity, security and revision. Oriented to a communicative approach, it is expected to offer students the necessary information, input and communicative experience with the target language, aiming towards

communicative competence equivalent to Proficiency Level A2 at the end of Year 9.

The analysis of the *Tieng Anh* was conducted from an external description of its physical features as well as an internal account of its design. The finding is that *Tieng Anh* is a well-designed textbook series, appealing in appearance with high-quality paper and colour printing. Using a cyclical, theme-based approach, the textbook series maintains continuity across the year levels, covering thematic or topical vocabulary, knowledge about grammar and the four macro skills. The content and language practice activities are designed in a sequence enabling students to go through a process of more scaffolded to less scaffolded teacher support until they can independently perform a communicative function in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The textbook allows students to go from mechanical practice to more independent language production. From this perspective, the textbook provides a sequence of activities that move back and forth between accuracy and fluency, in line with a 'weak' version of CLT.

However, the findings also indicate that communicative practice takes up the least proportion of class time compared to mechanical and meaningful types of practice. It is argued that if communicative competence is the ultimate target of the English language curriculum, then more communicative practice needs to be in evidence, as this is the type of practice which offers students the best opportunities to participate in the sharing and negotiating of meanings on a genuinely communicative basis. Furthermore, activities that require collaboration in pairs and groups are far fewer in number than those requiring individuals working alone, which offer fewer opportunities for student-to-student interactions. Importantly, if the teachers are not able to adapt the textbook content or do not see it as their role to adapt the textbook, then the outcome is the traditional teacher-directed classroom rather than the interactive, learner-centred classroom as expected in a CLT approach.

A different issue relates to the prominence of scripted spoken and written texts used for practice activities. The texts and the simulated contexts for communicative activities are mostly constructed, which raises the issue of authenticity of language input provided in the textbook. It is noted that the *Tieng Anh* is not alone in relation to authenticity as the same strategy is commonly found in other EFL textbooks. However, in the absence of authentic materials, students may find it hard to cope

with genuine interactive discourse when they encounter it in real life. This is exacerbated by the use of only one variety of English in the audio materials, which does not alert learners to different varieties of English or prepare them for intelligibility issues in cross-cultural communication.

The *Tieng Anh* includes a large number of visual images, many of which display strong intersemiotic complementarity with the verbal elements in the text, and therefore are functional in adding meaning to the learning activities. However, as noted, there are also several with little or no relevance to the learning activities. Given the fact that textbooks are typically constrained by space, only well-grounded choices of visual elements need to be included. This finding indicates a lack of understanding of the potential of visual materials in the design, as well as a lack of appreciation of the importance of the visual semiotic in the contemporary world and its place in classroom teaching and learning.

A final point to note is that the textbook is the provider of input and activities which are recontextualised and brought to life in the classroom. It is the role of the teacher to adapt the content to shape it appropriately to particular classes and students. On this basis, it is important to set this 'textbook-as-object' analysis alongside an analysis of the textbook-in-action, involving an analysis of the use of the textbook in the classroom. This takes the study to the implementation of the reform, the focus of Chapter VII.

CHAPTER VII: REALITIES OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM

To this point, the analysis has focused on the intentions of the Project 2025 curriculum reform by looking at the Government policy statements (Chapter V) and then at the new textbook series, *Tieng Anh*, as a material product of the intent (Chapter VI). Attention now turns to the implementation of the curriculum, and for this purpose, the data source is the teachers who were the key agents in the implementation process. The aim is to provide an empirical understanding of how teachers at the local level evaluated the curriculum reform, how they engaged with it and how they spoke about it. It draws on data from 112 survey participants, 11 teacher interviews, 4 principal interviews, and 28 classroom observations. A summary of the demographics of the teacher participants is provided as contextual information and is followed by an analysis of teacher attitude towards the new curriculum and their understandings of CLT. The section documenting the classroom discourse provides evidence of the 'how' of implementation – how the teacher attitude and teacher knowledge of CLT translated into classroom practice.

7.1. Teacher Attitude

As part of the aim of describing, analysing and interpreting the reality of the curriculum reform at the classroom level, information was initially sought to gauge the attitude of teachers towards the new curriculum. Their disposition towards the mandated content and the prescribed ways of teaching that content was determined to be a useful starting point from which to analyse their practice. Drawn from the online surveys and face-to-face interviews, the aim was to document how the teachers evaluated the curriculum change, how they appraised the achievability of the curriculum goals in their local context, and what they believed might hinder its implementation.

7.1.1. The necessity and feasibility of the new curriculum

Table 7.1 below indicates that the teachers assessed their students to be 'communicatively incompetent' and needed significant improvement in their ability to use English communicatively. Over 90% of the teachers reported that their students needed to improve their listening skills, and around 80% believed that their students should have more substantial input in relation to speaking skills and pronunciation. Writing skills were also in need of improvement, as stated by 54% of

the participants. In contrast, the teachers believed that their students generally had a strong command of the English language system, including its grammar and vocabulary.

Table 7.1. *Teacher perceptions of student needs*

	Listening	Speaking	Pronunciation	Reading	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary
Responses	92% (n=76)	77% (n=64)	80% (n=66)	8% (n=7)	54% (n=45)	7% (n=6)	19% (n=16)

In line with the perceived need to enhance student communicative skills, 92% of the teachers approved of the curriculum change, indicating overwhelming support for the innovation, as shown in Table 7.2. Of these, approximately 58% viewed the reform as necessary and 34% as very necessary.

Table 7.2. *The need for the curriculum change*

	Not necessary	Somewhat necessary	N/A	Necessary	Very necessary
Responses	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)	2% (n=2)	58% (n=54)	34% (n=33)

Correlation tests[*] showed no statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceived necessity of the curriculum change and their gender (p=.272), their education (p=.636), their teaching experience (p=.206) or their level of English proficiency (p=.965). Teacher attitude about the need for curriculum renewal was not shaped by background or prior training and experience. Rather, their attitude was more obviously aligned with the perceived need to improve communicative competence as indicated above.

Despite the overwhelming support for the reform, Table 7.3 below indicates that 76% of the respondents believed that the set achievement targets could only be partially achieved, whilst far fewer, 19%, regarded the overall goal as achievable. At the opposite end of the scale, only 5% of the teachers believed that the new curriculum could not support students to use English as a tool of communication for

[*] *p-Value is based on a Pearson Chi-square test, confidence level at 95%*

their studies and future personal development. The overall goal covered a broad sweep and may have been viewed as overly ambitious, and on that basis, the teachers were reluctant to wholly endorse its achievability. The second goal was much more tangible, as it was related to an English language proficiency level. Two-thirds of the teachers (66%) viewed this goal as partly achievable. Only 13% of respondents expressed real confidence that their students could reach the Proficiency Level A2 with a larger number (21%) taking the view that this goal was completely unachievable. More teachers took the view that their students would not reach the target proficiency in the English language than those who believed they would.

Table 7.3. *The achievability of the curriculum goals.*

#	***Overall goals of the new curriculum***	***Comments by teachers***		
		Unachievable	***Partially achievable***	***Achievable***
1	English language education at lower-secondary schools aims to help students to practise and develop their communicative competence in English, which becomes a foundation for the use of English for study, and helps to create the habit of life-long learning, through which they become responsible citizens in the context of globalisation.	5% (n=5)	76% (n=71)	19% (n=18)
2	After finishing lower-secondary school, students achieve level A2 of proficiency on the CEFR.	21% (n=20)	66% (n=62)	13% (n=12)

Again, there was no statistically significant correlation found between teacher attitude about the achievability of the curriculum goals and their backgrounds, including gender, education, experience and English proficiency levels (p>.005). In fact, the teacher attitudes were grounded in their perceived understandings of the constraints hindering the achievement of the specified goals. Further insights into teacher attitude were evident through the Appraisal analysis of the teacher interviews.

7.1.2. Attitude towards the new curriculum

Table 7.4 provides a summary of the evaluations expressed by the teachers as evident in the Appraisal analysis of the interviews, along with the data generated from the open-ended survey questions. The Table presents details of the specific

type of positive or negative Attitude identified in the analysis. Positive evaluations accounted for 20% of the total, while negative evaluations were four-fold higher, at 80%. Negative Appreciation was the most frequently expressed Attitude type, at 58% of the total of negative evaluations. Instances of emotional Affect were rare and only positive, accounting for only 4%, while Judgement in relation to accepted norms accounted for 22% of the total of negative Attitude.

Table 7.4. *Attitude types in teacher responses*

Attitude	***Instances***	***As %***
Positive	**39**	**20%**
Affect	6	4%
Judgement	1	-
Appreciation	32	16%
Negative	**158**	**80%**
Affect	-	-
Judgement	44	22%
Appreciation	114	58%
Total	**197**	**100%**

Table 7.5 details the inscribed/explicit versus invoked/implicit expressions of Attitude. Whilst there was a clear distinction between negative and positive Attitude, the ways in which both were expressed were very similar. Very close to 50% of the positive Attitude tokens were inscribed and the same percentage invoked. The same was evident in relation to the negative Attitude expressed.

Table 7.5. *Inscribed and invoked Appraisal instances in teacher responses.*

Attitude	***Instances***	***As %***
Positive	**39**	**20%**
inscribed	22	11%
invoked	17	9%
Negative	**158**	**80%**
inscribed	79	40%
invoked	79	40%
Total	**197**	**100%**

The Attitude analysis also indicated that the new curriculum was not the only Target (the entity or person appraised) of the teacher evaluation. Other Targets were linked to the new curriculum and were appraised by the teachers. These included the textbook, the workload, the previous curriculum, the class size, the students, the parents and the teachers themselves. Table 7.7 lists the different Targets of the attitude expressed, the Source, that is the appraiser, and the Attitude type (Affect, Judgement, Appreciation) as either positive or negative, inscribed or invoked.

Table 7.6. *Example of Appraisal analysis*

Appraisal language	***Source***	***Target***	***Attitude type***
*I **really like** the new curriculum*	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Inscribed Affect
*because it's **rich** in terms of knowledge*	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Inscribed Appreciation
*and can **help** students **develop** their skills*	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Inscribed Appreciation
*I think the new curriculum is **good***	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Inscribed Appreciation
For the old curriculum, hard work is the determinant of achieving good results	Teacher K	The old curriculum	Negative; Provoked Appreciation
But this new one asks the students to be more critical	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Provoked Appreciation
One thing about this curriculum is that it requires the use of English as the final aim	Teacher K	The new curriculum	Positive; Provoked Appreciation
*Generally, the appearance of the books is **eye-catching** and **motivating** to the students with **a lot of** visual images*	Teacher J	The textbook	Positive; Inscribed Appreciation
*It is **not boring at all***	Teacher J	The textbook	Positive; Inscribed Appreciation
*I think my students **can't reach** A2 level.*	Teacher G	Curriculum goal	Negative; Inscribed Appreciation
*Even for selective classes, I'm **not sure** whether **20%** of the students can achieve A2 level*	Teacher G	Curriculum goal	Negative; Inscribed Appreciation
*Most of the sections are **long**,*	Teacher A	Heavy workload	Negative; Inscribed Appreciation
so we have to race to meet the time	Teacher A	Heavy workload	Negative; Provoked Appreciation
How to run communicative tasks in a class of 43 students?	Teacher J	Large class	Negative; Provoked Appreciation
*I have to say that students are **lazy***	Teacher G	Students	Negative; Inscribed

			Judgement
*They are **not keen to learn** English*	Teacher G	Students	Negative; Inscribed Judgement
*Their parents do **not really care much** about their studies*	Teacher G	Parents	Negative; Inscribed Judgement
*To be honest, I'm **not very confident***	Teacher A	Teachers	Negative; Inscribed Judgement
*There are **a lot of things** that I **haven't been very clear** about, as the teaching methodology*	Teacher A	Teachers	Negative; Inscribed Judgement

The following section presents more detail about positive and negative appraisals in relation to the new curriculum and its related Targets.

7.1.2.1. Positive Attitude

Thirty-nine instances of positive Attitude were recorded, constituting 20% of the total number. In this category, Appreciation was the prevalent choice (16%), while instances of Affect were rare (4%), and only one instance of positive Judgement was evident.

Positive Appreciation was the most common means by which the teachers made positive evaluations of the new curriculum. Typically, these positive comments were about the value of the new curriculum and were expressed explicitly rather than implicitly, as in the following example:

> "I really like the new curriculum because it's rich in terms of knowledge and can help students develop their skills… Generally, I think the new curriculum is good" (Teacher K)

In some instances, positive Appreciation was conveyed implicitly, as when a teacher expressed Appreciation because the new curriculum could foster critical thinking rather than focus on grammar and lexis and this capacity was ranked more highly in relation to acuity in language. The previous curriculum was implicitly charged with a negative attitude as it valued hard work and disregarded critical skills and abilities as relevant for language use. Furthermore, the new curriculum was valued because it placed communicative ability at the centre of learning, as evident in the following comment.

> "For the old curriculum, hard work is the determinant of achieving good results. But this new one asks the students to be more critical. One thing about this curriculum is that it requires the use of English as the final aim" (Teacher K)

A number of positive evaluations were made when the teachers made a comparison between the new and old curriculum. Some teachers explicitly acknowledged the advantages of the new over the old. These positive comparisons by the teachers were linked to the fact that the new curriculum promoted the development of communicative skills in the students. In the previous iteration of the curriculum, the study of grammatical form and vocabulary was the main focus, whereas the new program was seen as more advanced because it was designed to develop the ability to use the language:

> "When working with the new curriculum, I found that obviously it has more advantages over the old one in that it can help to develop students' language skills" (Teacher H)

The textbook series developed as the vehicle for the new curriculum was a frequent Target for appraisal. Positive Appreciation of the new textbooks included their appealing appearance and their rich visual resources as in the following comment:

> "Generally, the appearance of the books is eye-catching and motivating to the students with a lot of visual images. It is not boring at all" (Teacher J)

This teacher appreciated the design of the new textbook series because it could stimulate student interest and motivation. The diversity of learning tasks in the textbooks was also positively evaluated because they were varied in terms of the degree of difficulty and, therefore, allowed for flexibility with students at different levels, as in the following comment:

> "I think the level of difficulty of tasks in the textbooks is varied. The books can be used for different levels of students. There are tasks for good students, and other easier ones for weaker students" (Teacher D)

Whilst these comments illustrate the positive evaluations made by the teachers, the analysis revealed a much larger number of negative comments about the new curriculum, including the English language proficiency levels specified in the goals and the teachers' understanding of the contextual constraints.

7.1.2.2. Negative Attitude

Negative Attitude was by far the more common teacher evaluation. A total of 158 instances were recorded, or 80% of the total of expressed Attitude. Around 58% of this total were Negative Appreciations, followed by 22% negative Judgements. The quantity and the targets of these negative evaluations revealed the extent of the

teacher concerns, including the challenges they faced in reform implementation in their local contexts.

Partial achievement of the curriculum goal

All of the teachers shared the view that it was difficult for their students, especially those at the mid-range of achievement in Normal schools, to attain the Proficiency Level A2, the achievement target specified in the curriculum goals. This finding is consistent with the survey data in which the majority of the respondents reported that only partial achievement of this proficiency goal was feasible. The number of students considered able to achieve this level varied for different teachers, as evident in the following comments.

> "They [students] can't achieve A2 level of proficiency. No… I think about 40% to 45% of students in top classes can achieve. In other classes, there may be about 30% to 35%, and only 10% to 15% of students in the lowest ranked classes" (Teacher J)

> "I think my students can't reach A2 level. Even for selective classes, I'm not sure whether 20% of the students can achieve A2 level" (Teacher G)

The interviews with school principals provided similar views about the capacity to achieve the curriculum goals. Proficiency Level A2 was again seen to be overly challenging for students in the mid-range of achievement in mainstream classes. As one principal from a Normal school commented:

> "I think it is impossible for students in this school to reach the required level which is too high. The new program seems to be difficult and heavy for our students in particular and the students in this rural district in general. All the three teachers in my school complained that the lessons are too long and too challenging to our students" (Principal of School C)

In a similar vein, the principal of School A, a Normal school in the city, expressed her doubts about the achievement of the proficiency level:

> "There would be an estimated 20 to 30% of students who can reach the proficiency level required by MOET. Now I think the program is difficult and heavily overloaded to both teachers and students. It is overloaded but ineffective. Most of the students cannot speak English. There is no point if students remain unable to communicate with foreigners in English" (Principal of School A)

In Selective schools, it was expected that the proficiency achievement rate would be higher. However, one principal expressed her concern that not all the students were at a similar level because the primary school English program was optional:

> "I think for my students the new program is much better than the previous iteration. It is beneficial and suitable for about 70% of students, while for the remaining 30% it is overloaded… Some students did not study much English previously, as English is an optional subject at the primary level. When starting learning with the new program at the secondary level, those students find it hard to cope with. This is the issue that I am so much concerned about" (Principal of School D)

Level of difficulty of the curriculum

A key concern among the teachers was the expected English language level in the new curriculum for mainstream students. From the teacher perspective, the new program was "difficult" in terms of the skills and knowledge required, and "heavy" in terms of the workload allocated for classroom teaching and learning. Many teachers were concerned that the curriculum was too challenging and demanding for average students and more so for struggling students. By contrast, it was suitable and beneficial for high achievers, especially those in top classes or in selective schools. As such, it was evaluated with negative Appreciations, as illustrated in the following comments.

> "I think the new program is more difficult in terms of both linguistic knowledge, the number of new words and level of difficulty. I think the new program is more suitable for good students who will develop their language skills, especially speaking skills. However, the students who are not very good will achieve nothing" (Teacher G)

> "The specific objectives set out in the curriculum are only suitable for selective classes and schools. For students in rural and mountainous areas, it is difficult to achieve because the program is too heavy" (Teacher S4 from the survey)

Several negative Appreciations about the textbooks were also evident in the teacher interviews, mostly regarding the ineffective design of some sections, and the inclusion of topics unfamiliar to both teachers and students, which made it even more challenging, exemplified by:

> "Some topics or contents for learning in the books are not familiar to the students, even for the teachers. If the teachers have almost no ideas about the topics, how can they explain to the students? Sometimes I feel that some of the contents are "up in the clouds", and have almost no relation to the students' everyday life" (Teacher D)

Mixed ability students with different levels of motivation

Consistently, the teachers linked their students' learning ability to the success of the curriculum reform. It is interesting that the teachers routinely evaluated their students on their performance as "the top" and "the other", "the good" and "the not-very-good", "the strong" and "the weak", or "the hardworking" and "the not motivated". If the students were good and worked hard, they would benefit greatly from the new curriculum. On the contrary, the students who were not at a high level would achieve little. An example of this kind of Judgement follows, made more interesting by the positive Appreciation of the curriculum:

> "But it [the new curriculum] is difficult for weak students. For top classes, I can achieve most of the objectives of the lesson. But for other classes, I can only cover half of the target. Generally, I think the curriculum is good, but only for good students from selective classes" (Teacher K)

Other instances were found where a teacher expressed her discontent about her students' laziness and lack of motivation to learn, as in:

> "I have to say that students are lazy. They are not keen to learn English. Students in rural areas have little motivation for learning English" (Teacher G)

In this instance, the Judgement was of the students in general and was independent of the curriculum. In another interview, the teacher expressed her concerns that her students did not have a good foundation of English in the earlier years of their schooling, making it more challenging to ensure success at the secondary level. The same teacher also commented that the students remained silent during communicative lessons, or learnt slowly. She also noted the challenge of English instruction in economically disadvantaged areas where students were often demotivated to learn foreign languages. These students normally achieved a very limited language proficiency as a result of insufficient support and little incentive to learn:

> "Students do not gain much from their primary English studies, so it is difficult for them to go on with English 6. Sometimes the class is too quiet for communication lessons. What can I do if the students don't talk" (Teacher F)

The parents were also one of the Targets for Judgement. In commenting on the role of parents in the success of a student at school, one teacher explicitly named the parents as significant contributors to the attitude and achievement of their children.

One rural teacher stated her concern that when the parents did not pay attention and give encouragement to their children, there was little motivation for learning, resulting in poor school performance:

> "Students in rural areas have little motivation for learning English. If the students have little motivation and passion for learning, they don't spend time studying… Their parents do not really care much about their studies; they think that if their children do not perform well at school, it is not necessary for them to invest resources on learning. These students do not take any further tutorials besides formal classroom instruction" (Teacher G)

The Judgement is clearly negative of the students and their parents in the rural areas of the province, which are generally perceived to be under-resourced and also underachieving. These comments also raise the issue of additional tuition outside of the formal school timetable. As noted in Chapter II, section 2.1.4, a 'shadow education' industry is an important factor in the educational context in Vietnam.

Workload

A heavy workload was also a factor in the evaluation of the new curriculum where a general comment was that teachers lacked the time to cover the required content. The teachers complained through expressions of negative Appreciation that they had to 'race' to finish lessons in the 45 minutes allocated for lessons. This finding is in line with the textbook analysis, which suggested a heavy workload for lessons of forty-five minutes.

> "… the learning contents in the textbooks are too much with a lot of exercises and tasks. Teachers had to quickly move on to new exercises and tasks, which made both teacher and students demotivated and tired" (Teacher S3 from the survey)

> "Most of the sections are long, so we have to race to meet the time. Sometimes I want to skip some parts, but there are new words or new knowledge in those parts which may be included in the tests. For example, if I skip one part, but other teachers don't. Therefore I always try to cover all sections in the mandated textbooks" (Teacher A)

Along with the heavy workload, an increase in curriculum hours for English was considered an unwelcome imposition. All four principals shared the concern that the current school program was already heavily overloaded for students.

> "Honestly, I think if we increase the class time for English, we have to decrease the time for other school subjects; otherwise students will be overloaded. For example, Year 6 and 7 students currently have 30 periods of learning per week. This means for most of the morning,

> students have to take 5 periods, which finishes at 11.35am. Combined with other activities outside class time and lesson breaks, I think the students are already overloaded" (Principal of School D)

The teaching staff were also overloaded, and in some instances overwhelmed. On top of extra timetabled teaching duties, teachers had to participate in extra-curriculum events, and respond to parents and bureaucrats. Unfortunately, schools could not afford to hire additional staff, as stated by one urban principal.

> "I find an unreasonable issue here. In the previous curriculum, there were two learning periods per week for Year 9, while there are three period within the new curriculum. So the teachers have to teach more classes. There are seven Year 9 classes in my school, which means the teachers have to teach seven more lessons. The managers have not prepared for this. I am not allowed to hire more teachers because the school does not have the money to pay" (Principal of School B).

Class size

Large class sizes made it extremely challenging to implement and monitor effective communicative activities as well as keep track of student progress and also provide individualised feedback. This became even more challenging when a teacher was responsible for teaching multiple classes per term.

> "There are 41 or 43 students in one class. I think the class needs to be divided into 2 or 3 smaller classes in order to teach and learn effectively. How to run communicative tasks in a class of 43 students?" (Teacher J)

The effect of written examinations

The spectre of high-stake examinations and their washback effect was evident in the teacher interviews. While the curriculum goal was to develop communication skills, the high-stakes examinations remained unchanged: written and grammar-based. A shared concern among the teachers was that an intensive focus on communicative ability would be at the expense of grammar practice, resulting in lower achievement levels in written tests and examinations:

> "One student may understand the lesson and use more English, but he or she may not perform well in the tests where there are grammar items included. Students who are good at communicative English may not be good at grammar" (Teacher K)

> "However, the entrance exam to Year 10, there are only reading, writing and grammar. Therefore, students are not encouraged to develop their communicative skills and they still study for the exam to Year 10" (Teacher S12 from the survey)

The importance of the written examinations has led to a marked increase in private tutoring in addition to formal schooling. Private tutoring has been a persistent feature of the Vietnamese education system where a strong desire for high achievement has created a context in which many students and parents have felt obliged to engage with private tuition. Many teachers confirmed that they also worked as private tutors themselves in the shadow industry regardless of government restrictions because of the strong demand from students and parents:

> "It's not allowed to teach extra lessons according to the regulations. I do teach but you know I can't really say it in public. It's kind of confidential information shared by the teacher, students and their parents. Administrative officers said extra teaching should be banned. They said that it should be stopped, but their children all go to our extra classes". (Teacher J)

Teacher J further commented that the students who would achieve the target level of proficiency were those who subscribed to more private tutorials:

> "So I suggest that you should note further information here is that the students take more lessons outside of school. They can achieve A2 level as a result of their family investment, rather than from the school and me" (Teacher J)

The 'shadow education', the name given to the phenomenon of additional tutoring, loomed large in relation to Project 2025. Out of school teaching and learning has been an expanding industry over a number of years in Vietnam and is widely accepted as a normalised cultural practice. The reform has made additional demands on teachers as part of the formal education system, yet the private world of tutoring still plays an important part in education and cannot be ignored.

Teacher confidence

Some expression of negative Judgement were about the teachers themselves and were related to their English proficiency levels. Furthermore, it appeared that there was a lack of, or ineffective teacher support, resulting in the fact that the teachers were confused or did not know what they should do in relation to the new curriculum, as indicated in the following comments:

> "Honestly, when I taught the new curriculum for the first time, I was not confident at all. There was only me working on my own. I complained all the time. I always lacked class time to cover the syllabus, and I had to teach during the break time. I was too tired, and there was no one out there to ask" (Teacher I)

> "To be honest, I'm not very confident [teaching the curriculum] because there are a lot of things that I haven't been very clear about, as the teaching methodology… If being asked whether I am confident about teaching the new curriculum, I may say that no one can say they are confident" (Teacher A)

The low level of confidence among teachers indicated that they were not well supported to implement the new curriculum successfully. Teacher stress was also mentioned, another factor which impacted on the capacity to enact the intended changes.

School and classroom facilities

A lack of material facilities to support teaching and learning was another constraint frequently mentioned by the teachers. In the following comment, the teacher expresses discontent about the poorly equipped classrooms:

> "I just say simply about Vietnam's education system is that there is a lack of facilities, lack of teaching aids, audio-visual equipment. We are not provided with teaching aids like disc players, speakers, so we have to buy. We are not supplied with necessary facilities for teaching and learning foreign languages, but are required to achieve this objective or that objective. This sounds silly" (Teacher J)

This finding was reinforced by the school principals. Generally, urban classrooms were better equipped as a result of voluntary financial contributions from the parents, as expressed by the Principal of School A:

> "The classroom facilities are largely upgraded and equipped by parents. The State doesn't have the money. I have to say honestly that some equipment provided by the public sector is not usable and not good quality. I have to encourage parents to contribute and buy classroom devices for their children. Some parents complain but I have no other choice" (Principal of School A)

In rural schools, where the parents were poorer, there were even more limited facilities to support classroom learning. A further comment was made by one of the rural school principals:

> "The school facilities have not yet met the requirement for teaching and learning. To be honest, I cannot ask the parents for contributions because many families are financially struggling themselves. I only use the money from the State which is little. As you see, not all classrooms have a screen projector" (Principal of School D)

The data analysis further indicated that the large class sizes, which were an obvious impediment to establishing a communicative classroom, were the result of a lack of financial investment in more school buildings:

> "In some schools, I know there are classes of over 60 students. The regulation on class size is no more than 45. But there is a lack of classrooms. This is the reality" (Principal of School A)

Overall, the Appraisal analysis indicated some positive teacher attitude towards the new curriculum. However, negative attitude was far more common. The negative attitude was primarily focused on potential hindrances to the implementation of the communicative-based curriculum at the classroom level. Chief among these barriers was the overly ambitious proficiency goal, set against the general level of student ability in mainstream classrooms. The required level of achievement, the heavy workload, limited instructional hours, large class sizes and unsatisfactory classroom resources all conspired to limit the potential for communicative classrooms. Furthermore, unmotivated students, unconfident teachers, coupled with the strong washback effect of the paper-and-pencil examinations, all contributed to the challenges in implementing the prescribed communicative curriculum. The constraints ranged from the macro-level of curriculum design to micro-level of the classroom context, and cumulatively amounted to doubt among the teachers that Project 2025 could actually be implemented successfully in the classroom.

The interviews with the school principals further reinforced the teacher evaluations that the curriculum goals could only be partially achieved. Given the constraints voiced by the principals, it is clear that they had limited power to resolve these issues. Large class sizes, lack of school facilities and limited instructional hours were beyond the control of these public schools which were directed by external bureaucracies and relied on too scarce Government funding.

7.2. Teacher understanding of CLT

The attitude of the teachers to the curriculum reform was evidenced in the Targets they chose to appraise and the positive or negative comments they made about

these Targets. A general finding was that the teachers did see merit in the new curriculum but that it was difficult to implement due to a number of organisational or structural matters. They did not comment on the content of the curriculum and did not focus strongly on CLT as the pedagogy prescribed to achieve the curriculum targets. Rather they focussed on obstacles to teaching in a communicative manner, such as class size and school resources which curtailed their capacity in using a CLT approach.

In wanting to look in more detail at the prescribed pedagogy, the teachers were questioned about CLT. The aim here was to gain an insight into teacher knowledge and understanding of the communicative approach as well as the sources of teacher knowledge, which necessarily encompassed issues in relation to the scope and quality of in-service professional training and support as part of the curriculum reform.

7.2.1. Teacher conceptualisation of CLT

Table 7.7 collates the survey responses to features related to the communicative approach. In this multiple-choice question, teachers were asked to select one or more items from a list of choices, with an aim to obtain a general picture of how they conceptualised CLT. As the table reveals, the great majority of the teachers (84%) agreed that the goal in the CLT classroom was to help students develop communicative skills. A similar proportion (79%) believed that more interactivity should be evident in the CLT classroom. None of the teachers felt that CLT should result in a teacher-centred classroom. They also disagreed with the statement that CLT placed an exclusive focus on grammar instruction. These were relatively simple pairs of opposite statements which provided baseline data only. The question of responsibility for what kind of materials would be available based on the needs of students in particular classrooms was less clear. Approximately 38% of the teachers suggested that within a CLT approach they would adapt the textbook materials to their specific needs, but the majority of the respondents felt that the textbook should provide the resources they required.

Table 7.7. *Teacher understanding of CLT*

Features		***Responses***	
		(n)	***(%)***
1	A learner-centred pedagogy	69	84%
2	A teacher-centred pedagogy	0	0%
3	Primarily focusing on developing student communicative competence in English	69	84%
4	Primarily focusing on grammar	0	0%
6	Encouraging interactions in English between teachers and students, and amongst students	65	79%
7	Using only English in the classroom, avoid using Vietnamese	9	11%
8	Teachers select and design activities and materials suitable to the needs, interests and level of the students	31	38%

When the interviewees were asked to describe in more detail what CLT involved and how they applied it in their own practice, they found it difficult to respond, as evidenced in the minimal and fragmented descriptions of CLT recorded throughout the interviews. None of the teachers offered any detailed account of CLT, nor was able to describe their practices using CLT. One teacher claimed that she never heard the term CLT before. It was also apparent that the teachers were not familiar with technical terminology in the field of language teaching and learning. Little of the metalanguage associated with CLT, such as ‘communicative competence’, ‘communicative activities’, ‘functions’, ‘authentic materials’, ‘genuine interaction’, were mentioned. The teachers expressed a fragmented knowledge of CLT, which resulted in confusion about how to work with the approach in their teaching practice. Their conceptions of CLT remained very general and centred primarily on the view that it was a learner-centred approach, it made a focus on speaking, and it paid less attention to grammatical form than traditional teaching.

7.2.1.1. CLT is student-centred

Student-centredness was the common conception of CLT amongst the teachers, although none described precisely what they meant by a student-centred approach, as exemplified in the following definition:

> “It [CLT] means student-centeredness. The teachers play the role of facilitators. The students will need to discover new information by themselves” (Teacher I)

Another teacher asserted that traditional deductive teaching should be avoided within the communicative approach, and teachers should encourage the students to learn and discover new knowledge. She stated:

> "The instructors [in in-service teacher training] guided us on how to teach a lesson. What is in my mind now is that I should encourage students to learn and avoid deductive teaching" (Teacher K)

7.2.1.2. CLT focuses on speaking skills

The second common conception about CLT was that it involved a greater focus on speaking. The teachers commented that there should be more interaction in the CLT classroom. However, they found it hard to give any further account of how an emphasis on spoken language could be achieved:

> "Generally, more interaction will be needed in class. I understand, but it's difficult to express in words comprehensively" (Teacher K)

> "It [CLT] means teachers and students have to interact more with each other" (Teacher E)

Others expressed a similar view about the need to give priority to speaking. For example, one teacher described her classroom pedagogy as the integration of the four macro-skills with greater weighting on speaking:

> "I focus on all language skills, especially speaking. For example, even when the task is about writing, actually speaking skills are still involved" (Teacher I)

7.2.1.3. CLT means less focus on grammar

In interview, the teachers commonly acknowledged a less significant role for grammar in CLT classrooms in contrast to a more traditional approach. They also shared a similar view about the general goal of teaching being to focus on communicative skills in the target language. However, the focus on communicative skills did not mean complete avoidance of a focus on form. When asked about the role of grammar, all the teachers advocated the need for grammar as a prerequisite for communication to take place. They were more articulate when talking about teaching grammar, as it was the practice with which they were comfortable and familiar:

"In CLT, grammar teaching is not as important as in the traditional methodology. Grammar now plays a supporting role in practising communicative skills. In the past, grammar played a central role" (Teacher B)

"I still think it [grammar] is important because students need to understand the structures. Therefore, grammar still needs to be reinforced... Of course, the final aim is to communicate, but grammar still plays an important role. I think there should be a balance of both developing skills, but understanding the structures" (Teacher K)

Some teachers expressed concerns about developing communicative skills at the expense of knowledge about grammar, which they feared might negatively impact on student achievement in the high-stakes written examinations:

"Although the aim of the curriculum is to target more interaction – speaking and listening – grammar still plays an important role. Furthermore, the entrance examination to high school and university does not include listening and speaking, but only grammar. Therefore, the students still have to focus on learning grammar" (Teacher D)

Again, the wash-back effect of discrete-point testing and the intensification of private tutoring with an exclusive focus on grammar was highlighted. In the following quote, the teacher commented on the role of grammar in testing and emphasised the need to prepare students for these pencil-and-paper events. The communicative curriculum could not fully address the grammar required for success in examinations:

"Grammar is significantly important for the tests. As for teaching grammar, we teach in extra classes in the afternoon. Along with the regular class hour in the morning, each class has one tutoring lesson of about 2 hours per week. It is not sufficient for grammar learning in the morning classes" (Teacher I)

This comment points to the acceptance of private tutoring as a necessary element within the system. The teacher acknowledges the role of both parts of the organisation, formal schooling where CLT may take precedence and then private tutoring where the focus can turn to the grammatical pressures inherent in the examination. This informant pragmatically noted the intense pressure for achievement in examinations. The pressure was not only for the students but also for the teachers who could experience pressure from school managers and parents alike, which was linked to examination success:

> "If students do not attend extra lessons, they may even fail the entrance exam to high school. We are under pressure of making sure that the students can perform well in exams and gain good marks" (Teacher I).

7.2.2. Sources of teacher understanding

The analysis revealed that the teachers had limited experience and understanding of the principles and practices inherent in CLT, and that the primary source of this understanding was the in-service training undertaken as part of the preparation for the curriculum reform. One senior teacher commented that she did not have the opportunity to engage with CLT in her undergraduate teacher training program or in other pre-service courses:

> "I heard about CLT from the training. I didn't learn about it when I was at university a long time ago. At that time, I only knew about deductive teaching, you know, the grammar-translation" (Teacher A)

In-service training for teachers was mostly in the form of short courses, seminars and workshops sponsored by MOET and the local DOET. A range of negative comments were forthcoming about the quantity and quality of these in-service opportunities, exemplified by the following complaint about the insufficient support this teacher received before and during the implementation of the new curriculum:

> "Honestly speaking, I think training and workshops are not very effective. For example, when changing from the old curriculum to the new one, there was no training. Only a small number of teachers who worked with the new curriculum in the first year were invited for training. But the number is very small. For us, we have to find our way with little guidance and instruction. I think the training content is general and not practical" (Teacher J)

The limited opportunities for professional development meant that not every teacher had the chance to participate. Some reported that they learned about CLT by observing other teachers. Others questioned the practicality of 'quick-fix' training workshops.

> "I only attend the workshops organised by DOET and the district office. I'm not allowed to attend other workshops. The district office organises one workshop annually. DOET organises more, about two. But to be honest, I have to say that these workshops are not practical, not really close to the curriculum. All the teachers from different levels were attending the same workshops. A one-day workshop does not solve anything. I think the administrators organised workshops just for quantity and for making reports. Regarding the benefits and effectiveness, I think there is none" (Teacher J)

Sharing the same experience, another teacher commented on the ineffectiveness of the training. She also expressed a lack of confidence about the pedagogy about which she did not have sufficient understanding. She relied on her own experience as a teacher and as a learner to teach the new curriculum, rather than from theoretically informed practice:

> "To be honest, I'm not very confident. Because there are a lot of things that I haven't been very clear about, as the teaching methodology. In the training, the instructor explained pretty briefly and not into details. Mostly I use my own experience gained from everyday teaching" (Teacher A)

Another teacher expressed her feelings of isolation and frustration when teaching the new curriculum for the first time, confirming the lack of support in the process of curriculum implementation.

> "There was only me working on my own. I complained all the time. I always lacked class time to cover the syllabus, and I had to teach during the break time. I was too tired, and there was no one out there to ask" (Teacher I)

The insufficient professional training and the lack of teacher learning opportunities resulted in uncertainties and confusion among these teachers with regard to how to teach the communicative curriculum. As a consequence of this lack of understanding of the principles underpinning CLT, teachers were more likely to revert to or persist with their existing traditional, form-focused practices. This raises an important issue regarding the process of change more generally as, in this case, professional development or the lack of appropriate professional development emerged as an important determinant of the approach to teaching and learning in English language classrooms:

> "As a teacher, I feel a little bit isolated. I do not have the chance to learn and improve. I would really want one or two experts to come and guide me because I almost do it in my own way, from my past experience or sometimes learnt by observing other colleagues. I do not really know what the standards are to follow. It's not really because I'm lazy, but mostly because I don't know how. I'm still lucky here at this school because I have knowledgeable colleagues. I know that in other schools, there may not the same. Generally, I think the teachers love their jobs and want to commit, but they don't know what and how to do better" (Teacher K)

Further insights about how the teachers enacted the curriculum were gained as part of thee analysis of classroom discourse presented in the following section, where the data offer evidence of teachers' actual pedagogic practices, as opposed to them

reflecting on their pedagogic practices. Using an SFL informed analytical framework, the focus was to look in some detail at how the teachers and students in participating classrooms engaged and interacted within routine English language lessons.

7.3. Classroom discourse analysis

As discussed in Chapter IV Section 4.4.3, the analysis of classroom discourse was adapted from SFL which offered a linguistically theorised perspective of the language used by the teachers and students as they engaged in teaching and learning English. The approach, labelled as pedagogic register (Martin & Rose, 2013) sits within a framework of classroom discourse analysis, in which discourse is understood simply as the language used in the classroom. As such, an analysis of the language used in the classroom offers a lens with which to examine and interpret curriculum and pedagogic processes.

The content of the curriculum was mapped in the *Tieng Anh* and was sequenced by the curriculum and textbook writers. In effect, the elements of language which constituted the content of the lessons were mandated by MOET and were not to be contested in any way. This content was mapped through specific topics and packaged into distinct units. The content, or, in SFL terms, the experiential meanings in the curriculum, was not a focus in the study. It was accepted by all as the appropriate language content for the students in this age range to be learning. Whilst the content of the pedagogic activities was not central to the research, the type of pedagogic activity, what Richards (2006) described as the different types of language practice, mechanical, meaningful and communicative, were of key interest. The analysis of these variations in pedagogic activities brought to the surface the nature of language practice tasks prevalent in the classroom. In this way, the analysis offered insight into if and how such tasks provided the opportunity for genuine classroom interactions in the target language. The analysis of pedagogic relations, the Tenor of the roles and relationships between the teacher and the students was at the heart of the discourse analysis. Accordingly, the prevalent patterns of oral classroom interactions were identified, along with the respective roles of teachers and students, use of the mother tongue, and participation by the students, including interactions between and among students in pair and group work. In considering the pedagogic modalities, an exclusive focus was placed on how the textbooks worked to utilise the visual semiotic within language based activities and tasks.

Because the lessons unfolded with recurring features and patterns, a subset of six lessons was selected from the 28 observed lessons, as listed in Table 7.8, including one from an urban Selective school, one from a rural Selective school, and the others from Normal schools in urban and rural areas. This data set made it practical for comprehensive coverage and in-depth analysis of classroom discourse across the different kinds of schools and class types. The classroom exchanges presented in the study were taken from the transcriptions of the selected lessons with the aim to illustrate key features of the classroom discourse.

Table 7.8. *Details of selected lessons*

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Class/ Type</th><th colspan="2">School/ Type</th><th>Size</th></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 1 (8C)</td><td>Normal</td><td>School A</td><td rowspan="2">Normal school</td><td>40 students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 2 (6E)</td><td>Selective</td><td>School A</td><td>48 students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 3 (7C)</td><td>Selective</td><td>School B</td><td>Selective school</td><td>47 students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 4 (8C)</td><td>Normal</td><td>School C</td><td rowspan="2">Normal school</td><td>37 students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 5 (7A)</td><td>Selective</td><td>School C</td><td>36 students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesson 6 (6B)</td><td>Selective</td><td>School D</td><td>Selective school</td><td>40 students</td></tr>
</table>

7.3.1. Class size and arrangement

The average size of the observed classrooms was 42 students, as indicated in Table 7.9. Urban schools generally had larger classes than those in the rural areas. School B had the largest class size among the four schools, with an average of 47 students per class, above the MOET recommendation of 45 students.

Table 7.9. *The average size in the observed classrooms*

School	School type	Location	Average size
School A	Normal	Urban district	42 students
School B	Selective	Urban district	47 students
School C	Normal	Rural district	37 students
School D	Selective	Rural district	40 students
		Average	**42 students**

A traditional style of classroom arrangement was evident in all of the classrooms, as the diagram in Figure 7.1 shows. This typically consisted of six to eight symmetrical rows of fixed seating, with students facing the teacher at the front of the room. Four to five students sat on each of two benches, making up to ten students in a row. An alternative arrangement had three benches, each with two or three students. A blackboard and/ or a projector screen were placed at the front and a teacher's desk at the front and side of the classroom. This has been the traditional classroom setting in Vietnamese schools and is easy to implement with large classes. This physical arrangement directed focus onto the teacher and minimised student-to-student interaction, thereby supporting a traditional learning environment as part of a teacher-centred pedagogy. Students were located in a defined area, which controlled the interactional flow so that attention was routinely directed to the teacher at the front of the classroom.

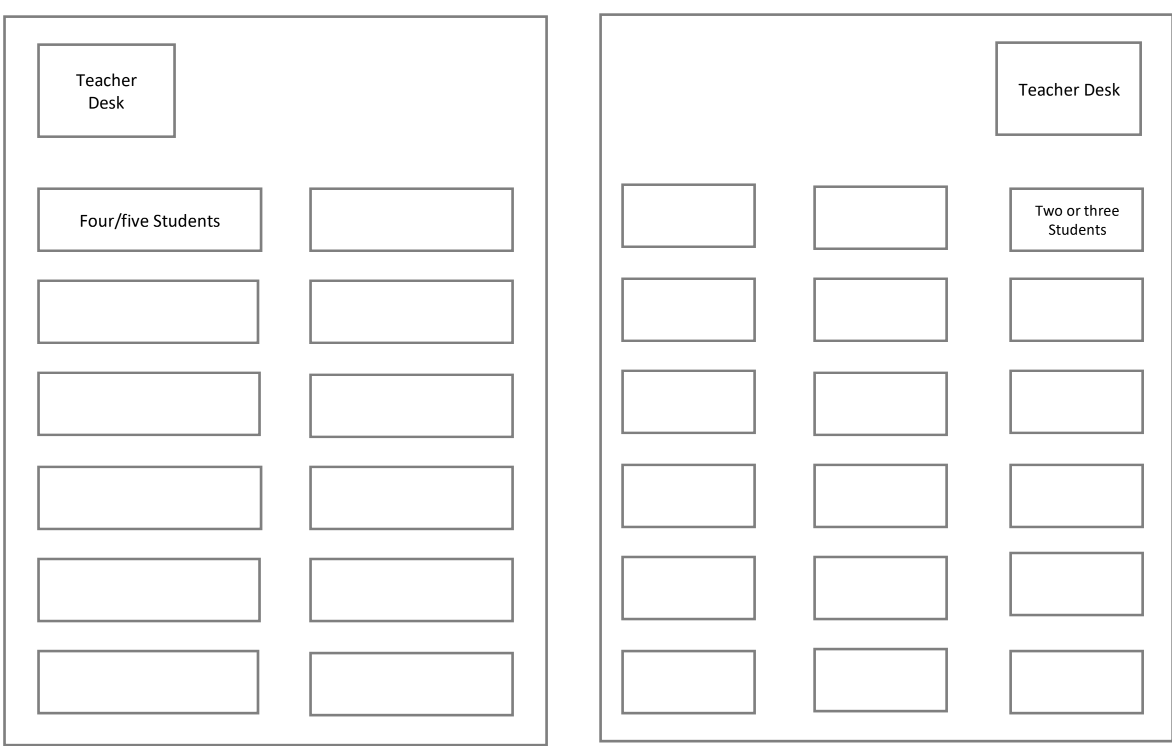


Figure 7.1. *Typical classroom settings*

Immediately, it is evident that this arrangement of classroom seating is not well suited to communicative language teaching. Yet this was the default classroom arrangement accommodating on average 42 students. In reality, these traditional classroom arrangements clearly hamper a pedagogy such as CLT. Large numbers of students seated in rows all oriented to the teacher at the front is a classroom

arrangement that does not encourage communication between and/or amongst students. Such an arrangement was originally established to support the traditional one-way communication with the teacher at the centre of all interactivity.

7.3.2. Pedagogic activities

In applying Martin and Rose's notion of pedagogic register to the analysis of classroom discourse, the focus was on the nature of the classroom teaching and learning activities as the means to consider how these activities provided the students with opportunities to communicate both with the teacher and with each other in the classroom.

7.3.2.1. Language practice types

Table 7.10 summarises the different types of language practice activities conducted in each lesson, based on the categorisation suggested by Richards (2006). A prominent feature across the lessons was the limited opportunity for genuine interaction, evident in the predominance of accuracy-based activities such as drills and controlled mechanical practices.

Table 7.10. *Language practice types*

#	Class type	School type	Mechanical Practice	Meaningful Practice	Communicative Practice	Total
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal urban	5	0	0	**5**
Lesson 2	Selective		3	2	2	**7**
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective urban	3	2	1	**6**
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal rural	0	3	0	**3**
Lesson 5	Selective		1	4	0	**5**
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective rural	1	4	0	**5**
Total			**13**	**15**	**3**	**31**

As evident in Table 7.10, the classes in the Normal schools used the most limited range of language practice types. In Lesson 1, only mechanical exercises involving pronunciation drills and inventories of discrete-point language items were evident. Lesson 4 contained only the meaningful practice type, with three reading comprehension tasks centred on one text. Whilst the students had the opportunity to work with a complete text, these reading activities aimed to develop receptive

skills. There was no post-reading activity to offer students communicative experience basing on the input from the reading. Neither of the Normal classes in the data set engaged with communicative practice activities at all.

Lessons 5 and 6 had similar types and numbers of language practices, including one mechanical and four meaningful language activities. Mechanical practice included a fill-in-blank grammar exercise and a vocabulary exercise in which students were asked to place individual adjectives into appropriate groups. The meaningful practice activities involved text completion, substitution drills and controlled pair-work practice based on a modelled exchange. No examples of communicative practice tasks were found in these lessons.

Lessons 2 and 3 provided a balance of language practice with evidence of all three types of practice, ranging from controlled to less controlled and free practice. Evidence of communicative language practice was found in a language game (a guessing game about appearances and personalities), and in an information-gap task (an interaction about recipes and star signs), both aiming to simulate interaction and information sharing and requiring a high degree of student participation.

The analysis of language practice in the classroom supports the findings in the textbook analysis (presented in Chapter VI Section 6.2.4). The textbook analysis revealed that meaningful language practice took up the largest proportion of space and time in the textbook, and the classroom discourse analysis showed that meaningful language practice was also the most common activity type at the classroom level. However, in terms of communicative language practice, there was a disparity between the textbook and the classroom discourse analysis. Only 10% of the activities analysed in the lessons were communicative, whilst the textbook analysis contained 23% of this type. In fact, communicative practice activities were seen in only two of the six classrooms selected in the study. In other lessons, the teachers and students could not finish all the activities in the textbooks, which resulted in no communicative language practice activity evident in these classrooms.

7.3.2.2. Classroom working arrangements

The language practice activities were organised individually or collaboratively in pairs or groups. Table 7.11 reveals the prominence of individual-based activities as

compared to those requiring collaboration. This finding corresponds strongly with the textbook analysis.

Table 7.11. *Number of individual and collaborative activities*

#	Class type	School type	Individual	Pair work	Group work	Total
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	4	1	0	**5**
Lesson 2	Selective		4	3	0	**7**
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	5	1	0	**6**
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	2	1	0	**3**
Lesson 5	Selective		3	2	0	**5**
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	2	1	2	**5**
			20	**9**	**2**	**31**

Across the six lessons, the amount of individual work was prevalent, accounting for 66% of the classroom arrangements. This is a clear indication that students spent more time working on their own than interacting with their peers in pair or teamwork tasks. For example, in Lesson 3, there were five activities that required students to work individually, whereas there was only one involving collaborative work. Group work was the least common arrangement, with only two group work tasks, or 6% of the total, across the six lessons.

Pair work activities were evident in all of the lessons with three in Lesson 2 and two in Lesson 5. However, a closer examination of these pair work activities revealed that some produced questionable outcomes. The reason for this was attributed to the superficial nature of the tasks, which provided no clear benefit or value in the collaboration. For instance, in Lesson 1, the teacher assigned students to collaborate in pairs and 'discuss' the word to fill in each blank in a mechanical exercise. In reality, there was no benefit in working with a partner to complete this exercise. The outcome was that students worked individually, mostly in silence, with no actual pair work taking place. A similar outcome was seen in Lesson 5 where students chose to work individually to answer reading comprehension questions rather than collaboratively in pairs as required by the teachers. It could not be concluded that pair work or group work activities were more conducive to authentic communication simply because of the way the class was organised.

Another feature of the collaborative tasks was the amount of time devoted to task accomplishment. Many were conducted in a very short time. An example is shown

in Extract 1 from Lesson 3, in which students were asked to share information about how to make an omelette; one minute was allocated to this task. Similarly, the time allowed for a group work activity exemplified in Extract 2 from Lesson 6, was only three minutes.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*And now it's time you share with your friends how you or your mother make the omelette at home. Okay. Right*
T	*So you can share with them about… the first one ingredients what you need and the next one process. And to talk about process you can use the words like…*
	…
T	*Okay,* ***one minute*** *for you to share in pairs* *Work in pairs*

Extract 1. *Lesson 3*

Spr.	*Exchange*
T	*Now I would like you to work in group again … and describe a person in our class … and the other guess…*
T	*Understand?*
SS	*Yes*
T	*Now groups of four again please. You have* ***three minutes***

Extract 2. *Lesson 6*

In summary, the analysis of the pedagogic activities and the classroom arrangements through which they were conducted indicated that there was a preponderance of mechanical language practice, where students worked on their own, and a paucity of communicative activities that stimulated meaningful interaction between and among students. From the analysis of the textbook, it was concluded that MOET adopted a weak version of CLT, which highlighted the need to focus on both form and meaning in the context of classroom teaching and learning. Such pre-communicative activities as grammatical explanations, error correction, drills and other types of controlled practice were seen to have a valid place in the classroom as they offered students necessary prerequisite knowledge about language to facilitate communicative language skills. However, the evidence here indicates that the opportunity for the students to engage in interactional

activities was minimal, evident in the fact that four of the six lessons analysed provided no communicative language practice tasks at all. The obvious conclusion was that the prevalence of accuracy-based activities, coupled with an individual mode of working, encouraged attention to form and accuracy rather than simulating the sharing and negotiation of meaning on a genuinely communicative basis. A closer look at the reality of classroom interactions is now presented with a view to determining if and in what ways the learning activities resulted in communicative language classrooms as intended by the curriculum.

7.3.3. Pedagogic relations

The pedagogic relations aspect of Martin and Rose's classroom register equates with the variable of Tenor in the SFL model, where Tenor comprises the roles and relationships between and amongst the interactants in the specific context of language use. Here the specific context was the classroom, and the focus on pedagogic relations foregrounded the roles adopted by the teachers and by the students in their interactions, as well as the relationships that were enacted between the teachers and their students and also amongst the students. These pedagogic relations were realised within the patterns of classroom exchanges between the teacher and students and in the interactions between students, including how much and in what ways they participated. The focus on classroom interaction also foregrounded the language used in the exchanges, whether Vietnamese or English, and included attention to code-switching, where the language at particular moments changed from Vietnamese to English or vice versa.

7.3.3.1. Patterns of classroom exchanges

The data analysis revealed patterns of interactions in the classrooms consistent with a large number of individual, mechanical language practice activities, as noted above in Section 7.3.2. In some collaborative tasks, 'pseudo-communicative' exchanges among students were evident under the direct control or intervention of the teacher. Extensive use of drills was prominent in all lessons, and genuine communicative interactions were rare.

The most commonly occurring pattern of classroom interaction resembled the traditional pattern of the "initiation – response – feedback" (IRF) structure first reported in mother-tongue classes in the UK in the 1970s (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). This IRF pattern placed the teacher in control of the interaction as it was the

teacher who decided “who should say what and when” (Nunan, 1987, p. 139). The IRF pattern typically began with an initiating teacher request for information (knowledge exchange) or demand for action (action exchange), followed by student response(s) to the question or performance of the demanded action. The exchange finished when the desired answer or action was forthcoming and was acknowledged by the teacher. Exchanges such as the following from Lessons 2 and 3 were typical:

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*And the last one. Happy* *Nguyen Ngoc Anh please?*	Initiation	dK1
S2	*Happy and unhappy*	Response	K2
T	*Unhappy. Okay* *You are very good*	Feedback	K1

Extract 3. *Lesson 2*

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*So now who can come here and write the answers?* *Trang please?*	Initiation	A2
S4	*[goes to the board and writes answers]*	Response	A1
T	*Yeah thank you*	Feedback	A2f

Extract 4. *Lesson 3*

Extract 3 is an instance of a knowledge exchange drawn from a vocabulary-revision exercise, in which the task was to find the antonym of the given adjective. The teacher took on the role of a primary knower (dK1), addressing a question to the whole class whilst already knowing the answer. Student Nguyen Ngoc Anh (S2) raised her hand and the teacher invited her to take on the role of the secondary knower (K2). K2’s answer was correct, and the teacher confirmed the response by repeating it with an affirmation, *‘Okay’.* In this instance, the teacher’s feedback was extended to include a positive Judgement of the student’s capacity, “*You are very good”.* Based on the notation used by Berry (1981) and elaborated by Martin and Rose (2013), this knowledge exchange follows the sequence of dK1 ^ K2 ^ K1, equivalent to Sinclair and Coulthard’s classic three-move IRF sequence. Although the students were able to display knowledge by answering the initiating question, the teacher had the power to allocate turns, to evaluate the response and to close the exchange. Extract 4 exemplifies a typical action exchange with a similar IRF

sequence (A2 ^ A1 ^ A2). It opened with an A2 question from the teacher, asking for a participant, immediately followed by a command to one student to complete the task. The student went to the board and wrote an answer. The exchange ended with a teacher follow-up move "*Yeah, thank you"*. It was noteworthy that this action exchange required no spoken student language for successful completion.

The purpose of this IRF pattern was to seek a specific answer rather than to negotiate meaning via communication and reflected a pedagogic approach in which the function of classroom interactions between the teacher and the students was one in which the teacher checked for information/knowledge acquisition by the students. This traditional strategy typically produced modest language output by the student, regularly one word or short answers. There was no spoken language produced by the student in successfully completing the task in Extract 4, a fact clearly at odds with the interactive, communicative principles of CLT. Another example is described in Extract 5 where the teacher sought answers from her students as part of a discrete-point lexical exercise. The IRF pattern was repeated three times and could have been extended indefinitely depending on the number of questions in the exercise:

Spr.	*Exchanges*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Now number 1*	Initiation	dK1
SS	= *Ceremony*	Response	K2
T	*Ah very good. Ceremony*	Feedback	K1
	…		
T	*Number 3. Gì nhỉ? [What?]*	Initiation	dK1
SS	*Temple*	Response	K2
T	*Ah temple. Cham temple.*	Feedback	K1
T	*Now number 4. Quỳnh?*	Initiation	dK1
S15	*Waterwheel*	Response	K2
T	*Waterwheel*	Feedback	K1

Extract 5. *Lesson 1*

On some occasions, the IRF exchanges consisted of two moves only, in which the teacher closed the exchange after receiving the answer she expected to hear without providing feedback or evaluation and moved to another exchange of a similar pattern. In other cases, the IRF pattern was expanded with follow-up moves, to track meanings made within the preceding move by checking, clarifying, or confirming. These exchanges usually occurred when the teachers wanted to track

a response proposed by a particular student with the whole class (Extract 6), or to ask for the correct answer to be proposed and then affirmed (Extract 7). In these instances, even when the exchanges stretched beyond the three-move IRF sequence, the initiating question constrained the type of information being exchanged, leaving little space for students to develop ideas or engage in extended communication.

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*So… look at these pictures.*	Initiation	A2
T	*Can you guess what food or what dish we are going to (…) today? What dish? Linh Trang?*	Initiation	dK1
S2	*Omelette.*	Response	K2
T	*Omelette? Do you think so?*	Tracking	tr
Ss	*Yes*	Response	rtr
T	*Good job*	Feedback	K1

Extract 6. *Lesson 3*

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Who is he or who is she?* *Lam?*	Initiation	dK1
S15	*Is she Gam?*	Response	K2
T	*Is she Gam? Right or wrong? No.*	Feedback	K1
T	*Quynh Anh?*	Initiation	dK1
S3	*Is she Nhat Anh?*	Response	K2
T	*Yes* *You have done so well*	Feedback	K1

Extract 7. *Lesson 6*

Sometimes, the exchange was stretched out over multiple moves. This typically happened when there were no responses to the teacher questions. The students remained silent, so that the teacher repeated the questions or provided clues, or switched to Vietnamese as a way of clarifying the task. An example is shown in Extract 8 in which the teacher was trying to elicit responses from the students.

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Now in… unit four we learn about the topic our customs and tradition. [Switch to Vietnamese] O bai so 4 chung ta hoc ve cac phong tuc va truyen*	Initiation	K1

	thong. Truoc khi vao phan chung ta tra loi cho co mot so cau hoi nhu sau.		
T	*Now look at the activity 1. Look at pictures and answer my question*	Initiation	A2
T	*How many pictures are there?*	Initiation	dK1
Ss	*[no answer]*		
T	*How many pictures are there?*	Initiation	dK1
Ss	*[no answer]*		
T	*There are…? There are…?*	Initiation	dK1
Ss	*[=] Three*	Response	K2
T	*[=] Three pictures*	Feedback	K1

Extract 8. *Lesson 4*

It is salient that the student body's only contribution to this exchange was to answer "*Three".* The teacher has perhaps predetermined that the question may have been challenging and so switched to Vietnamese for clarity. She went through several initiation moves without any response before offering a sentence beginning which required the single word, '*Three'*, for completion. This was a regular pattern in non-selective classes.

Extract 9 shows a longer exchange in which the teacher provided the answer and closed the exchange because there was no response from the class. Although the exchange stretched over many moves, little information was exchanged. These instances further demonstrated that the purpose of these exchanges was about the learners responding to what the teachers expected, rather than negotiating any information exchange as part of genuine communication.

Spr.	***Exchange***	***Function***	***Role***
T	*Nào, một bạn khác nào. Huyền nàp*	Initiation	A2
S4	*[standing up]*	Response	A1
T	*Answer my question* *Have… Has Duong … Has Duong been well known about … ethnic group? Yes or No?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*Has Duong known about ethnic group?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*Bạn Dương có biết rõ về dân tộc thiểu số này không nhỉ?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*No*	Response	K2
T	*Ah no*	Feedback	K1
	Why? Tại sao bạn biết được điều đó?	Tracking	tr

S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*He hasn't …? known…? about ethnic groups well.* *So? … You, ah he … and Nick… have to…?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*Have to…? Go to...?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*Vietnam Museum of Ethnology.*	Initiation	K1
T	*They want to… know…* *Họ muốn tìm hiểu học tập…* *About…?*	Initiation	dK1
S4	*[no answer]*		
T	*About the culture of … Ethnic groups.*	Initiation	K1
T	*Okay* *Sit down, please*	Feedback Initiation	A2
S4	*[sit down]*	Response	A1

Extract 9. *Lesson 1*

In Extract 9, the teacher took nine turns at talk, mostly inviting and/or challenging one student (S4) to respond. Within the entire exchange, the student stood up and sat down on command, and in-between his/her sole contribution was to offer *No* to a question asked in Vietnamese. The extract also reveals that the teacher herself was an unconfident English user as some of her questions were grammatically incorrect and difficult to understand.

Drills featured prominently in all lessons and was another prevailing pattern in the classroom discourse. Extract 10 exemplifies a repetition drill in which the students repeated the words and phrases in unison. This monotonous chanting of decontextualised lexis was common in all six lessons.

Spr.	***Exchange***	***Function***	***Role***
T	*Now class listen and repeat* *Choir*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[Drill] Choir*	Response	A1
T	*Choir*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[Drill] Choir*	Response	A1
T	*Firework Competition*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[Drill] Firework Competition*	Response	A1
T	*Greyhound racing*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[Drill] Greyhound racing*	Response	A1

Extract 10*. Lesson 2*

Extract 11 displays another repetition drill, this time of the whole sentence in a lesson on comparative sentences. The teacher, having just asked students to compare two musical genres, launched into a repetition drill. The drill was undertaken by the whole class, then individually.

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Now class repeat* *Opera is not as exciting as pop music*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[drill] Opera is not …as exciting … as*	Response	A1
T	*Opera is not as exciting*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[drill] Opera is not as exciting*	Response	A1
T	*As pop music*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[drill] As pop music*	Response	A1
T	*Again. The whole sentence*	Initiation	A2
SS	*[drill] Opera is not as exciting as pop music*	Response	A1
T	*[writes the sentence on the board]*		
T	*Now you again*	Initiation	A2
S12	*Opera is not as exciting as pop music*	Response	A1

Extract 11. *Lesson 5*

Other drill types included substitution drills, as exemplified in the following exchange, Extract 12 from Lesson 5. The teacher, after explaining the structure of the sentence, asked the students to make new sentences by replacing one or more words in the original example. The activity was more meaningful than the previous chanting, although still controlled by the teacher. There was no follow-up practice to offer students additional communicative experience with this grammatical structure.

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Now can you make sentence with this form?* *Can you make sentence with this form?* *Make sentences with 'as adjective as' and 'not as adjective as'* *Ngoc please*	Initiation	dK1
S8	*Cooking is as interesting as singing*	Response	K2
T	*Yes cooking is as interesting as singing*	Feedback	K1
T	*Another answer, Ngoc Anh?*	Initiation	dK1
S17	*Playing football is… as interesting as… playing…*	Response	K2
T	*Playing football is as interesting as playing…?*	Tracking	tr
S17	*Volleyball*	Response	rtr

Extract 12. *Lesson 5*

In a lesson on the topic of star signs, the teacher created a sample exchange by ‘interviewing’ a student, included here as Extract 13 from Lesson 2. At first, the interaction seemed genuine, as the teacher asked for information from the student that she might not have known in advance. This sort of question was different from the ‘display’ questions previously initiated in her dK1 moves.

Spr.	*Exchange*	*Function*	*Role*
T	*Now. Okay. Nguyen stand up*	Initiation	A2
S9	*[standing up]*	Response	A1
T	*When is your birthday?*	Initiation	K1
S9	*My birthday is on 6 December*	Response	K2
T	*Okay. 6 December. What is your star sign?*	Initiation	K1
S9	*My star sign is Sagittarius*	Response	K2
T	*What does your star sign tell about your personality?*	Initiation	K1
S9	*[reads from the textbook] My personality is independent, freedom loving*	Response	K2
T	*I am….?*	Initiation	K1
S9	*[reads from the textbook] Independent, freedom loving and confident*	Response	K2
T	*Now do you agree?*	Tracking	tr
S9	*Yes, I do*	Response	rtr
T	*Is Binh Nguyen independent, freedom loving and confident? The whole class?*	Tracking	tr
SS	*Yes*	Response	rtr

Extract 13. *Lesson 2*

The information about the student’s birthday was new and unpredictable, but the remainder of the text was provided in the textbook where the student ‘read’ the answer rather than providing genuinely new information. As such it was not genuine communication, rather a pseudo-communicative exchange.

7.3.3.2. The role of teachers and students

From all of the classroom exchanges cited it was clear that the lessons were teacher-driven and teacher-centred. Table 7.12 reveals that every one of the exchanges across the six lessons was initiated by the teacher. There was neither spontaneous talk on the part of the students nor student-generated topic nomination. There were no exchanges in which the students disagreed with the teacher, or demanded information, or asked for further clarification, or challenged

the teacher – in fact, there was no genuine negotiation of meaning, which is at the heart of CLT and the rationale for its choice as the pedagogic approach to achieve the national goal. There was no indication that lessons such as these, which were typical in the data set, would or could provide a pathway to communicative competence. The evidence suggested that all the lessons were teacher dominated and controlled, and reflected the role of the teacher at the centre of the classroom discourse.

Table 7.12. *Exchange initiations*

#	*Class type*	*School type*	*Teacher-Initiated Exchanges*	*Student-Initiated Exchanges*
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	77	0
Lesson 2	Selective		83	0
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	84	0
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	71	0
Lesson 5	Selective		90	0
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	80	0

This dominance of the teacher was also reflected in the overall amount of time the teacher and the students spoke, as shown in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13. *Classroom talk (measured by % of the number of words spoken by teachers and students)*

#	*Class type*	*School type*	*Teacher talk*	*Student talk*
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	89%	11%
Lesson 2	Selective		67%	33%
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	89%	11%
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	95%	5%
Lesson 5	Selective		86%	14%
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	85%	15%

In Normal classes, the percentage of teacher talk was timed to be 89% in Lesson 1 and 95% in Lesson 4. This overwhelming amount of teacher talking time operated at the expense of student talk, calculated at 11% in Lesson 1 and only 5% in Lesson 4. Students in Selective classes spoke a little more than their peers in Normal classes. In Lesson 2, student talk was measured at 33%, still only equating to half of the teacher talk time at 67%. The overwhelming amount of teacher talk pointed to the traditional role of the teacher as a transmitter of information and knowledge,

rather than a facilitator who encouraged and supported student interactivity and communication.

The roles of the teacher and the learners and their relationships were clearly evident in the type of classroom interaction which, as discussed in Chapter IV Section 4.4.3.2, was a focus for Bernstein (1990). He distinguished between instructional discourse which related to interactions about subject content, and regulative discourse, which was more about the organisation or management of students so that the instructional discourse could proceed in an appropriate way. The regulative discourse was concerned with what he called the 'moral regulation' of the students, their behaviour and their disposition to learning.

The findings from the classrooms in the study point to an overwhelming amount of instructional discourse, with regulative discourse evident in only two of the six lessons. Table 7.14 below provides a summary of the instructional and regulative exchanges in each lesson. Instructional exchanges dominated and indicated that the teacher and students understood and accepted their primary roles in the classroom. The focus was on content knowledge, and the teacher had little need for regulative discourse to manage the class or to maintain their focus on the content at hand. The teacher and all of the students worked within a focus on instructional discourse.

***Table 7.14**. Instructional and Regulative Exchanges*

#	*Class type*	*School type*	*Instructional Exchanges*	*Regulative Exchanges*	*Total*
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	71	6	77
Lesson 2	Selective		83	0	83
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	84	0	84
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	61	10	71
Lesson 5	Selective		90	0	90
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	80	0	80

As Table 7.14 shows, regulative exchanges were only found in Normal classes, with 6 and 10 exchanges in Lesson 1 and 4, respectively. This is a distinguishing feature between Normal and Selective classes where the classroom exchanges in Lessons 2, 3, 5 and 6 were entirely instructional.

The regulative exchanges in Lessons 1 and 4 were principally aimed at directing acceptably ‘good’ manners among the students, tied to the teacher expectation that students should present no overt misbehaviour or lack of involvement. Extract 14 offers an example:

Spr.	*Exchange*
T	*Now are you ready?*
Ss	*Yes*
T	*Yes*
T	*Now we are going to continue unit four*
T	*[shout] KEEP SILENT!*
Ss	*[silent]*

Extract 14. *Lesson 4*

In this exchange, the teacher exercised her authority by commanding the students to stop talking. The classroom immediately quietened. As the lesson unfolded, more regulative exchanges were found where the teacher’s negative evaluation of class behaviour was the basis of the punishment. As in Extract 15, the teacher addressed a student who seemed to be sleeping during the lesson.

Spr.	*Exchange*
T	*Thế bạn Thắng làm đến câu nào rồi ấy nhỉ?* *[How many questions have Thang finished?]*
S	*[No answer]*
T	*Thế mà cô giáo làm cho mà vẫn gục mặt xuống là thế nào?* *[So why are you lying down on the desk?]*

Extract 15. *Lesson 4*

Extract 16 from Lesson 4 presents a long regulative exchange in which the teacher was displeased with a student who had not participated in the lesson. The teacher warned him about imposing a suspension from school if he persisted in this behaviour. At the end of the exchange, the teacher was frustrated when the student addressed her without an appropriate vocative, which was highly unusual and considered to be disrespectful in Vietnamese culture. The exchange was mainly in the mother tongue.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*Bạn nam nào? Lấy ví dụ với indoor activity* *[You please. Take an example about types of indoor activity]*
S	*[no answer]*
T	*Đấy có hôm nào cô đặt câu hỏi mà bạn ấy trả lời được đâu. Mà bạn ấy chẳng bao giờ chú ý. Mà bạn ấy còn ngồi nói chuyện nữa. Mà bạn ấy đã được nghỉ ngơi mấy ngày rồi. Hôm nay là ngày đầu tiên bạn ấy quay lại trường đúng không nhỉ? Sau mấy ngày nhỉ?* *[There is no time that you can answer my question. You never pay attention. And talk during the lesson as well. You have been 'rested' (suspended) several days from school already. Is it the first day you come back to school? How many days have you been suspended?]*
SS	*Hai* *[Two]*
T	*Ah two days at home* *(Turn to the class) Thế chúng ta có được vinh dự ở nhà như bạn ấy không?* *[Do you have that honour to stay at home like that?]*
SS	*No*
T	*Thế mà bây giờ bạn ấy chưa có sự chuyển biến gì cả. Bạn ấy vẫn ngồi nói chuyện nữa. Hay là bạn ấy vẫn muốn ở nhà nghỉ ngơi an dưỡng thêm một tuần nữa. Thế Nam có muốn như thế không hả Nam?* *[Even so you show no progress. You still talk in class. Or do you want to stay at home for several more days? Nam do you want so?]*
S	*Không* *[No]*
T	*Ai không hả Nam?* *[Who has just said 'no', Nam?]*
S	*Không* *[No]*
T	*Ai không?* *[Who?]*
S	*Em không* *[Me]*
T	*Em trả lời với ai vậy? hả? Em trả lời với ai? Em trả lời với bạn em hay là với cô? Em trả lời như thế à? Lát nữa ra chơi cô sẽ gọi lại cho mẹ em nhé.* *[You answered with no addressing vocative. Who do you talk to? Do you answer your friend or me? I will talk to your mother]*

Extract 16. *Lesson 4*

It is interesting that the exchange was conducted entirely in Vietnamese. It is probable that the first language was chosen when regulative discourse involving a negative evaluation was made by the teacher, especially a negative Judgement

about behaviour. It is important to note that in the few examples of regulative discourse, student participation was minimal. This could be interpreted as a universal phenomenon in which the exchange was dominated by the powerful participant, the teacher, while the less powerful participant, the student, listened or perhaps did not listen but remained silent. In some contexts, it may be that the student would challenge the authority of the teacher. It is possible that the teacher interpreted the lack of vocative in his response as a challenge to her in the context of a student to teacher interaction. The cultural norm would be for the student to address the teacher using the appropriate vocative to indicate the given relationship between student and teacher. To show deviance from the culturally accepted behaviour was noted by the teacher and she publicly rebuked the student.

All of the exchanges presented here reveal a clear demonstration of teacher authority in regulating unwanted classroom behaviour. In all cases, the students complied with the teachers' directions, and no challenging behaviour was evident. However, silence and tension were apparent in some instances, creating a classroom atmosphere where students appeared to be tentative about speaking publicly. In some, the students participated with a single word response. Linguistically, it is obvious that the exchange is counterproductive to a communicative classroom. The conclusion drawn from these exchanges was that there were set ways in which the teachers and students interacted and all of the participants understood and accepted these ways of interaction. The fact that one student did not use the appropriate vocative to indicate deference to the teacher and that the student was negatively judged by the teacher was highly unusual. The classroom discourse unfolded in prescribed ways with teachers and students taking up roles and relationships which enabled teaching and learning to take place along clearly defined lines.

The predominance of the IRF exchange pattern and teacher-initiated exchanges, along with absolute teacher authority and the overwhelming dominance of teacher talking time provided clear evidence of the high power distance – the asymmetric power relationships between teachers and students in the classrooms. The teachers occupied a position of power, the traditional teacher and student roles still prevailed, with the teacher as the dominant participant in classroom discourse and the students as respondents and receivers of knowledge which was transmitted mainly via an IRF pattern.

7.3.3.3. Classroom participation

The analysis of classroom participation identified students who were actively engaged in classroom interactions and offered insight into levels of inclusion and exclusion in the discourse. Student engagement within the learning environment also revealed their relationship with the content or topic being studied.

Table 7.15 shows the rate of participation across the six lessons, determined by the number of students who participated in classroom exchanges in relation to the total number of students in the class. This revealed quite different levels of engagement across the lessons, particularly between Selective and Normal classes.

Table 7.15. *Classroom participation, measured by the number of students participating in classroom exchanges*

#	*Class type*	*School type*	*No. of student participants*	*Class size*	*% of participation*
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	21	40	**53%**
Lesson 2	Selective		27	48	**56%**
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	28	47	**60%**
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	8	37	**22%**
Lesson 5	Selective		32	36	**89%**
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	20	40	**50%**

A higher level of participation was evident in the Selective classes (Lessons 2, 3, 5 and 6). Lesson 5 had the highest degree of student inclusion in classroom interaction, with 89% of the students engaged in classroom exchanges. Lesson 4 had the lowest level of involvement, with only 8 in a total of 37 students or 22% engaged in classroom exchanges. These two classes present a stark difference in how the students engaged and were engaged in classroom discourse. The non-participating students were not heard in the classroom. They did not volunteer to answer questions, nor asked for help nor spoke up in small-group activities. The stark reality was that they did not use spoken English at all in their English language classes.

Extract 17 from Lesson 1 exemplifies a low level of engagement. There were no responses to the teacher's question, with the result that the teacher targeted one particular student:

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*Look at the picture* *Which ethnic group is it?*
SS	*[no response]*
T	*Which ethnic group is it?*
SS	*[no response]*
T	*Look at the picture. You please?*
S1	*It's Thai.*
T	*Ah it's Thai.* *How many kinds of Thai? Do you know?*
SS	*[no response]*
T	*Where do they live? You, please?*
S2	*[…]*
T	*So many groups. They live in many provinces. Okay.* *There are three kinds of Thai people. Can you name?*
SS	*[no response]*
T	*Do you know? Chung ta biet la co may kieu nguoi Thai nhi? [How many types of Thai people?]*
SS	*[no response]*
T	*You don't know?*
	…

Extract 17. *Lesson 1*

The aim of increasing participation is not to have every student participate in the same way or at the same rate. Rather, it is to create an environment in which all students have the opportunity to interact and communicate, and in which the class explores issues and ideas from a variety of viewpoints. The premise is that participation in English in an English language lesson is essential for spoken English language development. The data analysis revealed that some students consistently responded to questions and participated more than others. Those were typically successful students. The teachers tried to engage less verbal students in conversations by targeting them to speak. However, in the context of large class sizes, it was not possible that all students could receive individual attention. This resulted in minimal individual follow-up or support, especially for average and below-average achieving students who were typically reluctant participants in the classroom interactions.

7.3.3.4. Student-to-student interactions

Classroom participation was also a factor in collaborative activities such as pair work and group work, as indicated by student interactions with each other. Interactions in English between and among students in pair and/or group work were minimal. The students routinely completed tasks in silence, and without monitoring, they switched to their mother tongue. Instead of talking to each other, some wrote in their notebooks, so they could 'read' their notes if addressed by the teacher. Large class sizes made it challenging to ensure students actually participated in the target language instead of having personal 'off task' mother-tongue conversations.

Insufficient class time devoted to collaborative student tasks was seen as a powerful constraint, as for example when students were asked to work in pairs and talk about a recipe for one minute (Lesson 3), or in groups for a guessing game for three minutes (Lesson 6). This resulted in limited language production by the students, both in length and complexity. Most of the students were unable to independently produce language after a few minutes work on a collaborative activity. Extract 18 from Lesson 2 exemplifies a pair performance in which the students 'read' the dialogue, rather than engaging in the prescribed conversation.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*I want two of you Ngan and Khanh. Stand up* *Now the class, listen to them*
S3 S19	*[standing up]*
T	*Hoi di nao* *[let's ask]*
S3	*What is Adia birthday?*
T	*When is Adia birthday?*
S19	*[read the textbook] It is on 15 May.*
T	*It's on 15 May. Okay* *Now?*
S3	*What is her star sign?*
S19	*It is Taurus*
T	*Okay. Now? Gi nhi?* *What does her star sign tell about her personality?* *Louder*
S19	*[read from textbook] patient reliable hard-working*
T	*Okay. Sit down*

Extract 18. Lesson 2

The pseudo-communicative nature of the exchange was evident. Both Students, S3 and S19, with textbooks in their hands, 'read' the script, instead of producing more natural responses. The students were not ready to independently participate in an interaction without relying on the textbook and the teacher intervention to keep the conversation going. In effect, in this dialogue, the teacher had six turns while the two students had five turns in total.

Another pair work performance is presented in Extract 19 from Lesson 2 in which S25 and S26 were asked to talk about their own star signs based on a modelled example. It was a communicative practice activity as previously unknown information would be exchanged. The teacher was no longer the only primary knower (K1) as Student S26 would provide new information about him/herself.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*Now I want another pair* *Okay Phuong Mai and Nguyen Hung* *Stand up*
S25 S26	*[standing up, each holding a textbook]*
S25	*When is your birthday?*
S26	*It is on 30 November*
S25	*[Reading from textbook] What is your star sign?*
S26	*[Reading from textbook] My star sign is [inaudible]*
S25	*[Reading from textbook] What does your star sign tell about your personality?*
S26	*I am friendly and independent*
S25	*[Reading from textbook] Do you agree with this des…*
T	*Description*
S25	*Description*
S26	*Yes, I do*
T	*Okay*

Extract 19. Lesson 2

The exchange was also teacher-led, initiated by a command to the two students to create a conversation. Although less teacher intervention was evident in the exchange, the conversation was constrained by the modelled example and the students 'reading' the questions and answers to the questions. Whilst the interaction appeared to be authentic, it was actually more akin to a contextualised drill than a free communicative dialogue as specified within the textbook.

The longest, and perhaps most successful language production was recorded in Lesson 3, presented as Extract 20, when a student made a presentation about how to make an omelette. Although the student still needed some help from the teacher, he spoke without relying on the textbook. It is noted that this was the only instance in which a student used language independently.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*Okay, one person only*
T	*Who can? Tuan Kiet? Can you? Be quick please*
S22	*[come to the board]*
T	*Now big clap, the whole class*
SS	*[clapping]*
S22	*Hello every one. Today I'm going to talk about…*
T	*Louder*
S22	*I'm going to talk about … how to make.. omelette… the ingredients are… eggs sauce and oil. First you will beat the egg (…) in a pan… after that you …*
T	*Put some sauce*
S22	*Put some sauce and finally you serve with some vegetables*
T	*Okay, thank you*
SS	*[clapping]*

Extract 20. *Lesson 3*

The common feature of all the exchanges was that they were neither spontaneous nor voluntary. They were typically teacher-led interactions rather than authentic exchanges where students negotiated meanings with the teacher or with each other. The students were asked to perform a conversation or speak about a given topic, which was always followed by a teacher's A2 command. The teacher played the role of controller whose interventions were evident when the students did 'talk'. Although a few instances of independent language production were observed, it was clear that these students were amongst the high achievers in a class, raising the concern that the interactions were dominated by the high achieving students.

7.3.3.5. The use of Vietnamese

Switching to Vietnamese as the mother tongue was evident in all lessons, but its use varied significantly as evident in Table 7.16.

Table 7.16. *The use of English and Vietnamese*

#	*Class type*	*School type*	The use of English	The use of Vietnamese
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	42%	58%
Lesson 2	Selective		80%	20%
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	90%	10%
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	64%	36%
Lesson 5	Selective		86%	14%
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	95%	5%

The use of English was most evident in the two Selective schools, and then in the Selective classes in the Normal schools where it was clearly used more than Vietnamese. Lessons 3 and 6 were conducted almost entirely in English with only a small amount of Vietnamese use, accounting for 10% and 5% respectively. In contrast, the mixed ability class in the Normal school witnessed more use of Vietnamese than English.

The use of mother tongue fulfilled a number of purposes. Besides intervening at signs of misbehaviour or lack of involvement as part of regulative discourse, a common purpose for code-switching was to present the Vietnamese equivalent of a vocabulary item. In doing so, the teacher felt she was supporting student learning by providing additional help. Extract 21 from Lesson 2 shows an exchange in which the teacher tracked the Vietnamese meaning of two new lexical items.

Spr.	*Exchange*
T	*Come on* *How about this picture? What is it?*
Ss	*Temple*
T	*What does temple mean?*
Ss	***Đền [temple]***
T	***Đền [temple]*** *Good*
T	*And this one?*
Ss	*Volunteer*
T	*Okay, volunteer*

	What does that mean?
Ss	***Tình nguyện viên [volunteer]***
T	***Hoac la lam tinh nguyen**. [or a volunteer]* *Okay*

Extract 21. *Lesson 2*

Other functions of switching to the mother tongue were to check student understanding, to clarify instructions, or to summarise what was taught. In Extract 22 from Lesson 4 below, the teacher was revising the use of the present continuous tense. When there was no response to her initial question, she switched to Vietnamese to clarify her question, making it less challenging for the students. Switching to the mother tongue can be seen as a strategy to help students understand the question, save time and keep the lesson going. This kind of scaffolding was commonly provided when the students struggled to complete a task.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*So tell me when do we use present continuous?*
Ss	*[no answer]*
T	*When do we use present continuous?* *Khi nào chúng ta sử dụng thì này nhỉ? Cho hành động ra làm sao?*
Ss	*[=] đang xảy ra*
T	*[=] đang xảy ra ở hiện tại* *Yes*
T	*For… actions… actions đang xảy ra ở hiện tại. In this dialogue we have another use for the action in the …future but that…. is our plan …er plan in the future…. In the future.*

Extract 22. *Lesson 4*

In Normal classes, the teachers regularly translated into Vietnamese after speaking in English, assuming that the students would understand better if she provided the Vietnamese translation as in Extract 23 from Lesson 1. In some cases, the teacher asked the students to translate the task requirement into Vietnamese.

Spr.	***Exchange***
T	*After reading you have to answer this question. Sau khi đọc chúng ta sẽ …trả lời câu này. Nhưng trước khi đọc cô muốn các em đoán trước*
T	*Now who can guess… her writing about her family or her society?* *Now guess… Chúng ta có thể đoán nào*

	She… is writing about her…?
Ss	*[=] family*
T	*Family yes. About her family*
T	*And after… reading you can check. Sau khi đọc chúng ta sẽ đoán nhé*

Extract 23. *Lesson 1*

It was very common for the students to use Vietnamese to address the teacher. Traditionally, as noted earlier, Vietnamese students are expected to address their teachers in a particular way and do not speak without using the appropriate vocative, such as "*Em thua co*" (Miss) to begin. To address the teacher otherwise would be considered rude and disrespectful as was noted in Extract 16 above. Whilst it is more flexible in English language classrooms compared to other classrooms, out of habit Vietnamese vocatives were still used to respond to the teacher. This was evident in many exchanges, as exemplified in Extract 24 from Lesson 3.

Spr.	*Exchange*
T	*Now, number 1. Number 1* *Phuong?*
S	***Em thua co*** *number 1 match with [read from the textbook] "Offering coupons for free chicken noodle soup for the poor in Hanoi*
T	*Now sit down* *The last, ban Thuy?*
S	***Em thua co*** *la number 5 match with d*
T	*Okay sit down*

Extract 24. *Lesson 3*

The analyses of pedagogic relations in these typical English language lessons provided clear insights into the ways in which the new curriculum was enacted at the classroom level. The foregrounding of how the teaching and learning took place within the lessons pointed to the roles and relationships expected and adopted by the teachers and the students. In this way, these analyses offered a view of the pedagogy enacted in the classrooms. Essentially, the ways in which the teachers and students interacted in the classroom were totally at odds with and removed from the principles of CLT prescribed in the documents of intention. This important matter is addressed in more detail in the following chapter.

7.3.4. Pedagogic modalities

Pedagogic modalities encompass all of the resources which used to enable pedagogic activities and support pedagogic relations in the classroom. In terms of register, the pedagogic modalities refer to the variable of Mode or the channel of communication. Traditionally, Mode in SFL simply differentiated between spoken and written language. However, with rapid advances in technology in the 20th century continuing into the millennium, several new semiotic modes of communication have been developed, collectively labelled social media. Moreover, there has been a marked increase in the importance of visual resources in meaning-making and SFL analysts have applied SFL principles to the analysis and interpretation of visual images, particularly their place and function in educational contexts. English language educators have been quick to draw on the support that visuals can provide for meaning making in the classroom. Accordingly, the analysis of the *Tieng Anh* textbook series targeted the use of image as a pedagogic modalityfor analysis within the study.

7.3.4.1. The use of the textbook

The analysis of classroom discourse revealed that all of the lessons were textbook-based, making the textbook the prime source of knowledge and the centre of the teaching and learning. Commands such as "*Open your books*", or "*Look at page X*", were evident in all lessons as the means whereby the teachers drew student attention to the textbook. The analysis also showed that only one of the six lessons covered all of the content available in the textbook. Table 7.17 presents a summary of how much textbook content was covered in each lesson.

Table 7.17. *Textbook coverage*

#	***Class type***	***School type***	**Textbook activities**	**Activities undertaken**	**% Coverage**
Lesson 1	Normal	Normal, urban	6	3.5	58%
Lesson 2	Selective		4	4	100%
Lesson 3	Selective	Selective, urban	5	4	80%
Lesson 4	Normal	Normal, rural	6	3	50%
Lesson 5	Selective		6	3	50%
Lesson 6	Selective	Selective, rural	6	4	67%

There was a notable variation in textbook coverage across the lessons, ranging from 50% to 100%. These numbers indicate that the textbook provided more input than the instruction time allowed for those activities to be undertaken. This is in line with teachers' comments about the heavy workload, evident in comments that they had to 'race' to cover the allocated content in the textbook, or could not spend a sufficient amount of time on communicative activities, supported by the analysis of pedagogic activities. This was an important issue for the teachers because they believed they needed to cover all of the content in the textbook as part of their unwritten contract. For them, classroom teaching and learning revolved around the use of a textbook, and it was beholden of the teachers to engage with all of the content in the book. To not be able to do so was a matter of concern and distress, and was one criterion for evaluation as a teacher.

Adapting the textbook was rare and was evident only in Lesson 2 and Lesson 3, both Selective classes. The teacher in Lesson 2 began the lesson with a short warm-up game which she had created. In Lesson 3, the teacher skipped a mechanical activity in the textbook to save time for a pair work activity that she designed, although the time devoted to this activity was brief. No textbook adaptation was found in other lessons. The teachers stuck strictly to the activities as laid out in the textbook until the bell rang for the end of the lesson.

7.3.4.2. The use of different semiotic modes

In all of the lessons, the teachers incorporated visual materials into their teaching. As the textbook was the prime source of input, these visuals were largely sourced from the textbook. Images were commonly used to complement vocabulary building activities, whereby pictures were used to support the teaching of new vocabulary. Extract 25 from Lesson 2 presents an exchange in which the teacher drew the students' attention to a picture of star signs in the textbook.

Spk	***Exchange***
T	*Okay. Let's come to the next part.*
T	*What can you see in the picture?* *What can you see?* *Now. What can you see?*
SS	*Star sign*
T	*Yeah star sign*
T	*Do you know star signs?*

SS	*Yes*
T	*What does it mean in Vietnamese?*
SS	*Cung hoang dao*
T	*Okay*

Extract 25. *Lesson 2*

In this example, the teacher used a visual and also the mother tongue to make the meaning clear. The use of images in the textbooks was discussed earlier in Chapter VI Section 6.2.7. As noted in that discussion, the textbook contained functional visuals which were essentially used as part of the learning tasks, and others which the teachers did not use because there was no complementarity between the verbal language and the visual image. Figures 7.2 and 7.3 show examples of textbook images which were not utilised by the teachers.

2 **Read Mi's presentation on customs and traditions. Is she writing about her family or her society?**

In my opinion, customs and traditions are very important. Like other families, we have our own customs and traditions.

A Firstly, there's a tradition in our family of having lunch together on the second day of Tet. Everyone has to be there before 11 a.m. We have followed this tradition for three generations.

B Secondly, we have the custom of spending Sunday together. We usually go to the cinema or go for a picnic. We don't have to do it, but it makes us closer as a family.

C Thirdly, we celebrate our grandparents' wedding anniversary on the first Sunday of October because they don't remember the exact date. The custom is that we have to cook a new dish each year. Last year, my mum cooked lasagne, an Italian dish. This year, we prepared five-coloured sticky rice served with grilled chicken.

We all enjoy these customs and traditions because they provide our family with a sense of belonging.

44 Unit 4/ Our Customs and Traditions

Figure 7.2. *A reading text, Lesson 4*

1 **Put *as*, or *from* in the gaps.**

1. The music festival this year is as good ______ it was last year.
2. The concert will be broadcast 'live': that means it comes on TV at the same time ______ it is performed.
3. This camera is not as expensive ______ I thought at first.
4. Your taste in art is quite different ______ mine.
5. Some people say that *Spider-Man 2* is as boring ______ *Spider-Man 1*.
6. My mother is always as busy ______ a bee.

41 Unit 4/Music and Arts

Figure 7.3. *A grammar exercise, Lesson 5*

The images in Figure 7.2 minimally engaged the viewer due to their lack of prominence in terms of size and were not referred to by the teacher. The image in Figure 7.3, despite its prominence, was not used because it was only relevant to one question and did not serve any function in the grammatical exercise.

Computers and PowerPoint slides were used to facilitate classroom teaching and learning but were only found in the urban schools. The classrooms in the two city

schools were equipped with a desktop, a projector and a pull-down screen, or with interactive whiteboards. In the two rural schools, classrooms were poorly equipped with no computers nor electronic devices. Even in School D, a Selective school in a rural area, the only electronic device available for the teachers to use was a portable disc player. Financial constraints made the textbooks the only resource for learning and teaching English in these schools. The schools in the urban area were generally better equipped than those in the rural area, reflecting the financial gap between urban and rural areas. Although one stated mission of Project 2025 was to have classrooms adequately equipped to facilitate the use of ICTs in teaching and learning, this was not evident in all the schools and classes in this study. Accordingly, some of the classrooms relied entirely on the visual images in the textbook and, as discussed, some of these seemed to be included for decoration purposes only.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter presented the realities of the curriculum reform as implemented in the classroom. Although the vast majority of teachers in the study indicated their support for curriculum change, they also expressed doubts and negative attitudes towards the feasibility of the curriculum goals. In the main, their concerns were related to the unrealistic achievement standards and also the various localised challenges hindering curriculum implementation. The school principals shared a similar view about the feasibility of the new curriculum for the majority of students.

The findings revealed a limited understanding amongst teachers about the core principles of CLT, perhaps as a result of the insufficient professional training they were offered. Insufficient professional training resulted in a feeling of isolation among many of the teachers, evident in ongoing pedagogical confusion and even frustration with the process of implementing the new curriculum. They were presented with curriculum content and a prescribed pedagogy to enhance communication, but had not been engaged in the professional development which was crucial to its successful implementation.

The inevitable outcome was made clear in the classroom discourse analysis. The teachers strove to cover the curriculum content presented in the textbooks, but showed little knowledge of or feeling for the communicative pedagogy as intended. The clear pattern of classroom discourse showed a predominance of mechanical

practice and individual work by the students, as opposed to the communicative and interpersonal language practice that would provide the opportunity for communicative experiences in the target language. The prevalence of the traditional IRF classroom exchange structure did not align at all with the communicative-based classroom as intended and planned; this was particularly evident in non-Selective classes. A preponderance of teacher talk, along with the number of teacher-initiated exchanges revealed an asymmetric power relationship between the teachers and students, clearly indicating features of a traditional, teacher-centred classroom. Little evidence of a learner-centred classroom was found, since the students invariably adopted the role of passive respondents. There were no instances of exchanges where students requested information, asked for clarification, or disagreed with the teachers. Minimal use of pair and group work also suggested a lack of genuine interaction between and among the students. A gap in performance between Selective and non-Selective classes was also evident. In Selective classes, a greater rate of engagement and student talk in performance-based tasks appeared to align more easily with communicative principles. However, even in these classes, the interactions among students were pseudo-communicative, involving the teacher's direct intervention, and making the interactions little more than contextualised drills.

All lessons were textbook-based with very few departures from the prescribed activities. The textbook included far more content than the lessons could cover, with the outcome that most of the lessons remained unfinished. This concerned the teachers because one of their prime goals was to cover all of the content in the textbook.The limited function of many of the visual images was evident as they were not utilised for classroom teaching and learning.

In blunt terms, the findings point very clearly to a pedagogic chasm between the intentions and the realities of Project 2025 in these English language classrooms. The lessons analysed were not communicative by any definition; they were largely traditional in the ways in which they unfolded. To return to comments made at the beginning of Chapter 1, it would seem that little has changed within English language classrooms apart from the new textbooks provided as part of Project 2025. The roles of teachers and students were traditional with clear and accepted asymmetric relationships in terms of status and power, in terms of who spoke and at what point in time. In Chapter I it was proposed that there was little difference

between the intention of the English language curriculum and the reality within the classrooms of twenty years ago. Then intention was to prepare for the high stakes written examination at the culmination of schooling, and the reality of the classroom matched the intention. This is not the case now. Project 2025 has made explicit the communicative intentions for Vietnamese citizens in coming years. Chapter VIII offers a discussion of those intentions and the finding of unchanged realities evident in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION

The discussion is centred on the significance and relevance of the findings in relation to the research questions posed at the outset and the salient literature which pertains to the study. The realities of the Project 2025 reform are set alongside its intentions, and are considered with a view to informing the research questions.

As stated at the end of Chapter VII, the findings pointed very clearly to differences between the intentions and the realities of Project 2025 in the English language classrooms which participated in the study, at the time when the data was collected. The evaluation presented within the study revealed a pattern of a clear difference between what was intended in the policy and what was evident in classrooms. To the time of writing the study in 2019 and 2020, the goal of a particular level of English language proficiency to be achieved via a curriculum and pedagogy underpinned by CLT had not been met. Furthermore, CLT was not evident in teaching and learning processes and practices in any of the classrooms participating in the study.

The extension to the date for successful implementation from 2020 to 2025 is an indication that the policy has not yet achieved its targets. However, it is important to acknowledge what has been achieved at this point in time and the positive contributions of this national initiative to English education in Vietnam. These include the introduction of new communicative curricula and local textbook series at three levels of schooling, along with the establishment of an English language proficiency framework, new testing formats and national approaches dedicated to teacher in-service training. The interpretation of this five year extension is that the Vietnamese Government remains committed to the intended goals within the reform. The Project has not been abandoned, rather the timeline has been pushed back to 2025. The discussion in this chapter is conducted with the new timeframe in mind. If MOET had made a decision to abandon the reform because the outcomes were not promising and would not be delivered by the original date set, then the discussion here would have followed a different trajectory. The study would have provided a negative evaluation of the project and discussed all of the reasons why the reform was doomed to fail. However, a more positive and constructive process is to examine the gaps between the intentions and the reality and to consider changes which might be initiated to enable the goals of Project 2025 to be achieved.

8.1. The intentions of the curriculum reform

As participation in the globalised world occurs increasingly in and through English, it is hard to deny the economics of English language proficiency. As part of this global commodification of English, non-English-speaking countries have associated English proficiency with individual and national development, and have embarked on national planning dedicated to expanding and improving English instruction in schooling systems (Kam, 2002; A. Kirkpatrick, 2010; Moodie & Nam, 2016; Nunan, 2003; Spolsky & Sung, 2015). As a developing country in Kachru's (1992) global framework, positioned as part of the Expanding Circle, Vietnam has followed this trend. Vietnam sees the potential to develop as a nation and to improve the standard of living and the life chances of its citizens through increased participation in the globalised world. In recent decades, it has emerged from political and social upheaval and isolation to take its place amongst those considered to be successful nations. The Government has adopted the position that improving proficiency in the English language for its people can hasten and support that success.

Project 2025 in Vietnam became the response of the Government to the pressing economic needs for English language proficiency in the national schooling system, coupled with the perceived poor quality of English language teaching and learning in schools over the years. The intention was made clear with the specification of Proficiency Level A2 as the attainment objective for lower-secondary education. To achieve this goal, the political decision was made to write a new communicative curriculum and to adopt CLT as the designated pedagogy to implement the curriculum. Whilst the content of the curriculum remained relatively stable, the adoption of CLT as the prescribed pedagogy aimed to bring about a radical change in the teaching and learning practices and processes at the classroom level. The intention was to transform the traditional, grammar-based, teacher-centred classroom into an interactive, communicative and learner-centred space. This, in time, would create a citizenry equipped to talk with, to engage with and to negotiate with international speakers in English to achieve successful commercial transactions. The uptake of CLT in Vietnamese schools was also closely aligned with similar global and regional trends in moving towards a CLT-based classroom where the overarching aim was to foster authentic, meaningful communication in the target language (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007, 2014).

To realise these intentions, MOET initiated, planned and implemented the curriculum reform via a top-down approach. As discussed in Chapter III Section 3.4.3, this top-down model to reform aimed to change educational practices, processes and outcomes through the imposition of state-driven policies using power-coercive strategies (Cummings et al., 2005; Miller, 1995). Given the socio-political context within Vietnam, such an approach was inevitable.

8.1.1. The top-down model of reform

This top-down curriculum reform had a number of advantages and potential for making change. Its strengths were in line with Fullan's (2007) remark on the central role of Government in realising educational reform:

> If we are to achieve large-scale reform, governments are essential. They have the potential to be a major force for transformation (p. 236)

The Project 2025 initiative began with a mandate for unified change, hierarchically from MOET at the bureaucratic hub, then down through DOETs at the regional level, into schools with the support of school principals as Government officers, and finally to classrooms throughout the country. The expectation of the Vietnamese Government was for a wholesale, directed, purposive and systematic change in English education at the national level. The financial investment in the Project enabled the development of the curriculum, textbooks, facilities and teacher training, all of which were understood as important for the success of the reform. The unified curriculum package, including the new textbook series and assessments developed and provided by MOET, aimed to eliminate any confusion or burden in selecting instructional materials on the part of the teacher. The package ensured uniformity in scoping what students across the country should know or be able to do in order to achieve the expected proficiency level.

However, MOET's top-down reform, although having potential benefits as noted above, came at a cost. The well-researched issues with top-down approaches were manifest wherein stakeholders at one level planned and developed the curriculum reform for those at another level to implement. This led to the classic dilemma within top-down reform, the misalignment between policy intention and policy enactment. Figure 8.1 shows the power lines and relationships of change agents in a hierarchy-based model (Berlach, 2010):

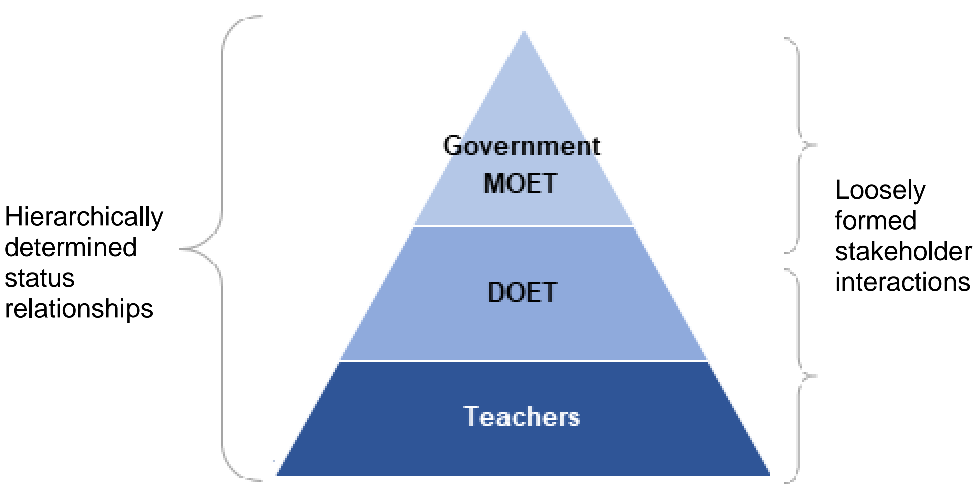


Figure 8.1. *Change agent relationships: top-down model*

The research findings revealed three major issues with the top-down model of reform in Project 2025, which were not well addressed and did little to resolve the questionable aspects of this approach to curriculum change.

8.1.1.1. Collaboration among stakeholders

A major problem within the 2025 curriculum reform in Vietnam was the lack of collaboration amongst the various stakeholders in the process of planning, shaping and implementing the reform. This was in line with Fullan's (2007) observation of the two 'divergent worlds' involved in the complex process of curriculum change:

> We have a classic case of two entirely different worlds: the policymakers on the one side, and the local practitioner on the other. To the extent that each side is ignorant of the subjective world of the other, reform will fail - and the extent is great (p. 99)

Fink (2003) shared a similar view that when each of these 'divergent worlds' was not able to listen to or understand the realities of the other to build "better bridges of understanding", misalignment and loss of coherence between the policy and practice were likely to happen (p. 105). This was true in the case of Vietnam. Essentially, there was an absence of teacher voice in relation to the reform package, importantly in setting the proficiency goal and the time frame for its achievement, in the pedagogy to be used and in the type and extent of professional development which was required for the English teachers. This lack of collaboration resulted in a loss of shared understanding between policymakers and policy implementers in

relation to the why, what and how of change. At the macro level, policymakers and politicians have often been decried for their "desperate craving for a magical solution" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 1996, p. 294), resulting in ambitious overarching goals and high accountability standards. In the curriculum reform in Vietnam, this 'magical solution' was the ambitious proficiency target which was judged by teachers to be impossible to achieve in mainstream classrooms. The 'magical solution' was to produce communicatively competent English language speakers via the designated adoption of CLT, a wholesale Western-imported pedagogy with principles alien to many Vietnamese teachers, and radically different from the traditional views of teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context. The lack of interaction and collaboration amongst the various stakeholders in the hierarchical system resulted in an obvious mismatch between policy intent and enactment in the implementation.

8.1.1.2. Power relationships in curriculum policy and implementation

The top-down model operated with differences in power accorded to participating groups. However, the power of different stakeholders in the reform process was not merely in a linear relationship. Although the Government at the top of the hierarchy had the power to impose change, this did not mean that the teachers at the ground level of the system were powerless. Whilst teachers did not have the power to plan, to shape or to regulate the curriculum reform at the level of policymaking, they held power in the classrooms where the changes were to take place. According to Hall and Simeral (2008), being "the field agents of educational change", it is teachers who determine student wins and losses, who establish the expectations within classrooms and year levels, and ultimately who influence the success of the reform. The findings from the study indicate that the teachers were entrenched in their existing ways of practice, with little understanding of the principles and premises of CLT, and were uncomfortable in its implementation. The inevitable outcome was that the reform could only operate at a 'surface' level – the intended communicative, student-centred lessons imagined at the macro level were not evident at the classroom level. The disadvantages of the top-down model in which one group was responsible for the policy development and another was charged with its implementation were obvious in Project 2025.

8.1.1.3. Preparation for the communicative curriculum

MOET's intention of transforming traditional classroom practices into communicative practices have not been realised to date due, in part, to the lack of professional development made available to teachers in preparation for the required changes. Nothing has changed in regards to large class sizes and the ongoing washback effect of high-stakes written examinations, both of which are counter-productive to the intended communicative curriculum. Furthermore, a gap in assessment policies further highlights the lack of strategic planning for the curriculum to be successfully enacted. As the findings reveal, guidance regarding communicative testing was only made available four years after the curriculum was piloted (MOET, 2016). This indicates a policy gap, resulting in a lack of consensus across schools and leaving teachers unsure about how to measure student achievement. During this period, students graduated from lower secondary school not knowing if they had achieved the proficiency level to be ready for the upper-secondary English program aiming towards the Level B1.

The lack of coherence and alignment between the intentions of the reform and the realities in the local context as revealed in the study is not surprising. The top-down model within education has been discussed at length in the literature with regards to its reputation for mismatches between the intentions and the enactment of reform (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Morgan, 1992; Waring, 2017). Top-down reforms, as Waring (2017) remarked, have been appraised as "both outmoded and ill-suited" to the challenges of contemporary educational change and have fallen out of favour in many Western contexts (p. 540). It may be asked why MOET adopted this model to reform despite its "long history of failure" (Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015, p. 43). However, it is argued here that the socio-political and socio-cultural contexts of Vietnam ensures that centralised reform is natural and completely normalised. The reality is that in Vietnam, the adoption of a top-down approach was inevitable.

8.1.2. The socio-political context of reform

As noted in Chapter II Section 2.1.3, Communist Party dominance and socialist principles, including "democratic centralism" (*dan chu tap trung*) and "collective leadership and responsibility" (*lanh dao tap the*), channelled through a controlled, centralised management system, influence all sectors of Vietnamese society (Q. Truong, 2013). The concentration of political and positional authority reflects the

broad orientation of public administration and decision making (London, 2011; D. T. Truong, 2013). Combined with the high power distance and collectivist characteristics of the Vietnamese culture in which there is a strong need to avoid conflict, voices of dissent or challenge are often silent in decision-making processes. This blend of a centralised political system coupled with cultural disposition greatly influences the governance and operation of education in Vietnam. From the earliest period in Vietnam's history to the present, the governance of education, as noted in Chapter 2, has been "profoundly political" (London, 2010, p. 377). Educational policies in Vietnam, therefore, have been historically normalised in a top-down manner.

Whilst such top-down planning is no longer popular or acceptable in the processes and practices of Western education, it has remained standard practice and is culturally prevalent in Vietnam. It is not a matter of choice, but is simply 'how we do things' – absolutely natural as a way of operating, of 'doing' education. This explains why a top-down approach was adopted and naturally accepted for the shaping, writing and implementation of the Project 2025 reform. This also explains the fact that the teachers in the study expressed their support for the reform even though it came from 'above' and did not involve them in the process of shaping the curriculum they were expected to enact. It is also noteworthy that in a centralised system such as Vietnam, educational change may not be possible without a top-down push. This is not only because a bottom-up approach to education reform is culturally unknown, but also because Vietnamese teachers, who work with constraints of information, time and support, may well be unable to initiate and engage in bottom-up reform. Grass-roots change is simply not part of the mindset of teachers.

8.2 The realities of the curriculum reform

The realities of the new curriculum implementation were reflected in the negative attitude of the teachers towards the feasibility of the achievement target and their fragmented understanding of CLT principles and premises. In combination with insufficient teacher in-service training and support, these led to an overarching sense of confusion amongst the teachers about how to create a communicative language classroom. Unsurprisingly, the analysis of pedagogic discourse provided clear evidence that the classroom remained largely teacher-dominated, was textbook-based and had minimal student-to-student interactions. In their confusion about the requirements of CLT, the teachers continued to teach as they had

traditionally, with the outcomes as they were traditionally; communicatively incompetent students.

8.2.1. *Teacher attitude towards the curriculum reform*

> Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that (Fullan, 2007, p. 129)

Significant emphasis appeared to be placed on product development (i.e. the curriculum content and textbooks), on the legislation and on other formally expressed changes (i.e. the decisions and guidelines), in a way that seemed to minimise the variable ways that the teachers at the local level would respond to the task of enacting the change. This neglect is understandable to some extent, as noted by Fullan (2007), because people are usually "much more unpredictable and difficult to deal with" (p. 85). Dealing with the human aspect of enforced change was always likely to prove challenging, and the changes enshrined in Project 2025 were no different. The human variable was the teacher, the decisive agent in the success of the change, who would ultimately transform, or not, the intentions of the curriculum reform into reality within each and every Vietnamese classroom.

Whilst the teachers accepted the need for curriculum renewal, they voiced negative attitudes and concerns about the feasibility of the goals, which they considered to be overly ambitious. As noted, one teacher in a rural school estimated that only 20% of her students could reach the required level after the four years of the new curriculum. The common view was that the desired Proficiency Level A2 was achievable by high-performing students, but was too challenging for those in the mid-range and below, that is for the majority of students. Whilst this teacher was at the lower end of estimating overall outcomes, the general sense was that the achievement standard was generally neither feasible nor realistic for the great majority of mainstream students. This view was corroborated by research at the upper secondary level, where Le (2015) described the overall goal of the reform as "ambitious and unrealistic" (p. 196).

This raises the issue of equity in the curriculum policy. Although MOET's curriculum proficiency goal was seen as a concerted push for higher proficiency standards, it failed to take into consideration the particularities of students from different backgrounds and to differentiate among different cohorts of learners. The establishment of a rigid 'one-size-fits-all' proficiency goal failed to consider the

influences, the social determinants that students brought to school – their socio-economic backgrounds, their ethnicity, their motivations for schooling, and their different interests and capabilities. In reality, it seemed to be targeted at the highest band of achievement. The data from the interviews reinforced the fact that Vietnamese students have diverse needs for learning English, at odds with a one-size-fits-all goal. The need for English competence was more relevant to high-performing and urban students and in schools where there was an awareness of the importance and utility of English. Disadvantaged and/or low achieving students did not have the same needs because differences in economic development within rural areas limited the demand and motivation for English competency among these students. On this basis, H. Nguyen et al. (2018) described Project 2025 as "a biased access policy" (p. 224), and concluded that the reform would only result in increasing the gap between individuals, communities and regions, as well as among high and low performing schools and students.

The Appraisal analysis revealed that the curriculum was not the only target of evaluation. Negative appraisals were evident in the teachers' comments about a number of issues, including class size, classroom facilities, the students, their parents and the teachers themselves. This highlights the fact that there were many inter-related factors actively involved, which combined to hinder the implementation. Again, a lack of consultation with the classroom teachers and related stakeholders was reported to be the primary cause of the problem. It is a contemporary Western industrialised understanding that curriculum creation is a collective and on-going process in which the opinions and objectives of teachers, administrators, academics, parents as well as business, industry and community groups are sought, with improvements and amendments made as part of the process of reform (Ditchburn, 2012; D. Macdonald, 2003). This is the model held up in Western democracies as potentially having the best chance of success. However, as noted earlier, the way MOET shaped the reform, although sponsored by the best intentions of the educational authorities, failed to accommodate the voice of the teachers – the ultimate end-users of the curriculum. This culminated in the negative attitude shown by the teachers about the curriculum reform. The mismatch was most stark between what MOET believed as the achievable goals and what the teachers perceived as practical and feasible for the students in their local contexts, and equally clearly between the prescribed pedagogic approach and what the teachers were able and prepared for in this regard.

8.2.2. Teacher understanding of CLT

The gap between the intention and reality of the reform was very clearly reflected in teacher understandings of CLT as the pedagogy to deliver the new curriculum. The findings indicated that the teachers had only a fragmented knowledge of the principles and processes of CLT, leading to confusion about how to establish a classroom in which communicative teaching and communicative learning were the norm. The data analysis also revealed that the teachers generally lacked knowledge of theories about language, about language teaching or about language learning, all of which limited them in employing strategies that worked in their particular classroom context.

A lack of clarity about CLT was not specific to this study. The literature abounds with studies that found teachers to be confused about CLT. These include studies conducted in Libya (Orafi & Borg, 2009), in Japan (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008;), in China (Fang & Garland, 2014), in South Korea (Lee, 2014), Turkey (Kirkgoz, 2008), in Thailand (Segovia & Hardison, 2009), and in Malaysia (Hardman, J., & A-Rahman, 2014). Rahman (2015) in an attempt to explore teacher understanding of CLT in Bangladesh found that English teachers who claimed to be practising CLT in their classrooms did not have a clear idea of what it entailed. In Hong Kong and China, Chan (2014) and Zheng and Borg (2014) found discrepancies between teacher understanding of Tasked-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), a ‘spin-off’ of CLT, and its principles as stated in curriculum documents. From these studies, and from the data in this study limited teacher understanding of what exactly constitutes CLT was a common issue.

One explanation for the clouded understanding about CLT is that at the level of theory, CLT has had a problem of identity (Littlewood, 2014; Spada, 2007). As noted in Chapter III Section 3.6.6, there are a dearth of texts with definitive statements about CLT or with any single model of CLT that is universally accepted as authoritative. CLT is not a neatly packaged ‘method’, but a ‘framework’ approach comprising a fluid and dynamic set of ideas and principles about language teaching and learning. This has created multiple opportunities for interpretations and has also resulted in misconceptions because of this openness (Mitchell, 1987; Richards & Renandya, 2002). One common misconception, one also reported by teachers in this study, is that CLT only focuses on speaking. This finding is in line with Lee (2014) and Zheng and Borg (2014), who reported that teacher perceptions about

the approach were that it involved communicative work with a predominant focus on speaking. The reason for this may be rooted in the concept of 'communication' since many teachers equate this term with 'speaking' (Spada, 2007; Thompson, 1996). However, CLT has never been exclusively concerned with face-to-face oral communication. Its principles extend equally to reading and writing activities that engage students in the interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 2002, 2005).

The teachers in the study were clear about the need to teach grammar as a prerequisite for communication to take place. This attention to form is well-supported in the literature where advocates such as McDonough and Shaw (2012), Richards (2006) and Savignon (2005) all comment that communication cannot take place in the absence of structure. Participation in communicative events, while central to language development, also requires some focus on form. However, this point of view differs from a more general perception of some teachers that CLT did not include the teaching of grammar teaching, as reported for example by Li (1998), Savignon (2005), Spada (2007) and Thompson (1996).

The most common understanding of CLT amongst teachers in this and earlier studies, e.g. Ahmad and Rao (2013), de Segovia and Hardison (2009) and H. Wang (2008), is that CLT involves a learner-centred approach. However, the analysis of classroom discourse in the study suggests that the teachers, although claiming for learner-centred classrooms, did not enact them in practice. One explanation is that the teachers generally had an incomplete understanding of what a learner-centred classroom involved. A learner-centred classroom manifests co-operative and active learning, in which students solve problems, discuss, explain, debate or brainstorm their ideas individually, in pairs or teams, and learn from and with each other (Schweisfurth, 2011, 2015). Learner-centredness also promotes the joint construction of classroom discourse and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning (Nunan, 1988a; Tudor, 1993). It requires a change in the teacher's role from provider of information to a facilitator of student learning (Sikoyo, 2010). None of these criteria for a learner-centred classroom was evident in the classroom analyses in the study. In fact, the less informed the teachers were about the principles underpinning a learner-centred philosophy and the less comfortable they were in engaging their students in these ways of learning, the more they were entrenched in traditional teacher-centred ways of working.

It is important to emphasise the deep-seated barriers to a shift away from the traditional teacher-centred pedagogy evident in this study. Such a shift would require a questioning and re-evaluation of ingrained beliefs and understandings about what it is to be a teacher in Vietnamese culture. The power differential, deeply tied to the traditional Confucian ideology of teaching and learning, determines the role of the teacher as the embodiment of knowledge and morality, while the complementing role of students is to obey their teachers and to work hard. Students are not expected to interrupt, to question, to disagree, to challenge, to suggest alternatives or to argue with their teachers (Bock, 2000; Le, 1999, 2007; T. H. Nguyen, 2002). These culturally embedded values relating to the roles of teachers and students do not resonate with a learner-centred pedagogy and a CLT-based curriculum premised on constructivist and individualist philosophies inherited from Western educational and cultural values. It was, therefore, more easily said than done to plan for a shift from a teacher-dominated to a student-centred classroom in the Vietnamese context. The most significant challenge and most difficult to achieve would be the change in these deep-seated beliefs and values, which are the core of the identity of teachers in Vietnam. Attempts to change the existing classroom pedagogy, therefore, need to take into account these cultural values. As argued by Elmore (2004) and Hu (2002, 2004), culture cannot simply be changed by top-down mandates. Rather, it would require extensive and targeted professional development, neither of which were in evidence in the study.

8.2.3. Professional development and support for teachers

Insufficient teacher professional training appeared to be a significant reason behind the lack of knowledge of CLT principles and the capacity to enact these principles successfully. The findings indicate that teacher in-service training, the only source of knowledge about CLT to which the participating teachers were exposed, was limited and insufficient both in terms of quantity and quality. Professional development opportunities which lacked practical applications and were limited, were the prevalent themes reported by the teachers. This lack of professional training resulted in a feeling of isolation among many teachers in the study, expressed in ongoing pedagogic confusion and even frustration with the process of implementing the innovation. “Too tired” and “no one out there to ask”, as one senior teacher put it, probably best describes the lack of professional support and the feeling of isolation amongst the teachers.

There was no doubt that the curriculum reform created increased emotional and professional pressure for the teachers. Within a rapid timeframe, they were expected to renovate their pedagogy, especially the long-held cultural perceptions of their role, to shift from a transmitter of knowledge to a multi-role language educator. They were challenged to develop new skills for teaching English communicatively, to change how to assess students, to improve their capacity to adapt the content in the textbooks and to apply modern technologies in their teaching. None of these were taught to them as learners, as teachers in training or as any planned part of in-service training. Within the same timeframe, these non-native English speakers were also expected to improve their own language proficiency to be able to model and teach communicatively in the target language. Given the paucity of adequate professional support and training, it was neither possible nor realistic to expect these changes to be made. Insufficient professional training and support clearly contributed to the gap between the intentions and realities of the reform and needs to be addressed in a planned and rigorous manner if there is to be a successful alignment.

The teachers experienced the additional issue of increased workload. The findings clearly indicate that the teachers experienced work overload. Teaching hours increased as part of the reform, and these came with the standard duties for teachers such as ensuring exam pass rates, continuing their involvement in extra-curricular events, meeting with parents, and dealing with the demands of their principals and central office officials. As the demographics highlight, the vast majority of the teachers were female, at approximately 93% in this study, who were also obliged to undertake domestic work alongside their school duties. Although the curriculum reform, to some extent, provided opportunities for teachers to come into contact with new ideas for their professional development, it also put a great deal of pressure on these women who were expected to wear “too many different hats” at home and at work (Le, 2016, p. 186). Cultural norms require the involvement of Vietnamese women in organising and managing the family household, including the care of children and elders on both sides of the family. The teachers consistently reported a critical shortage of time, which also restricted their potential to develop professionally. They also commented on the lack of professional rewards for teachers, including payment for the additional work. While a professionally rewarding workplace could attract and retain the best personnel, what has happened in the roll-out of the reform to date may have had the opposite effect.

To exacerbate an already stressful situation, low salaries have forced many Vietnamese teachers to tutor extra classes to support their families. This has caused them to forego opportunities to develop themselves professionally. The expansion of the private tutoring industry, the so-called 'shadow education', has created an adverse impact on the reform efforts. Moreover, many teachers were under fixed-term contracts unable to gain a permanent contract due to a government scheme to cut permanent positions in the public sector. Contract teachers suffered the disadvantage of receiving lower income benefits than their permanent colleagues with the same workload, as well as a lack of job security. It is unsurprising that few teachers encountering these conditions had the self-motivation to engage in and sustain effective curriculum reform.

The realities for English language teachers in contemporary Vietnam, who live with critical shortages of information, of time, of energy, and of support, are that such conditions impact on their motivation to initiate and enact change. Even teachers who were enthusiastic about the reform had become disillusioned and "reverted to the security of their previous teaching methods" (Carless, 1998, p. 355) rather than "grow[ing] out of the conventional type of teaching" (Hamano, 2008, p. 397). The inevitable outcome when the intended world met the real world was that a communicative pedagogy was not in evidence at the classroom level.

8.2.4. The realities of the English language classroom

Given the clearly insufficient professional development included as part of the reform roll-out, it is not surprising that the analysis of classroom pedagogic register revealed that the intended shift from traditional teacher-fronted processes to interactive, learner-centred classrooms had not translated into reality.

The analysis of pedagogic register, based on the work of Martin and Rose in their registerial account of pedagogy, provided evidence about the prominent features of the classroom discourse, including the configuration of pedagogic activities, pedagogic relations and pedagogic modalities. The analysis of pedagogic activities highlighted a predominance of mechanical practice where students worked independently on drills or discrete point exercises. Communicative language practice activities were rare, which is at odds with the CLT classroom. The classrooms continued to be teacher-centred, where the teachers maintained their roles as the controllers and transmitters of knowledge, a starkly different role to that

of the facilitator of student learning championed within and necessary for successful CLT. The analysis of pedagogic relations revealed a predominance of teacher talk, in combination with the complete dominance of teacher-initiated exchanges, clear indicators of traditional teacher-centred classrooms. Classroom interaction was mostly pseudo-communicative rather than genuine interaction in the target language between teachers and students, and for that matter, between students and students. Students were unable to create independent language without a heavy reliance on teacher input or the textbook. These practices were clearly not aligned with a communicative language classroom. There were no obvious changes in the classroom tenor, particularly in the patterns of classroom exchanges, or any perceptible shift in the roles of teachers and students, in the amount of teacher and student talk or in classroom participation. Whilst some of the teachers claimed that they were implementing the new curriculum using CLT, there was no evidence to support such claims. That some of the teachers believed that they were creating CLT based classrooms, is more an indication of their lack of understanding of CLT than of anything else.

These findings are consistent with several other research studies of Vietnamese classrooms, for example Le (2019), Le and Barnard (2009) and H. Nguyen et al. (2018). Similar findings were reported in other contexts, for example in Japan (Nishino, 2011; Thompson & Yanagita, 2015), in South Korea (Jihyeon, 2009; Moodie & Nam, 2016), in China (W. Wang, 2014; Zhang & Liu, 2014), in Turkey (Coskun, 2011; Kırkgöz, 2008), and in Malaysia (Hanewald, 2016; Pandian, 2002). Other systematic reviews from a range of countries in the Asia Pacific and East Asia regions (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007, 2014; Nunan, 2003; Spolsky & Sung, 2015) have reported similar findings – that proposed and planned communicative curriculum reforms have not succeeded as planned. Karavas-Doukas (1996) concluded that the communicative approach had “brought innovation more on the level of theory than on the level of teachers’ actual classroom practices” (p. 351). Ten years later, Kumaravadivelu (2006a, p. 62) reflected that communicative classrooms “were anything but communicative” (p. 62). And approximately a decade later again Humphries and Burns (2015, p. 239) commented “in reality it’s almost impossible”, when reporting on an unsuccessful attempt to introduce curriculum innovation into the school context in Japan. The findings generated from the current study confirm the evidence from all of these other studies: there exists a substantial gap between the intended communicative curriculum and actual classroom practice.

The differences between intentions and realities were more pronounced in Normal classes. Here, the discourse analysis revealed a large amount of teacher talk, for example at. 95% in Lesson 4, and a low class participation rate, for example at 22% in Lesson 4. In Selective classes, there was a higher participation rate, at 89% in Lesson 5, and a greater use of English, at 86% in Lesson 5, compared to that of Vietnamese. There were some glimpses of CLT in Selective classrooms, but nothing of CLT principles or processes in Normal classes. The question arises whether CLT is more suitable for the highest achieving and motivated students in Selective classes. CLT may not only be challenging for teachers but also challenging for the students. They are required to draw on their repertoires of language knowledge, and if they feel they do not have these resources, they are likely to remain quiet or retreat into silence. One pedagogic strategy would be to scaffold (Vygotsky, 1978) – to challenge students at a point just beyond their current capacity – whereby the challenges are small and manageable. It does not appear as if the teachers in this study were aware of scaffolding strategies beyond code switching into Vietnamese which they regularly turned to faced with student lack of understanding in English. In fact, the teachers were largely driven by the need to complete all of the textbook tasks rather than by the needs of the students.

A consistent finding was the prevalence of the IRF classroom exchange structure (Lemke, 1990; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) which is entirely aligned with a traditional teacher-centred classroom. Whilst these teacher-led patterns of interaction had the advantage for the teacher of maintaining control, they came at a cost, especially in communicative language classrooms, as Van Lier (1996) commented:

> … this efficiency comes at the cost of reduced student participation, less expressive language use, a loss of contingency, and severe limitations on the students' employment of initiative and self-determination (p. 184-185).

In the study, this pattern of interaction limited the opportunities for the students to extend and/or elaborate on their utterances, a fundamental requirement for a communication-based curriculum. Kasper (2001) criticised the IRF pattern as "an unproductive interactional format" for the lack of opportunities afforded for "developing the complex interactional, linguistic and cognitive knowledge required in ordinary conversation" (p. 518). The IRF sequence placed the teacher at the centre of the classroom and maximised teacher talk and minimised student talk, and was entirely counter-productive to the communicative language classroom (Thoms,

2012). The teachers had complete control of the classroom interaction as they determined who participated, and when and how much interaction took place (Garton, 2012; J. K. Hall & Walsh, 2002; Thoms, 2012). The research data from six classrooms produced no instances of exchanges where students requested information, asked for clarification, or disagreed with the teacher. All exchanges were initiated by the teachers and revealed a traditional, asymmetric power relationship between teachers and their students, at odds with the communicative language classroom.

The extensive use of the IRF pattern amongst the teachers suggested that the teachers were primarily concerned with covering the 'what' of the curriculum – the content as mapped in the textbooks. Le and Barnard (2009) produced similar findings, reinforcing the fact that this is a normative practice in Vietnamese classrooms, where teachers emphasise the reproduction of information rather than opportunities for students to use the language for the expression, negotiation and joint construction of meanings. The findings indicated that there was little orientation to the 'how', that is to pedagogic techniques aligned with CLT principles. This was evident in the questioning strategies most commonly used by the teachers. They used 'display' questions to which they already knew the answer, and closed questions with preferred responses which had the effect of ending the exchange. Revisiting Extract 13, "*Now do you agree?*" and "*Is Binh Nguyen independent, freedom loving and confident?*" were both closed questions with a preferred answer of "yes", which constraind the range of potential responses and closed the exchange.

Spr.	***Exchange***	***Function***	***Role***
	…		
T	*What does your star sign tell about your personality?*	*Initiation*	*K1*
S9	*[read from the textbook] My personality is independent freedom loving*	*Response*	*K2*
T	*I am….?*	*Initiation*	*K1*
S9	*[re-read from the textbook] Independent freedom loving and confident*	*Response*	*K2*
T	***Now do you agree?***	*Tracking*	*tr*
S9	*Yes I do*	*Response*	*rtr*
T	***Is Binh Nguyen independent freedom loving and confident? The whole class?***	*Tracking*	*tr*
SS	*Yes*	*Response*	*rtr*

Extract 13. *Lesson 2*

In a communicative language classroom, the aim is for a range of responses in which students use their linguistic repertoires to express and to negotiate meanings which to extend and enhance communication. To change the typical IRF exchange and promote more authentic language use, different negotiation patterns involving clarification, disagreement or those which trigger different perspectives help to expand the exchange offering students the opportunity to use their linguistic repertoires. Instead of the closed question *“Now do you agree?”* the teacher might ask an open question, or a ‘referential’ question the answer to which she did not know. This type of question is more aligned with features of real-life conversations, likely to stimulate greater student engagement and authentic interaction, such as *“What would you say about Binh Nguyen?”* or *“How would you describe him/her?”,* or *“In what ways do you think Binh Nguyen is independent (or freedom loving or confident?)”.* The teacher could then engage in more meaningful interaction and the students are challenged to offer responses to support their appraisal of Binh Nguyen, that he/she was or was not independent or confident. In such an example, the students would not take on the role of a secondary knower (K2); rather they would be the primary knower (K1) contributing new information, insights and perspectives. The aim would be to increase their confidence and competence to initiate an exchange by adopting the K1 role. At that point, the intended communicative, learner-centred classroom would be possible, in which the classroom exchange becomes more authentic and meaningful.

8.2.5. The textbook in action

As described, Martin and Rose’s work provides detail about the SFL Register variables of Field, Tenor and Mode as they are applied to the context of classroom discourse in the form of pedagogic activities, pedagogic relations and pedagogic modalities and then realised in different choices from a range of sub-systems of language. The variable of Mode is understood as the channel of communication, that is the way or ways in which the Field and the Tenor operate within a context. In terms of how the context is then evident within language, the variable of Mode is manifest through textual meanings. Essentially, these textual meanings enable the experiential and interpersonal meanings to be made appropriately within the specific context. Experiential meanings are the linguistic realisation of Field and interpersonal meanings the linguistic realisation of Tenor. The same model is applied when the notion of Register is applied to specific contexts, as for example,

in considering classroom discourse. The function of pedagogic modalities are to enable the operation of the pedagogic activities within the pedagogic relations inherent in the classroom. The question for the study was to consider the pedagogic modalities used in the classrooms and how successful they were. The principal pedagogic modality was the textbook, and the interest was in considering its contribution to teaching and learning. All of the lessons in the data set were strictly textbook-based, indicating its place of importance. Combined with insights from the textbook analysis in Chapter VII, the analysis of pedagogic modalities in the classroom discourse further revealed how the textbook was put into action. In combination, these two analyses offered a holistic understanding of the textbook series as the manifestation of the curriculum.

8.2.5.1. Classroom use of the textbook

The textbook series was designed to develop communicative competence via a sequence of activities that moved back and forth between accuracy and fluency. Students were initially provided with the opportunities to practise the language input in controlled activities, then in less controlled and independent practice. This pattern was described by Breen and Candlin (1987) as ‘process competence’, referring to the capacity to draw on different realms of linguistic knowledge and to practise these in the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, as the classroom discourse analysis highlighted, most of the lessons remained incomplete because the textbook required more than the allocated 45 minutes’ lesson time. The shift from controlled, form-based activities to more independent practice did not occur. For example, in Lessons 1, 4 and 5, approximately 50% of the textbook content was covered. This was consistent with information from the teacher interviews in which they commented on workload, whereby they had to ‘race’ to cover the textbook content. The consequence was that teachers did not have enough time for time-intensive communicative activities, resulting in diminished language output in both spoken and written form. This also explains why communicative language practice activities and students’ language production were scarce. In reality, the students needed more time and practice in order to internalise the forms learnt from the modelled examples as a precursor to independently producing language. The heavy workload curtailed the opportunities for students to be able to translate linguistic knowledge into communicative skills.

The amount of individual language practice evident in the textbook analysis was at 79%, and was greater than that of collaborative work, for example discussions, problem-solving, role plays at 21%. The clear indication was that the students had fewer opportunities to interact with each other by dint of working through the textbook. The classroom discourse analysis revealed a similar finding where individual work was prevalent, and the students spent more time working on their own than in interacting with their peers in the target language. There is a view that pair and group work are not considered essential features of a CLT classroom since they may be inappropriate in some contexts (Savignon, 2005; Spada, 2007; Thompson, 1996). However, although individual work is easier to manage in large classrooms, pair and group work have been widely accepted as the optimal arrangements for promoting student interactions (Philp, Walter, & Basturkmen, 2010; Storch, 2001). A study by Long and Porter (1985) offered evidence that students produced a much greater variety of speech functions in collaborative work, which was seen as a marker of language development. The prevalence of individual working arrangements supported traditional ways of teaching and learning, counter to the interactive principles of CLT, and consequently did not foster English language use as intended.

It is important to note that the textbooks were designed for adaptation by teachers in local contexts where particular circumstances would shape the choices of tasks and activities. The mission was to make the textbook as much of a resource as possible with its specific use to be decided by the teacher. Teachers had the choice to adapt an individual activity to pair work or group work, or to skip an activity to save time for another that they found more useful and suitable to their particular classroom. However, all of the evidence from the classrooms was that textbook adaptation was minimal. The teachers subscribed to the tradition of attempting to cover each and every activity in the textbook. This finding is in line with Le (2015) who reflected that the classroom style of the teacher was “to finish the textbook within the time limit” (p. 185). The teachers’ rationale appeared to be based on fear of reprisal by colleagues for doing less than others, or missing activities which might later be used in tests or examinations. Textbook adaptation is traditionally an uncommon teaching process in Vietnam where the teachers have been accustomed to following and teaching what is prescribed in the curriculum. There has been no system of rewards or incentives for adaptation or creativity.

8.2.5.2. World Englishes

Standard British English is the variety of the English language used in the textbook series. This is also the variety used in the *Tieng Anh* texts at the primary school level as reported by Dang and Seals (2018). The use of Standard British English, as argued by Kuo (2006, p. 213), serves as "a convenient starting point" for policymaking. However, it is not well aligned with the concept of intercultural communication and the global co-existence of many different English language varieties.

Given the growing number of non-native speakers of English and the related increase in different 'Englishes', one obvious requirement for English language curricula in a global world is to pay more attention to the instrumental function of English as the language for international communication. Accordingly, students need to be aware of and prepared for intercultural communication with speakers of varieties of English, with different accents, and different lexical and grammatical features. A case has been made that English language education should no longer prepare learners for intelligibility amongst native speakers in one small part of Kachru's Inner-Circle (A. Kirkpatrick, 2010; Marlina & Giri, 2014; Sharifian, 2013). Instead, what English language students need in the contemporary world is the ability to achieve and sustain mutual comprehension in different global contexts with a view of English as entirely and fundamentally a means of communication. A similar point was made in Japanese research where Abe (2013) highlighted the need to introduce a World Englishes point of view in ELT in Japan, and that students should be exposed to accents and variations of different 'Englishes' rather than a segment of Inner-Circle English only.

Although this was a relevant issue for Vietnam in developing attainable goals for the language curriculum, MOET did not address the need for intelligibility of different Englishes and intercultural understanding in cross-cultural communication. Neither the curriculum nor the textbooks deal with the need for international communication.

8.2.5.3. The textbook visuals

The inclusion of a large number of visual images was a feature of the textbooks. However, the analysis concluded that whilst some contributed functionally to meanings necessary for the learning activities, a number of visuals had very little or no connection to teaching and learning. Findings from the analysis of pedagogic

modalities further indicated that some visuals were not used by the teachers. The absence of any strategic or theoretical grounds for the selection and design of visuals in the *Tieng Anh* indicated that MOET had not paid sufficient attention to the rich meaning potential of multimodal texts, neither in the official curriculum document nor in the textbook design. The potential of semiotic complementarity, as discussed in Chapter IV Section 4.4.2.3, in the use of image-supported meaning making was not well exploited. This supports research by Vu and Febrianti (2018) in their effort to explore the function of visuals in one *Tieng Anh* textbook. Their findings revealed a lack of strategic selection and design of images for teaching and learning and corroborated recent research in the area of multimodal studies. Accordingly, it is proposed that the selection of images in language textbooks should be more strategically and theoretically driven to effectively aid classroom teaching and learning, as well as to prepare language-learning students with the ability to negotiate meanings across a range of semiotic modes (Danielsson & Selander, 2016; Serafini, 2014).

Communication and the representation of meanings in contemporary texts often involve more than the exchange of language alone. Images are increasingly used not only in a complementary role to written texts but also as an independent means of conveying meaning. It is, therefore, no longer appropriate to consider that language development simply involves the accumulation of oral or written skills (Unsworth & Ngo, 2014). This multimodal reality has recently become a significant focus for literacy education research and has strongly influenced school curricula in some countries, including Australia, England and Singapore (Royce, 1998; Serafini, 2014; Unsworth & Cléirigh, 2009; Walsh, 2009; Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010). The fact that students routinely work with multimodal texts indicates that learning to construct meanings from the integration of images and written language now needs to be considered an important dimension of language competence (Unsworth & Ngo, 2014). Language textbooks need to incorporate the multimodal nature of texts and develop an understanding of the meaning affordances contributed by language, by images and by both complementing each other. As suggested by Vu and Febrianti (2018), the incorporation of this multimodal reality into textbooks would not only support students in deriving meaning from texts, from the images and the image-language interaction in textbooks, but also prepare them to negotiate similar texts encountered in everyday life.

8.3. Constraints to the implementation of the curriculum

Project 2025 was developed in the context of the extensive literature on reforms in the domain of English language teaching and learning in a range of similar contexts, particularly in East Asia. There were no lack of cases, experiences, and lessons to be drawn from the various attempts to adopt CLT in curriculum innovation. It might be expected that Vietnam would reflect on both the successful and unsuccessful attempts of the past to plan and initiate curriculum reform which would be more contextually sensitive (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). However, it is disappointing to reflect on the fact that many of the issues and constraints documented here were first documented more than 20 years ago, for example by Carless (1998) and Li (1998), and have been echoed in accounts from other contexts reported earlier in this study, for example in Butler (2011); Coskun (2011); Humphries and Burns (2015) and Nunan (2003).

8.3.1. Conceptual constraints

There is some inevitability in the conclusion that CLT was doomed to fail in Vietnamese classrooms for a wide range of reasons, both theoretical and practical, with a significant cause of the problem in the vagueness of the actual conceptualisation of CLT itself.

The vagueness of CLT is part of its identity. As highlighted in the literature Chapter III Section 3.6.6 and also earlier in this chapter, there is a lack of clarity about CLT, perhaps because its principles are drawn from different sources. Littlewood (2014) described CLT as having a “dual identity” (p. 350) because from the outset there have been two versions: the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’, which offer different implications for how language is best learnt and for the role of the teacher in the classroom. As noted, CLT is not a teaching method in the sense of which the content, syllabus and teaching routines are clearly identified and ready to be applied in the classroom (Brandl, 2008; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Savignon, 2002, 2005). Rather, a value of CLT is that it is often heralded as “a generalised umbrella term” (Harmer, 2007, p. 70) to describe the pathway towards “fluency, purposeful communicative activities, and student-student interaction” (Bax, 2003, p. 280). However, this laudable flexibility is challenging for teachers who are required to obtain a solid understanding of CLT, and of theories of language, language learning and language teaching. The teachers in this study did not articulate or demonstrate

the professional knowledge of CLT principles and processes required to be able to apply the pedagogy in their classrooms. This knowledge was not provided in professional development in preparation for the reform with the result that the teachers experienced self-doubt and isolation.

CLT has also been criticised for its lack of attention to the critical factor of local teaching and learning contexts (Butler, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 1993, 2006a; Littlewood, 2014; Prabhu, 1990). It is well accepted that what works in one situation may or may not work in another, and CLT is no exception. CLT discourse constantly emphasises the priority to generate communication in various ways, while relegating the context to a more secondary status. This matter was highlighted by Bax (2003) who argued attention had to be given to the contextual variables in the particular classroom, with the particular students in the particular country and culture as the starting point. He argued:

> Here we have the main problem of CLT – by its very emphasis on communication, and implicitly on methodology, it relegates and sidelines the context in which we teach, and therefore gives out the suggestion that CLT will work anywhere (p. 281).

In Vietnam, the adoption of CLT overtly prioritised the pedagogy at the expense of the local context, where the obvious factors mitigating against the uptake of CLT were ignored. The context of policy implementation encompasses all the elements connected to teaching and learning, including the students and their backgrounds, their needs, their learning styles, their strategies and their motivations. It also includes the teachers and their qualifications, their language proficiency, their experience and professional training, and finally the classroom conditions such as class size and facilities, the classroom culture, that is the culturally-motivated relationships between teachers and students and the ingrained 'examination' culture inherent in Vietnamese education. The classroom context in the study was a manifestation of all of these factors, most of which ran counter to CLT requirements for small class sizes and a learner-centred philosophy focusing on needs, interests and learning styles of individual students. Adoption of CLT without adaptation to its context of implementation is one very strong reason why the uptake of CLT at a national level has most often resulted in poor outcomes. The CLT based curriculum reform in Vietnam is a clear case in point.

8.3.2. Macro-level constraints

There are substantial impediments to the successful implementation of the reform, many concerning the macro decision-making process and other societal-institutional factors. Not the least of these is the continuing importance of written high-stakes examinations for entry to university which have an important influence not only at the upper-secondary level, but also much earlier in schooling. The spectre of a ‘make-or-break’ examination regime sets the tone for English language teaching and learning, as well as for all other subject areas. The ‘examination’ culture is normalised, is expected, and is simply ‘how we do things around here’ in Vietnam. It is also true to say that similar cultural norms are evident in several East Asian countries, typically in China, Japan and South Korea.

8.3.2.1. The washback effect of written examinations

The washback effects of written examinations and traditional forms of testing and assessment were evident in the study, to the point of impairing communicative classroom practices. The need for students to develop accuracy as a priority over fluency in order to pass the highly competitive examinations remained the paramount teaching and learning target. The information-centred education system in Vietnam is strongly based on marks and ratios of examination passes as determiners of school reputation. Teachers and school are under pressure to produce academic students who achieve high marks and grades at school and pass the examinations. Examination results are, therefore, of primary importance for schools, teachers, students and parents. The incompatibility of the goals of the curriculum reform with the processes and content of the examination culture is clear. The ‘victim’ is communicative teaching and learning in that “only lip-service is paid to communication” even though the communicative approach is the official pedagogy (Le & Barnard, 2009, p. 28). This washback effect has been the norm in a range of settings, and is especially prevalent in the Asia-Pacific, as noted in Korea (Lee, 2014; Li, 2001), in China (Hu, 2004; W. Wang, 2014), and in Japan (Thompson & Yanagita, 2015; Tsushima, 2012), where the examination culture is “a deeply rooted force that substantially influences teaching practice” (Humphries & Burns, 2015, p. 240).

The strong washback effect of the written examinations cast a permanent shadow over school education, extending down to the lower secondary level. It did not simply

fade away even though there was a prescribed approach which placed greater focus on generating communication, particularly oral communication. This presents a major paradox and challenge for MOET – if the high-stakes, written examinations remain entrenched, then their washback effect will continue to direct teaching and learning goals and practices towards traditional, pen and paper, discrete-point activities and away from oral communication in English language classrooms. This must be resolved as a matter of urgency if the national needs for communicative citizens are to be achieved.

8.3.2.2. Professional development

It is clear that insufficient and/or inappropriate professional support and in-service training before and during the implementation of the reform has been one of the major hurdles to its success. A similar issue was also reported by Ho and Wong (2002); Lamie (2000); Savignon (2008), and Wang (2008) in different locations, each reinforcing the critical importance of in-service training as a precursor to educational change.

In the case of Project 2025, a range of workshops and short courses were organised to prepare teachers to teach the new curriculum, indicating that, as per the documented policy intention, some attention and effort were directed to in-service training. However, the findings indicated uneven access and opportunities for this professional development, as well as concerns expressed about the quality of the training programs. One obvious conclusion was that inadequate training was in part responsible for teachers' insufficient knowledge and understanding of the pedagogic principles and processes required to successfully enact the desired changes. Although teachers are often considered to be autodidacts and active learners themselves, it cannot be taken for granted that teachers are able to change their pedagogic practice without a sufficient level of professional support (Hargreaves, 2002).

8.3.2.3. English is a foreign language in Vietnam

A different constraint at the societal level relates to the limited opportunities for English use beyond the classroom. In Vietnam, where English is a foreign language, it is not used as a means of communication and is rarely heard beyond the classroom, English is restricted to being a school subject in the school curriculum. Outside the classroom, students use their mother tongue to communicate; hence,

there is little or no instrumental aim to use English as part of life in the community (Barker, 2004; Kam, 2002). There is also variability with regard to the opportunity to access English classes outside of formal schooling. Children of parents with the financial means to buy qualified supplementary English classes enhance their progress towards higher levels of proficiency (Bray, 2013; Bray & Lykins, 2012). However, students in rural and remote areas as well as the urban poor do not have access to such resources.

The lack of opportunities for students to use English outside the classroom is a societal constraint and one which will not disappear in the near future. This fact of life, a fact shared with other countries in the region, creates challenges that need to be taken seriously as the drive towards the national English language competency goals continues.

8.3.3. Classroom-level constraints

At a more localised level, there are practical constraints on the successful implementation of the reform. These include large class sizes, limited classroom resources, students with different degrees of motivation, and unconfident teachers, all of which challenge the implementation of the reform.

8.3.3.1. Large class sizes

Large class sizes were among the most frequently mentioned impediments to communicative classrooms in this study. Data revealed an average class size of 41 students, too large to conduct communicative activities and to ensure student participation. Experience reported in the literature of curriculum reform suggests it is unrealistic to expect teachers to conduct communicative lessons in over-crowded classrooms. Overcrowded classrooms have been an ongoing problem for years not only in Vietnam, as reported in previous studies (Le, 2011, 2015; Le & Barnard, 2009; H. H. Pham, 2007), but also in other settings, for example in Turkey (Coskun, 2011), in China (Hu, 2004; W. Wang, 2014; Warden & Lin, 2000), in South Korea (Jihyeon, 2009; Li, 2001) and in Japan (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). In large classes, it is “very difficult, if not entirely impossible”, as Li (1998, p. 681) concluded, to introduce and manage performance-based activities, which tend to be more difficult to organise and time-consuming in overcrowded classrooms.

Policymakers and administrators in MOET and DOET were well aware of the issue of large class sizes. The interview data revealed that the school principals were well aware of the reality but financially unable to intervene. The simple fact is that it was an unrealistic expectation for communicative lessons to be conducted in such large classes. This factor points to insufficient preparation for the implementation of a communicative curriculum. As concluded by Fullan (2007, p. 15), insufficient preparation involves "many more disincentives than benefits" in the implementation of the intended change.

8.3.3.2. Poorly equipped classrooms

A lack of classroom facilities to aid teaching and learning was an additional obstacle to change, and was particularly obvious in economically disadvantaged areas. The classroom observations revealed that computers and access to the WWW were absent in most of the rural classrooms. This situation is likely to be worse in remote mountainous areas where even basic classroom furniture is not a given. Urban classrooms are much better equipped with audio-visual facilities, including state-of-the-art multimedia language labs in some schools. Such urban classrooms are often equipped from the voluntary contributions of more wealthy families. Such purchasing power is simply not available to the parents in poor rural areas.

8.3.3.3. Student motivation

Students, as the perceived beneficiaries of change, are essential participants in the process. Although student attitudes to the curriculum reform were beyond the scope of this investigation, the research findings did reveal that students with lower levels of achievement and motivation were perceived as an obstacle in the move towards the communicative curriculum. What was noticeable was the lack of motivation for communicative competence amongst students, particularly those in the mid-range of English language achievement. These students had limited communicative needs in English, and needed to study English purely as a compulsory examination subject. This finding is consistent with earlier studies, including Li (1998) and Warden and Lin (2000). Furthermore, students in disadvantaged areas, especially those from low-income families, consistently received limited support for learning, and generally demonstrated less motivation for learning English. Many parents who struggled financially were not in a position to provide additional support for their child's learning. This was seen by teachers to result in lower student motivation and

less success in English compared to peers from higher socio-economic environments in urban areas.

A narrative of lower achievement in schooling linked to lower socioeconomic status is common in education jurisdictions across the world. In some cases, the simplistic answer given is that poor children are generally less able. Alternatively, the responsibility is placed with the parents and the community who are seen to be less committed to the education of their children, or too busy to provide the appropriate level of attention or support. It may be that lower-achieving students are less motivated to learn than their higher-achieving colleagues. There is some evidence for a relationship between motivation and achievement, but the nature of the relationship is often a point for debate. In general, the relationship between achievement and socio-economic status is contentious and a subject of ongoing debate. It is largely a question of opinion rather than fact, with beliefs and values holding sway over empirical evidence. The teachers in the study placed the burden of responsibility for success and motivation on the students and on their parents, rather than taking any reflective position about the interest level in their lessons or the support for learning they provided.

8.3.3.4. The unconfident teacher

The study has pointed to the central importance of the English language teachers in effecting the intended curriculum and pedagogic changes demanded by Project 2025. The findings showed that the vast majority of the teacher participants had achieved MOET's required levels of proficiency to teach the new curriculum. This was a substantial development when compared to findings in a study by N. H. Nguyen (2013), in which he reported that more than 80% of lower-secondary teachers were underqualified in relation to their English language proficiency. In the current study, the language competence of the teachers surveyed was assessed to be at the appropriate level. However, the classroom analysis revealed that many teachers remained unconfident and uncomfortable in using English to teach, despite their appropriate level of proficiency. This finding is associated with the potential for shared anxiety among NNSs teachers more generally whereby their language proficiency is believed to influence professional self-esteem and confidence (Medgyes, 2001). They may be anxious about making errors when speaking in English, and in this way, losing the respect of their students. Earlier research noted that these anxieties and questions of self-confidence in language proficiency had

created feelings of inferiority and had also impacted adversely on teaching (Braine, 2005; Medgyes, 2001; Moussu, 2006). Closely related to the matter of confidence in using English was the lack of confidence about CLT, and also in relation to language theories and pedagogies more generally.

All of these factors in combination need to be understood alongside the clear evidence presented of insufficient teacher training and support. In sum, these factors constituted a serious impediment to a smooth and successful implementation of the reform. It is evident that the teachers had ongoing pedagogic uncertainties and confusion about implementing the changes in their classrooms. The stress and pressure created by the shift in demands of the CLT approach to teaching and learning were extremely important factors in inhibiting effective change.

8.3.4. The question of ideology

A broader and more deep-seated issue in the context of Vietnam is the potential clash between the student-centred, interactive principles of CLT and the traditional Vietnamese classroom where the legacies of Confucian ideology are clearly in evidence. Of particular relevance are the philosophical assumptions about teaching and learning, and the perceived roles and responsibilities of teachers and students in the classroom.

There is no question that CLT is essentially a contemporary Western industrialised creation, inherently displaying the ideologies and cultural values of its origins in Europe and the USA. When exported to non-Western locations such as Vietnam, there is a potential conflict between its Western-based premises and the beliefs and understandings about education in non-Western locations. In Vietnam, Confucian beliefs and values are implicit across many areas of culture, no more so than in education. Learning is conceptualised as an acquisition of information and knowledge which resides principally in books. The teacher is regarded as the possessor and transmitter of valued knowledge, and the learner is the recipient of the teacher’s wisdom. In this way, a relationship of power difference pertains between the teacher and the student, and the student pays due deference to the teacher in this asymmetric relationship. Students in traditional Vietnamese classrooms are expected to speak only when being addressed, and spontaneous interactions are traditionally not evident or welcomed in classrooms. In this

transmission-oriented pedagogy, there is strong teacher authority and minimal student individuality, resulting in a teacher-centred classroom. The Vietnamese culture values collectivism and conformity, which have shaped Vietnamese classroom practices over many hundreds of years. This partly explains the fact that the students preferred to stay quiet during communicative activities; not only did they did not have the linguistic resources to draw on, but also they were not comfortable to speak before being addressed by the teacher.

CLT inherently promotes an individualistic approach to learning. It rewards independence and individuality, and encourages authentic interactions in the target language as one of its core principles. CLT is constructivist-based and aims to place the learner at the centre of teaching and learning. The prescribed pedagogy in Project 2025 embodies an educational philosophy alien to Vietnamese culture, and has made assumptions about teacher and student roles at odds with those which have been ingrained within the local culture. It was bound to meet with resistance, likely to find only limited success, even failure as was the experience in China (Hu, 2002, 2004).

In Vietnam, there is no doubt that a clash of educational values has been an important impediment to the success of Project 2025. Relevant to this outcome is the following comment by Elmore (2004) which gets to the importance of the major professional development focus which will be required for success in the curriculum change:

> Cultures do not change by mandate; they change by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures, and processes by others; the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modelling the new values and behaviour that you expect to displace the existing ones (p. 11)

The cultural change implicated here relates essentially to the roles and relationships of the teachers and learners in the English language classrooms. The intended shift to a CLT approach marks a monumental shift for Vietnamese teachers and students. The modelling of the changes required for success must be addressed in the professional development programs and materials which are now crucial for teachers. Without them, Project 2025 and any other reform in the future can only result in limited changes, well short the magnitude targeted by the policymakers and needed by the country.

8.3.5. The 'shadow' industry

The growth of private tutoring in English goes on alongside the implementation of the reform, as if, somehow, the two are unrelated. Students routinely subscribe to supplementary lessons outside school hours in the hope of improving their scores and achieving success in the end of school examinations. The prevalence of private tutoring can be explained on two major counts. The first is rooted in the belief ingrained in Vietnamese culture that education is the gatekeeper to individual development and social mobility. This has put pressure on the education system to serve as a vehicle for personal and national development, and at the same time, on parents to provide the best educational opportunities for their children to become high achievers, including an investment in private tuition. The second stems from the perceived lack of high-quality school education, which has eroded trust in the quality of public schooling and stimulated the demand for private tutoring.

In an ideal context, the new curriculum would reduce the demand for private tutoring as it was designed to help students become independent, effective users of English. However, the study found that private tutoring remained popular, which raises a serious concern about the real effectiveness and sustainability of the reform. It appears that the new curriculum has not yet banished doubts that learning within the school curriculum alone will ensure the required achievements for current and future needs. Given the financial investment in Project 2025, the growing popularity of private tutoring for English is not a positive signal. Further empirical research in the size and scope of English private tutoring within the context of curriculum innovation would be beneficial and would provide clearer understandings about the 'shadow education' and its relationship to the curriculum reform.

Chapter conclusion

Project 2025 has posed unresolved challenges and dilemmas, evident in a lack of alignment between policy and practice. The findings of the research were not at all surprising. Fullan (2007) reflected on "the massive failure" of educational reforms, when authorities underestimate the critical role of setting up preconditions for change and building the local capacity for schools and teachers to be able to engage in effective change. He concluded:

> There was actually great pressure and incentives to become innovative, and this resulted in many schools adopting reforms that they did not have the capacity (individually or

> organisationally) to put into practice. Thus, innovations were adopted on the surface, with some of the language and structures becoming altered, but not the practice of teaching (p. 6)

Fullan's remark appears to reveal the classic dilemma of educational reform where change only occurs on the 'surface' – with little actual change at the level of classroom practice. Particularly in the case of Vietnam, a lack of preparation for implementing the communicative curriculum in terms of teacher capacity, classroom facilities and the assessment system, together with the top-down model for curriculum reform amongst other factors, has resulted in an obvious gap between the intentions and realities of the reform. On the basis of the research findings, some suggestions and recommendations for changes to bridge the gap between intentions and realities are proposed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study did not start with the aim to evaluate Project 2025, although it has analysed the evaluative language used by the participating teachers about the reform. It is noteworthy that no official evaluation of the project has yet been made public in Vietnam, although the decision to change the end date from 2020 to 2025 is important. That decision is interpreted as the Government through MOET not wishing to abandon the goals of the reform but accepting that 2020 is an unrealistic timeframe in which to see success. The comments made here aim to be supportive of that position. As a citizen of Vietnam, I am commited to the broad aims of the reform. I strongly support the national agenda of greater participation in the global economy as an important pathway to improved life chances and higher living standards for all of my fellow citizens. As an English language teacher and privileged scholarship holder, I agree with the importance of enhanced English language communicative skills for all of the population and as a way forward. The proposals discussed here are part of my commitment to the national effort.

These recommendations present ideas to bridge the gaps revealed in the findings and discussed in the previous chapter, and suggest what might be done to align the reality with the intention and the intention with the reality. Essentially, these recommendations are premised on the understanding that major changes are needed, both from the vantage point of policy intentions and from the vantage point of the classroom implementation. As would be expected, these matters for discussion and change are related and tied together so that change in one area is most likely to have repercussions elsewhere.

The chapter also presents suggestions for further studies into other aspects and issues of the English language educational reform for schools in Vietnam.

9.1. Major findings

The study has aimed to inform the three research questions posed at the outset, all of which revolved around the question of policy intention of English language educational reform in Vietnam and its uptake in classrooms. It described and examined the intentions of the policymakers for English language teaching and learning at the lower-secondary level, and how these intentions were manifest in *Tieng Anh,* the textbook series, developed to make concrete the curriculum. It then

provided empirical evidence of how teachers, the key implementers at the local level, made sense of the new curriculum through an exploration of their evaluations of the curriculum, their knowledge of the prescribed pedagogy underpinning the change, and finally how they enacted the new curriculum through their pedagogy.

There is no doubting the need to reform English language education policies in Vietnam to enhance students' English capacity in the context of globalisation and increasing socio-economic integration. Planned, developed and implemented in a top-down manner, which is standard practice in the Vietnamese socio-cultural context, the new curriculum for lower-secondary schools set a target of Level A2 in English proficiency, where this level was calibrated in relation to the European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with the intimation of a student-centred approach was taken up as the designated pedagogy for classroom processes and practices. MOET intended to bring about radical changes in classroom practice, shifting from traditional teacher-fronted processes towards an interactive, learner-centred space. The top-down reform process, although having some potential for making change as noted, posed a number of dilemmas and problems arising from a lack of collaboration between policy makers and practising teachers in the shaping of the curriculum goals, the pedagogy and the assessment practices.

The textbook series, *Tieng Anh*, presented the policy for classroom implementation. The strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks have been addressed in the study, with an attention drawn to the lack of focus on meaning making through multimodality and the potential to teach and learn using multimodal resources. In a world where communication increasingly uses and relies on visual resources, it is important that English language teachers and learners are working with images as a source of meaning in their classrooms.

Perhaps the most important point to make about *Tieng Anh* is that it was designed with the view that it would be adapted for use in classrooms. The fact that there was little evidence of adaptation is noteworthy. It points to the culturally ingrained ways of the teachers who felt obligated to work diligently through the book in a very literal manner. In the minds of the teachers to not complete all of the activities and exercises equated to a failing. This was not the intention of the textbooks, and given the additional workload inherent in them, it was never going to be possible to work through each and every activity. It was salutary to note that the omissions were

generally in relation to the communicative practice activities, precisely those which would challenge the learners in the areas of most need.

The teacher attitudes highlighted their serious doubts and concerns about the feasibility of the curriculum goals. Proficiency Level A2 was uniformly seen to be too high for mainstream classrooms to achieve. Barriers to the CLT curriculum were reported by the teachers, indicating organisational and structural impediments to the new curriculum. These exacerbated the mismatch between a communicative pedagogy and the orientation to teaching and learning of Vietnamese teachers.

Limited understanding of CLT principles and practices pointed to insufficient in-service training and support before and during the implementation of change, and highlighted MOET's lack of preparation of the teachers to enact the intended changes. Without a major, planned and extensive professional development program, as discussed in the previous chapter, the teaching force will remain severely constrained in its capacity to produce independent and competent teachers who are confident in adapting materials and strategies to match their local contexts. The conclusion is that time alone will not align the reality with the intention. Changes need to be made at several levels for the goal of communicative English language users to be achieved.

The title of the thesis was chosen to bring attention to the fact that the reform was developed and designed by one set of educational personnel, then handed to another group to be implemented. The intentions of the reform were those of the policymakers in the central bureaucracy; its realities were evidenced in how English language teachers across the province implemented the reform. In Vietnam, such an arrangement is standard practice and is perfectly normal. The socio-political structure in Vietnam operates as a one-Party socialist system with power vested in the central Government. The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) takes the lead role in all branches of society. Institutions such as education are highly centralised and policy decisions are made by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Reflecting on this social structure from a distance, and after four years of reading and researching in the field, it is important to state that centralised, 'top-down' arrangements, at least in the case of Project 2025, have come with some benefits and probably more challenges. The stark reality is that the teachers as implementers of the policy did not have the skills, the confidence or the understandings to successfully make the intended changes. The socio-political system in Vietnam

brings with it an obvious power relationship between the central bureaucracy and the citizens across the country. All sectors of society accept and work to support the system. The country's English language teachers, presented with the responsibility to implement curriculum and pedagogic reform, worked within constraints which made achievement of its specified goals extremely difficult.

Vietnamese culture remains traditional in many of its practices. Confucian philosophy with its clear and defined roles for adults and young people, for teachers and learners, remains important in all educational processes. Teachers and their learners are inducted from childhood into specific ways of behaving, unchallenged within the socio-cultural context. Vietnam's socio-political system works in tandem with these cultural values to produce agreed and accepted ways of being and doing in classrooms. In concert, they create teachers and learners who are not at all ideal candidates for successful adoption of CLT. This must be the starting point for successful change to enable the positive future for Vietnam envisaged in the reform. The socio-political context nor the socio-cultural context are likely to change in the near future, and it is incumbent on the reform to work within these contextual frameworks. That CLT is ideologically and philosophically opposite points to the simple fact that CLT must be adapted to work successfully in Vietnam. It is obvious that changes will be needed to bring intention and reality into alignment so that any official evaluation of the reform can be more positive, and steps towards greater global participation are made. Critical questions now revolve around what to do to intervene and bridge the gap. What can be suggested and implemented at any or all levels? What can be changed and by whom to support the different groups of stakeholders involved in English language teaching and learning?

9.2. The proficiency targets

The Proficiency Level A2 goal for the lower-secondary level was roundly criticised for being overly challenging for mainstream students to attain. The teachers judged this level of English language attainment to be too demanding for their learners. This goal did not facilitate a positive environment for teaching and learning in the classroom. The question arising is whether to keep or lower this proficiency level? This is perhaps an open question to be considered by each of the stakeholder groups. English language teaching and learning have exploded in popularity in Asia, and it is not surprising that many countries, including Vietnam, are making focused and determined efforts to establish cadres of competent users of English. In the

case of the English curriculum reform in Vietnam, it is understood that the proficiency goal was set within a vision for the future because the new curriculum is expected to be in use for at least ten years or more. With such an expectation, this specified proficiency level could remain appropriate for the next decade. However, it is argued here that a vision for the future does not necessarily call for a higher proficiency goal than the present conditions actually permit. A proficiency goal needs to be relevant, feasible and attainable at the present time and with full consideration of current conditions. Furthermore, a proficiency goal does not need to remain rigid over time; it could be subject to change and negotiation over time and in accordance with relevant contextual factors. In the current situation, it is recommended that changes should be made in regard to the proficiency goal.

One option is to lower expectations so that mainstream students can achieve the level. It is clear that in the current context of overcrowded classrooms, limited facilities, the strong washback effect of written examinations, teachers and students of different levels and capacities, the achievement of the Proficiency Level A2 is overly demanding and largely unrealistic. Teachers need time to improve their English language capacity to support their learners to achieve the set targets. Similarly, improvements in the infrastructure will also take time. When the local facilities and capacity are improved, a higher proficiency goal can be set.

Another option is to establish a flexible proficiency goal. In a real sense, there can be no one-size-fits-all goal that can suit all “actual situations within which the language teaching and learning will take place” (Breen & Candlin, 2001, p. 24). For this reason, a flexible set of proficiency levels appears a practical suggestion. A higher proficiency level could be achievable for high-performing students and schools, where the potential and the conditions to achieve are in evidence. For lower-performing students and schools, especially those in disadvantaged rural and remote areas, a lower proficiency level would be more practical. However, of importance to note is that working with a scale of proficiency goals could cause problems, confusion and inconsistencies in implementation. The process of ‘differentiation’ would need clear, detailed guidance, and necessarily strong leadership at all levels and at all points in the process.

Linked to the issue of the proficiency goal is the need for a compatible form of assessment to measure the achievement of the goal, especially at the end of each level of schooling, that is at Year 5, Year 9 and Year 12. This is of critical importance

because when a proficiency goal is established, it must be measured to determine whether it has been achieved by a particular proportion of students in different schools and regions. Moreover, the form of assessment needs to be communicatively oriented with an oral component. The assessment results could provide concrete evidence for evaluating the feasibility of the proficiency goal and the pedagogy, serving as a basis for adjusting and localising the curriculum goals, content and the pedagogy. Based on the assessment outcomes, schools might organise students in classes of similar levels of English capacity when they enter a more senior level. This would make it easier for teachers to focus on a proficiency goal and a pedagogy particularly adapted to a cohort of students. This is not to widen the gap between high and low performing students, rather to find ways to support all students on the basis of their differentiated needs and capacities. Schools might also arrange students in classes of mixed levels, providing that they have strategies to encourage students of different levels to improve their English capacities. Each of the options has benefits and drawbacks. They require higher levels of commitment and effort by individual schools and teachers to make real improvement at the classroom level. Equally, they require understanding, recognition and action from DOET and MOET bureaucrats.

9.3. Structural changes

Fullan (2007) made the case that large-scale, long-lasting reform will not occur if conditions remain unchanged. This comment rings true for Vietnam at the current time. In light of the findings in the study, it is critically important that structural changes, particularly in class size and in assessment, should be made, or planned to be made in order to establish the preconditions for the successful implementation of the communicative curriculum.

Communicative teaching and learning cannot flourish in overcrowded classrooms and in traditional classroom set-ups which are much more likely to inhibit rather than support interaction. Smaller class sizes are essential if communicative lessons are to be conducted. This, of course, would require more classrooms being built, better classroom facilities and, importantly, more teaching staff. All of these require an increased financial commitment. Increased investment in school infrastructure and human resourcing is dependent on Government policies and priorities, and budgetary constraints have been a major impediment to change in school infrastructure, especially when considered on a national scale. Nevertheless,

upgrading school infrastructure and classroom facilities must be seen as an integral part of the intention to improve the quality of English language education. Without changes to classroom conditions, the communicative language classroom will remain out of reach, an intention which cannot be matched in reality.

A second structural change concerns assessment. The high-stakes national examinations remain written-based, making it impossible and irrelevant to assess the communicative competence of students. Adding an oral component into high-stakes examinations would be highly desirable, but, as noted earlier, there are many obstacles to this including how to establish an oral test for more than one million candidates per year. However, if there is little or no attention to oral assessment as an integral element of the examination culture, then oral competency will struggle to be part of the teaching and learning practices in the classroom. One practical strategy would be to give a more prominent role to mid-term and end-of-term tests to assess oral proficiency and progress after each term of study and after each year level. Whilst MOET has encouraged oral tests in regular assessment, it is argued here that greater attention and focus must be paid to these oral tests as the strongest way of encouraging students to develop oral competence. There is some merit in considering an assessment driven curriculum.

There are several benefits of conducting class-based or school-based tests for oral proficiency. Financially it is more feasible and cost-effective to manage a test for students within a class or a school than for a million or more students in a national examination. Regular testing for oral proficiency on a term by term basis would also offer concrete evidence for assessing student progress over a period of study and enable the provision of appropriate, individual feedback. Regular testing in this way for oral skills would make the testing less stressful and less high-stakes in nature. The impediment here concerns the validity and reliability of the test results, as different teachers and schools may have different ideas and capacities to determine standards and performance. The introduction of a process of moderation, common in many educational jurisdictions in different countries, would address this concern. Placing a greater focus on oral assessment is an obvious way to encourage schools to engage with oral language and to bring spoken language to the forefront of the teaching and learning experience. It is, therefore, crucial that the teachers are trained in communicative language assessment, coupled with detailed guidance and assessment benchmarks to follow.

9.4. Implications for leadership

Across the entire education sector in Vietnam, a range of professional officers are charged with the responsibility of improving the English language performance of school-aged learners on a national scale. Education policymakers at the bureaucratic centre, district administrators, school principals and teachers all have had some role in planning, leading, managing and enacting the curriculum change. This requires leadership at all points in the process. As argued by Le (2019) on the importance of leadership in the implementation of curriculum change:

> What is needed for enhancing teacher capacity for successful implementation of the ELT initiative in Vietnam and in other similar contexts is a strong leadership that can orchestrate the interaction between top-down control and bottom-up autonomy (p. 74)

Le (2019) goes on to argue that strong leadership is required to provide central guidance and control. However, strong leadership does not necessarily mean a top-down, centralised approach which ignores the importance of other stakeholders in the process of making curriculum change. As noted in this study, the socio-politically normalised model of change evident in Project 2025 has not succeeded because, for one reason, the planning for change proceeded without the participation of teachers as the crucial agents in the process. However, it has also been noted that a bottom-up approach is not well suited to Vietnam. Such a process would be culturally radical and possibly be viewed with suspicion by all parties because it would require important shifts in cultural practices. Curriculum change or pedagogic change have no grassroots history in Vietnam. It is not the expected or appropriate place for teachers to drive change in this way. Nevertheless, it is critically important to find ways to engage all the stakeholders in the process of planning and implementing reform. This is where strong leadership is required to enable success. Instead of blaming different parts of the system for the current lack of success of the reform, it is incumbent on all stakeholder groups to collaborate as part of the effort to make Project 2025 a success. This is Le's orchestration function of strong leaders.

The need for coordinated change through collaboration has been widely advocated in the literature, with some consensus that strong guidance from the centre in combination with the participation of teachers and schools can yield positive outcomes (Fink, 2003; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Morgan, 1992). Clune (1993) outlined a 'coordinated decentralised' approach rather than a 'standardised

centralised' model to reform. In the same vein, Fullan (1994) noted the necessity to combine the strengths of both the centre and the local in realising and sustaining educational change:

> Combined strategies which capitalise on the centre's strengths (to provide perspective direction, incentives, networking, and retrospective monitoring) and local capacity (to learn, create, respond to, and feed into overall directions) are more likely to achieve greater overall coherence. Such systems also have greater accountability because the need to obtain political support for ideas is built into the patterns of interactions (p. 20)

In Vietnam, balancing these distinct and separate forces means that all stakeholders, including the most powerful policymakers, district administrators, school principals and teachers, all need to be involved in the change process. The execution of the new curriculum necessarily requires collaboration and negotiations amongst all of these stakeholders in relation to the approach to pedagogy, the proficiency levels to be achieved, the length of time it is going to take, and the professional development which needs to be put in place to enhance the teacher capacity to enact the intended changes. Based on the findings here, teachers need to have greater feelings of empowerment, of control and of certainty about the intentions of the reform. If this happens, questions about teacher attitude, and whether they accept or reject the change become redundant. Teachers may not need to be concerned about understanding an imposed pedagogy, about whether it is alien to them, or to what degree they think it works. When the meanings inherent in the curriculum reform are shared through collaboration, it becomes unnecessary to ask whether there is coherence between the centre and the local context. The more that top-down and bottom-up forces are coordinated, the more likely that educational change can be effective. Of course, this is easier said than done, as achieving harmony between top-down and bottom-up forces is never easy, particularly in an environment where such collaboration has no history or tradition.

Another implication for leadership is the importance of taking into account the voices of researchers and empirical evidence drawn from classroom-based research, which has been largely absent from or disregarded in the policymaking process. Such research should be treated as an independent and trusted source of reference, which can be used as a basis for improved decision-making. The role of educational research in Vietnam requires higher value and status in the public policymaking process, creating opportunities for academics and policymakers to work collaboratively towards improving curriculum policies and classroom practices.

9.5. Teacher professional development

The responsibilities for educational change rest with all of the stakeholder groups who are part of this study. The most obvious of these are the teachers, but as the findings indicate they are not currently well-served to succeed in enacting the policy intentions within Project 2025. Their shortcomings in terms of the competence and confidence to use and teach the English language has been one reason for the limited success of the curriculum reform. Their lack of understanding of the prescribed pedagogy in the reform has been another. Their lack of participation in the shape and thrust of the reform yet another. Together these point to the paramount importance of professional development as an essential area of focus to bridge the gap between policy intention and implementation reality. Professional development is crucial because the reform has challenged teachers not only to work with new content but more importantly to change their core values about the nature of teaching and learning English and to adopt new classroom practices and processes. These ways of operating in the classroom are culturally alien to the teachers and the evidence from classrooms is that they have not been well understood or adopted. The teachers in the study had little idea how to go about working within a CLT framework.

To develop the capacity to enact the mandated changes, the teachers are required to be independent, competent and confident English language users with a knowledge of language in relation to teaching, to learning, and to assessment. Accordingly, the focus of professional learning for Vietnamese NNS teachers should prioritise the following key areas:

(i) teacher competence in English language use
(ii) teacher knowledge of CLT and how to adapt CLT for the local classroom

Whilst more than 90% of the teachers had obtained the mandated level of English language proficiency, the findings revealed that they remained unconfident and uncomfortable using English to teach. Enhancing teacher English language competence appropriate to the teaching of communication is a key area of professional development. The other major focus of professional development is to enhance teacher understandings, processes and practices associated with CLT, and how to adapt the pedagogy to their local context. Highlighting the lack of understanding by the teachers is not to lay the blame for failure at their feet. Rather,

it is to stress the importance of teachers understanding in more detail what CLT entails and how it can work in their classrooms. They are the key agents of change. Without their positive participation the reform can only have very limited success.

9.5.1. The need to understand the nature of CLT

As argued by Rahman (2015), if the nature of CLT is not well-suited to a specific socio-cultural context, there is little hope for real improvement to be seen in classroom practice. Vietnam is one such socio-cultural context, and for CLT to be successfully implemented as required in Project 2025, there needs to be a major professional development effort at the national level. The point of emphasis is the need to focus on a contextually-driven pedagogy rather than holding to a singular pedagogic approach. In the context of Vietnam, it is of critical importance to adapt the principles of CLT which have the potential to work in the diverse local contexts in Vietnam rather than adopting it as a complete and coherent pedagogic package. Given the points made about the incongruity between the fundamental bases of the pedagogy in Western values of individualism and learner focus and the East Asian values of collectivism and teacher focus, then some important adaptation of CLT will be essential.

9.5.2. Adapting as opposed to adopting CLT

Of the ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ versions of CLT discussed earlier, the ‘strong’ version is quite alien to Vietnamese teachers and unsuitable to the context where English is a foreign language, and the teaching force consists entirely of non-native speakers of the target language. It is suggested that only the ‘weak’ version has some potential for uptake. The ‘weak’ version involves some focus on the teaching and learning of grammar as part of the pedagogy, an approach with which Vietnamese teachers are familiar and comfortable.

When a ‘weak’ interpretation of CLT is adopted, then the value of grammar teaching, explanation, drill and error correction is accepted as a necessary but not sufficient element of pedagogy. The non-communicative work is, therefore, still important and valid. Its importance is that it provides a pathway into language use. However, perhaps of more importance is the understanding that it is a step in a process and not the endpoint. The goal is to use the knowledge about form and structure in the communicative use of the language. The goal, as was the case in Vietnam in the

past, is not merely knowledge of the form and structure of language itself. The national imperative is for students to learn the language forms in potential contexts of use and be provided with opportunities to use them in genuine communicative interaction. The classification of language practice types by Richards (2006) suggests the need to move flexibly from more to less controlled activities. The aim is to increase the proportion of communicative language practice activities. As part of adaptation, teachers must engage with professional learning in how to use *Tieng Anh* to create activities which are communicative.

Research findings from this study and other sources (Butler, 2011; Fotos, 2005; Le, 2015) have confirmed that the culturally embedded values and roles of Vietnamese teachers and students do not align well with a learner-centred pedagogy based in Western cultural and educational philosophies. In particular, the focus in the latter privileges the individual and individualism. Accordingly, it will be advantageous to pursue a teacher-fronted approach whilst incorporating meaningful communicative activities in the Vietnamese classroom. On this basis, it will be beneficial to set off from familiar classroom practices, those with which teachers are more familiar and comfortable in their roles. Mechanical practice, including drills and substitution practices, need not be totally discarded, but rather used in combination with more communicative practices. For example, teachers who are accustomed to controlled, form-oriented strategies can still use these activities but gradually expand their repertoires to more information-exchange activities that trigger interaction. In crowded classrooms, it is possible to incorporate some aspects of the traditional Presentation-Practice-Product (PPP) cycle with activities involving structured or free practice depending on the level of students. In this way, teachers maintain a sense of security and confidence, but gradually expand their use of activity types in a more confident and consistent manner. In this way the learning starts from where the learner is situated, in this case the learner being the English language teacher. It is important to avoid the unrealistic assumption that teachers can move from non-communicative practices to authentic communicative practices without extensive professional learning over an extended period of time. Similarly, it is unrealistic to expect teachers, accustomed to and comfortable with teacher-fronted classrooms, to switch to a student-centred pedagogy without providing the knowledge and understanding of the potential of a student-centred pedagogy. The need for professional development is vital. It will be costly and will require extensive planning and resource commitment over a period a time. The stark reality is that without a

concerted professional development program the teachers of English will not be able to support the communicative citizens needed for national economic well-being.

9.5.2.1. Classroom interaction

To take a linguistic perspective on the communicative need, there is a need to generate extended oral exchanges in which students have the opportunity to take on the role of a primary knower (K1). It is suggested that an understanding of a functional model of language and context will be useful professional development with the goals of making changes to the Tenor in the classroom and to the focus on language form. Some understanding of a functional model of language will allow teachers to understand how different exchange patterns can be used to replace traditional IRF exchanges. As discussed earlier in section 8.2.4, the IRF pattern realises pseudo-communicative interactions, which do not incorporate the features of real-life conversation and are at odds with the communicative classroom. The system of Negotiation, as described within SFL, offers the means to analyse interaction from the vantage point of speakers adopting and assigning roles to each other to achieve particular communicative purposes (Martin & Rose, 2007). An understanding of Negotiation will allow the teacher to extend the student repertoire of exchange types and speech functions. It will provide a linguistic understanding of how to adopt and assign roles in an exchange, to add tracking and challenge moves which engage students in extended interactions that reflect the authentic communication patterns of everyday life.

In communicative classrooms, teachers do not rely on 'display' questions. As discussed above in Section 8.2.4, the use of a 'display' questioning strategy and the typical interaction pattern of IRF invites monosyllabic or very short responses. Teachers need to be aware that the use of closed, display questions does not encourage or stimulate language use among students. The use of 'referential' questions as opposed to 'display' questions is more likely to promote extended student responses, increase the length and complexity of student turns, provide opportunities for real information to be exchanged, and generally increase genuine classroom interaction. In Extract 3 below, although a tracking move was used by the teacher which extended the exchange beyond the three-move IRF pattern, the use of a display, closed question *'Do you think so?'* resulted in an automatic response 'yes' and closed the exchange. On reflection, there was very minimal language output generated in the interaction.

Spr.	*Exchange*	Role	
T	*Can you guess what food or what dish we are going to (…) today? What dish? Linh Trang?*	dK1	Initiation
S2	*Omelette*	K2	Response
T	*Omelette?* ***Do you think so?***	Tr	Tracking
S2	*Yes*	rTr	Response
T	*Good job*	K1	Feedback

***Extract 3**. Lesson 3*

What to take from this exchange is that the teacher was interested to know if the student knew the English word 'omelette'. However, instead of asking a closed question which closed the exchange, the teacher might have asked one or more 'referential' questions to which she did not know the answer and which potentially encouraged more interaction. Omelettes are familiar to the students, and offer an opportunity to engage students in sharing their personal experience. Questions could vary and include 'How often do you have omelette?', or 'Who cooks omelette in your family'? or 'How do like your omelette to be cooked?' When student interests are engaged, and they are able to bring their life experiences to the classroom interactions, then these interactions can begin to be truly communicative, even with very basic learners. In this way, students have the opportunity to take on the role of the primary knower (K1) rather than the teacher, and the intended communicative, learner-centred classroom is more likely to be enacted. The more students are engaged in such ways of interaction, the more familiar they become with the K1 role and develop the ability to draw on their linguistic repertoire to participate in a communicative event. It is important to keep in mind that the goal of language classrooms is to create opportunities that stimulate language use for the expression and negotiation of meaning. The quantity of meaningful classroom interactions in which students have the opportunity to use the target language with communicative purpose must be one criterion for 'a successful lesson'.

9.5.2.2. A focus on form and function

In the context of Vietnam, there has always been a strong focus on language form and structure in English teaching and learning. In fact, knowledge about language has always been held in high regard, and in the case of the written examinations has been an important area for assessment. However, as suggested, in the context

where the need is for oral communication, it is important that knowledge about English language is seen as a preparatory step in the process towards using the language. The findings from this study and others in the past make the clear point that the second step has not been a focus or a strength of Vietnamese teachers of English. Faced with the pedagogic challenges of the new curriculum, they have continued to focus on language form in the traditional manner. There has been a reliance on traditional grammar and traditional approaches to grammar as the bases for teaching about language which has not offered any framework for communicative use. The suggestion here is that an alternative model of language would better serve the country and its English language teachers to work towards communicative competence for their learners. The pathway to communication can be via a focus on language form, if that focus on form is related to function.

The suggestion is that the functional model of language and context, as described within SFL, would underpin CLT since CLT itself has not offered any guidance regarding language structure or form. This links to a persistent criticism of CLT, which is that it has lacked any theory of language to underpin its approach to language learning.. At least in the context of Vietnam, there is a vacuum created by the lack of any theory about language linked to language teaching and learning, and teachers have reverted to traditional ways of teaching about language, reinforcing a view that language learning can proceed by learning discrete aspects of structure. In this way, there may be a focus on English pronouns or conjunctions, as separate and distinct elements, unrelated to how they are used in communication. The recommended alternative is to integrate elements of SFL regarding a focus on language structure or form into the space where CLT does not offer any guidance. This has the potential to appeal to teachers who are steeped in a form-based understanding of language teaching. The functional model of language theorises the notion of context whereby text is understood and interpreted within the context in which it is created and used. It can support a weak form of CLT that promotes a focus on language form, but dissuades teachers from reverting to traditional notions of teaching decontextualised elements of language..

The focus on form includes different types of texts in both spoken and written modes, providing students with the opportunity to work with coherent, meaningful stretches of language. This moves the teachers and the students away from discrete-point, decontextualised language practice. Recognisable dialect variations might also be

incorporated into spoken texts to raise awareness among students about the proliferation of different 'Englishes' within authentic inter-cultural communication. These suggestions do not require changes to the syllabus or the textbooks, but revise and replace isolated language practice activities with texts of suitable length and level of challenge.

9.5.2.3. Exploring multimodal texts

As noted, multimodal texts have become a feature of everyday life in mass media, in the workplace, in the home, and also in educational contexts. The fact that students routinely encounter an increasing array of multimodal texts indicates that it is now becoming important to be "multi-literate" (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013). The multiliterate person possesses the skills to decode, comprehend and construct meanings from a range of semiotic modes within multimodal texts. The incorporation of this multimodal reality into textbooks not only supports the students to derive meanings from the images and visual and verbal complementarities presented in the textbook, but also prepares them for future engagement with the range of contemporary multimodal texts. A shortcoming of the *Tieng Anh* series is the lack of focus on multimodality as an important element of the curriculum.

The absence of any strategic and theoretical grounds for the selection and design of meaning making images in *Tieng Anh* indicates that MOET has not yet paid appropriate attention to the proliferation of multimodal texts or the importance of multiliteracy. Given the importance of image as a mode of meaning in the contemporary world, it will be useful to incorporate a focus on multimodality in professional development programs. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) provide a basis for exploring the structure of meaning in various forms of texts containing visuals or a combination of visual and verbal resources. Their visual grammar framework, which was built on the principles of SFL, supports the strategic use of images in textbooks. As CLT does not offer any guidance or principles of teaching and learning in regard to images and their meaning potential, it is suggested that the visual grammar framework based in SFL can complement a CLT approach.

This section has intended to make the case that teacher professional development is absolutely crucial to the success of Project 2025. The question remains: how to organise and deliver professional training and support programs in which these foci are made relevant and practical to the needs of individual teachers?

The policy challenge has been enormous, and as this study has found, the challenge has not yet been met successfully at the classroom level. Professional learning programs are a key component of meeting the challenges inherent in Project 2025. The shift from traditional teaching to communicative-based practice, from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred classroom is a major transformation. Therefore, the modelling of best practice is an essential requirement, so that English language teachers can watch, can discuss and then challenge themselves to enact change. Professional development programs need to embrace both theoretical and practical aspects of classroom processes and practices so that teachers can gauge exactly what they need to do to be successful.

The findings here and elsewhere indicate that radical changes must take place in order for Project 2025 to have a realistic chance of success. The changes in professional learning for teachers are vital to its success. They require planned and ongoing support to be able to meet the challenges inherent in the curriculum reform. The costs involved will be heavy. The changes to pedagogic practices will take time and a considerable degree of expertise to manage. The need is for leadership at all levels of education, including both those who envisaged the reforms and those who are to enact the reforms.

Making changes in the practice of teaching is never an easy task, especially when teachers are asked to teach in a way they were not taught themselves. The recommendations proposed in this final chapter have included suggestions to bridge the gap between the intentions and the realities reported, including suggested changes in proficiency goals, in structures, in leadership, in classroom pedagogies and critically in teacher professional development. Each and all of these changes necessarily require additional input in terms of money, human and material resources, effort and greater collaboration amongst all of the stakeholders engaged in the reform process. As noted, some of the required changes may be easier to make happen than others; where some may involve simply the redirection of financial resources, others exist at the level of deep-seated cultural values and orientations and as such will involve major changes. Most of these matters for discussion and recommended changes are tied to one another so that change in one area will most likely have repercussions elsewhere.

9.6. The need for future research

One important direction for further research is to explore cases where the curriculum reform has been successful. It is very likely that there are a few, some, or several cases of schools or districts where there has been success, or at least where a smaller gap is reported between intention and reality. An investigation into the factors enabling success will be beneficial as models for use more generally.

Another area for further studies is to explore the focus on form in the CLT classroom to gain an understanding of optimal ways of focusing on language which are conducive to supporting meaningful communication. The research might involve a trial of a more functionally oriented focus on form – on both written and spoken form – as a step to meaningful communication.

Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of successful educational change as well as active participants in the educational change process. Their opinions, therefore, should be listened to in the introduction and implementation of reform (Fullan, 2015). Little attention has traditionally been paid to the learners in the process of curriculum innovation and there is a need for studies to understand their perceptions and learning experiences with the new curriculum.

Further research is also required in different schools, both Selective and Normal, in different geographical locations to gain broader insights into the curriculum renewal across socio-economic regions. Empirical evidence gained from these studies will provide a practical, comprehensive understanding of the curriculum practices and the local contexts across geographical and socio-economic locations. Based on this evidence, appropriate and sufficient support and adjustment can be proposed for improved practice at the local level.

Research on curriculum change is both compelling and exciting, as it can yield empirically and theoretically informed findings to be used for refining and enhancing classroom practice. Longitudinal studies will be beneficial in exploring the effectiveness and sustainability of the curriculum reform over a longer period of time. These studies necessarily involve assessment outcomes to determine whether students actually improve their English knowledge and skills over a period of instruction, and allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum reform.

Longitudinal research on how teachers' attitudes and practices change will also be a significant addition to the existing body of knowledge.

9.7. Concluding remarks

The overarching purpose of the study was to investigate the ongoing English language reform at the school level in Vietnam. Many of the findings have concurred with prior studies conducted in other national settings, which also highlighted disparities between the intentions at the national policy level and realities of classroom practices at the local level. A range of impediments to the implementation of CLT reform was reported, some of which echoed accounts from other settings, while some were unique to Vietnam. The study concluded that particular features of CLT are not well suited to the context of Vietnam nor to similar nations in the Asian region as the philosophical rationale for CLT does not align well with pedagogic values and beliefs inherent in these socio-political and socio-cultural environments.

Seeking to achieve a system-wide reform at the level of the classroom is a complex task. Educational change is a dynamic and on-going process which involves several inter-related factors and constraints of various sorts. Real change involves persistence, time, money and more human investment from all the stakeholders at different levels across the education sector. The teachers in Project 2025 are challenged to teach in a way that they have not been taught themselves, which is intellectually and emotionally demanding, and, most importantly, which is culturally strange. The implications point to the need for changes in the curriculum goal, structure, leadership, and most particularly the need for a greatly increased level of professional support for teachers. Many of the proposed changes are not completely unfamiliar, and many are easy to write but very difficult to enact. However, it is only with the necessary and sufficient preparation will curriculum reform be possible and lead to the global economic participation required to raise the standard of living of Vietnamese citizens.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Abe, E. (2013). Communicative language teaching in Japan: Current practices and future prospects. *English today: The international review of the English language, 29*(2), 46-53.

Ahmad, S., & Rao, C. (2013). Applying communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language: A case study of Pakistan. *Porta Linguarum* (20), 187-203.

Al Azri, R. H., & Al-Rashdi, M. H. (2014). The effect of using authentic materials in teaching. *International journal of scientific & technology research, 3*(10), 249-254.

Anthony, E. M. (1963). Approach, method and technique. *English language teaching, 17*(2), 63-67.

Árva, V., & Medgyes, P. (2000). Native and non-native teachers in the classroom. *System, 28*(3), 355-372.

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Axinn, W. G. (2006). *Mixed method data collection strategies*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Bagarić, V., & Djigunović, J. M. (2007). Defining communicative competence. *Metodika, 8*(1), 94-103.

Baldauf, R. B., Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N., & Bryant, P. (2011). Success or failure of primary second/foreign language programmes in Asia: What do the data tell us? *Current issues in language planning, 12*(2), 309-323.

Barker, D. (2004). Encouraging students to take their language learning outside the classroom. *JALT Hokkaido journal, 8*(8), 79-86

Bax, S. (2003). The end of CLT: A context approach to language teaching. *ELT journal, 57*(3), 278-287.

Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The reading matrix, 6*(2), 60-69.

Berlach, R. G. (2010). The cyclical integration model as a way of managing major educational change. *Education research international, 2011, 1-8*.

Bernstein, B. (1990). *Class, codes and control: The structuring of pedagogic discourse* (Vol. 4: The structuring of pedagogic discourse). London, England: Routledge.

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Vol. 5). London, England: Taylor & Francis.

Berry, M. (1981). Systemic linguistics and discourse analysis: A multi-layered approach to exchange structure. *Studies in discourse analysis, 1*, 20-145.

Bjørge, A. K. (2007). Power distance in English lingua franca email communication 1. *International journal of applied linguistics, 17*(1), 60-80.

Blake, R. L. (1989). Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in family research. *Family systems medicine, 7*(4), 411-427.

Bochner, S., & Hesketh, B. (1994). Power distance, individualism/collectivism, and job-related attitudes in a culturally diverse work group. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology, 25*(2), 233-257.

Bock, G. (2000). Difficulties in implementing communicative theory in Vietnam. *Teacher's Edition, 2*, 24-28.

Bolton, K., & Kachru, B. B. (2006). *World Englishes: Critical concepts in linguistics*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Borton, L. (2000). Working in a Vietnamese voice. *Academy of management perspectives, 14*(4), 20-29.

Braine, G. (2005). A history of research on non-native speaker English teachers. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 13-23). Boston, MA: Springer.

Braine, G. (2013). *Non-native educators in English language teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Braine, G. (2018). Non-native-speaker English teachers. In C.A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, doi:10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0871.pub2

Brandl, K. (2008). *Communicative language teaching in action: Putting principles to work*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Bray, M. (2009). *Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for what private tutoring?* Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Bray, M. (2013). Shadow education: Comparative perspectives on the expansion and implications of private supplementary tutoring. *Procedia – social and behavioural sciences, 77*, 412-420.

Bray, M., & Lykins, C. (2012). *Shadow education: Private supplementary tutoring and its implications for policy makers in Asia*. The Philippines Asian Development Bank.

Breen, M. P., & Candlin, C. N. (2001). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.). *Innovation in English language teaching: A reader* (Vol. 1, pp. 89-112). New York, NY: Routledge.

Brewer, J., & Hunter, A. (2006). *Foundations of multimethod research: Synthesizing styles*. London, England: Sage Publications.

Brown, H. D. (2002). English language teaching in the "post-method" era: Toward better diagnosis, treatment, and assessment. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 9-18). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Bui, T. T. N., & Nguyen, H. (2016). Standardizing English for educational and socio-economic betterment – A critical analysis of English language policy reforms in Vietnam. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (pp. 363-388). Boston, MA: Springer.

Burns, A., & Knox, J. (2005). Realisation(s): Systemic-functional linguistics and the language classroom. In *Applied linguistics and language teacher education* (pp. 235-259). Boston, MA: Springer.

Butler, Y. G. (2011). The implementation of communicative and task-based language teaching in the Asia-Pacific region. *Annual review of applied linguistics, 31*, 36-57.

Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2012). *Using Functional Grammar: An explorer's guide* (4th ed.). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Byram, M., & García, M. C. M. (2009). Communicative language teaching. In H. Widdowson (Ed.), *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning* (pp. 491-516). Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.

Byrd, P. (2001). Textbooks: Evaluation for selection and analysis for implementation. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language, 3*, 415-428.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O., & Gilroy, P. (2004). *Practitioner research and professional development in education*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richard & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-47). London, England: Longman.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied linguistics, 1*(1), 1-47.

Candlin, C. (1978). *The communicative teaching of English: Principles and an exercise typology*. London, England: Longman.

Carless, D. R. (1998). A case study of curriculum innovation in Hong Kong. *Systems thinker, 26*(3), 353-368.

Chadwick, B. A., Bahr, H. M., & Albrecht, S. L. (1984). *Social science research methods*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.

Chan, W. L. (2014). Hong Kong secondary school English teachers' beliefs and their influence on the implementation of task-based language teaching. In D. Coniam (Ed.), *English language education and assessment* (pp. 17-34). Singapore: Springer.

Ching-Ching, C., & Kuo-Hung, H. (2018). Education reform and teacher agency. *Problems of education in the 21st Century, 76*(3), 286-288.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Christie, F., & Martin, J. R. (1997). *Genre and institutions' social processes in the workplace and school*. New York, NY: Cassell.

Clune, W. H. (1993). The best path to systemic educational policy: Standard/centralized or differentiated/decentralized? *Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 15*(3), 233-254.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education*. London, England: Routledge.

Coniam, D. (2014). *English language education and assessment: Recent developments in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland*. Singapore: Springer.

Cook, V. (2005). Basing teaching on the L2 user. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 47-61). Boston, MA: Springer.

Coskun, A. (2011). Investigation of the application of communicative language teaching in the English language classroom: A case study on teachers' attitudes in Turkey. *Online submission, 2*(1).

Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Cummings, R., Phillips, R., Tilbrook, R., & Lowe, K. (2005). Middle-out approaches to reform of university teaching and learning: Champions striding between the top-down and bottom-up approaches. *The international review of research in open and distributed learning, 6*(1), 1-19.

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford, England: Macmillan Heinemann ELT.

Dang, T. C. T., & Seals, C. (2018). An evaluation of primary English textbooks in Vietnam: A sociolinguistic perspective. *TESOL Journal, 9*(1), 93-113.

Danielsson, K., & Selander, S. (2016). Reading multimodal texts for learning: A model for cultivating multimodal literacy. *Designs for learning, 8*(1).

Datnow, A. (2012). Teacher agency in educational reform: Lessons from social networks research. *American journal of education, 119*(1), 193-201. doi:10.1086/667708

Davies, A. (1991). *The native speaker in applied linguistics*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.

Day, R. (2004). A critical look at authentic materials. *Journal of Asia TEFL, 1*(1), 101-114.

de Segovia, L. P., & Hardison, D. M. (2009). Implementing education reform: EFL teachers' perspectives. *ELT Journal, 63*(2), 154-162.

de Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in social research* (5th ed.). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 1-43). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Díaz, N. R. (2015). Students' preferences regarding native and non-native teachers of English at a university in the French Brittany. *Procedia – social and behavioral sciences, 173*, 93-97.

Ditchburn, G. (2012). A national Australian curriculum: In whose interests? *Asia Pacific journal of education, 32*(3), 259-269.

Do, H. T. (2006). *The role of English in Vietnam's foreign language policy: A brief history.* Paper presented at the 19th Annual EA Education Conference.

Drisko, J. W., & Maschi, T. (2015). *Content analysis*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching and learning*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International journal of applied linguistics, 19*(3), 221-246.

Elmore, R. (2004). The hollow core of leadership in practice. *Unpublished paper. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Graduate School of Education*.

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of advanced nursing, 62*(1), 107-115.

Fang, X., & Garland, P. (2014). Teacher orientations to ELT curriculum reform: An ethnographic study in a Chinese secondary school. *The Asia-Pacific education researcher, 23*(2), 311-319.

Farooq, M. U. (2015). Creating a communicative language teaching environment for improving students' communicative competence at EFL/EAP university level. *International education studies, 8*(4), 179-191.

Fauziati, E. (2008). *Introduction to methods and approaches in second or foreign language teaching.* In. Jalan, Malaysia: University Malaysia Sabah Press.

Fink, D. (2003). The law of unintended consequences: The 'real' cost of top-down reform. *Journal of educational change, 4*(2), 105-128.

Firth, A. (1996). The discursive accomplishment of normality: On 'lingua franca' English and conversation analysis. *Journal of pragmatics, 26*(2), 237-259.

Fishman, J. A. (1992). Sociology of English as an additional language. *The other tongue: English across cultures, 2*, 19-26.

Fotos, S. (2005). Traditional and grammar translation methods for second language teaching. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning, 1*, 653-670.

Freeman, D., & Katz, A. (2019). Leveraging teaching knowledge to develop teachers' classroom English: Working at scale. In *Building teacher capacity in English language teaching in Vietnam* (pp. 99-114). London, England: Routledge.

Fullan, M. (1994). Coordinating top-down and bottom-up strategies for educational reform. In A. R (Ed.), *Systemic reform: Perspectives on personalizing education (Report No. OR-94-3308)* (pp. 7-24). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2015). *The new meaning of educational change* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M., & Scott, G. (2009). *Turnaround leadership for higher education*. San Francisco, CA John Wiley & Sons.

Gage, N. L. (1989). The paradigm wars and their aftermath a "historical" sketch of research on teaching since 1989. *Educational researcher, 18*(7), 4-10.

Garinger, D. (2002). Textbook selection for the ESL classroom. *International journal of language learning and applied linguistics world, 6*(1), 523-533.

Garton, S. (2012). Speaking out of turn? Taking the initiative in teacher-fronted classroom interaction. *Classroom discourse, 3*(1), 29-45.

Gebhard, J. G., & Oprandy, R. (1999). *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

General Statistics Office of Vietnam. (2011). Area, population and population density by province. Retrieved from https://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=774

Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language teaching, 40*(2), 97-118.

Giri, R. A. (2010). Cultural anarchism: The consequences of privileging languages in Nepal. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development, 31*(1), 87-100.

Gómez Rodríguez, L. F. (2010). English textbooks for teaching and learning English as a foreign language: Do they really help to develop communicative competence? *Educación y educadores, 13*(3), 327-346.

Goodson, I. (2003). *Professional knowledge, professional lives*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Government of Vietnam. (2008). *Decision 1400: On the approval of the project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System Period 2008-2020"*. Hanoi: The Government.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 11*(3), 255-274.

Gregory, J. L., & Noto, L. A. (2018). Attitudinal instrument development: Assessing cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of teacher attitudes towards teaching all students. *Cogent education, 5*(1), 1-12.

Gregory, M. W. (2001). Curriculum, pedagogy, and teacherly ethos. *Pedagogy, 1*(1), 69-89.

Gurkan, S., & Yuksel, D. (2012). Evaluating the contributions of native and non-native teachers to an English language teaching program. *Procedia – Social and behavioral sciences, 46*, 2951-2958.

Hall, J. K., & Walsh, M. (2002). Teacher-student interaction and language learning. *Annual review of applied linguistics, 22*, 186.

Hall, P. A., & Simeral, A. (2008). *Building teachers' capacity for success: A collaborative approach for coaches and school leaders*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Halliday, M. A. K. (1980). Three aspects of children's language development: Learning language, learning through language, learning about language. *Oral and written language development research*, 7-19.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1993). Towards a language-based theory of learning. *Linguistics and education*, *5* (2), 93-116.

Hallinger, P., Walker, A., & Trung, G. T. (2015). Making sense of images of fact and fiction: A critical review of the knowledge base for school leadership in Vietnam. *Journal of educational administration, 53*(4), 445-466.

Hamano, T. (2008). Educational reform and teacher education in Vietnam. *Journal of education for teaching, 34*(4), 397-410.

Hamid, M. O. (2010). Globalisation, English for everyone and English teacher capacity: Language policy discourses and realities in Bangladesh. *Current issues in language planning, 11*(4), 289-310.

Hanewald, R. (2016). The impact of English on educational policies and practices in Malaysia. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (pp. 181-198). New York, NY: Springer.

Hargreaves, A., & Ainscow, M. (2015). The top and bottom of leadership and change. *Phi Delta Kappan, 97*(3), 42-48. doi:10.1177/0031721715614828

Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., Moore, S., & Manning, S. (2002). *Learning to change: Teaching beyond subjects and standards*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Harmer, J. (2003). Popular culture, methods, and context. *ELT journal, 57*(3), 288-294.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). London, England: Pearson.

Hayes, D. (2009). Non-native English-speaking teachers, context and English language teaching. *System, 37*(1), 1-11.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2010). *Qualitative research methods*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Hesse-Biber, S. J., Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *Emergent methods in social research*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Ho, W. K., & Wong, R. Y. (2002). *English language teaching in East Asia today: Changing policies and practices*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Hoang, V. V. (2010). The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam. *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture, 22*(1), 7-18.

Hoang, V. V. (2016). Renovation in curriculum and textbook developmet: An effective soluytion to improving the quality of English teaching in Vietnamese schools in the context of integration and globalisation. *VNU Journal of Education Research, 32*(4)*, 9-20.*

Hoang, V. V., Nguyen, T. C., Le, K. D., Phan, C. N., Vu, M. T., Luong, Q. T., & Kaye, D. (2015a). *Tieng Anh 6-9 Sach Hoc Sinh*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Vietnam Education Publishing House.

Hoang, V. V., Nguyen, T. C., Le, K. D., Phan, C. N., Vu, M. T., Luong, Q. T., & Kaye, D. (2015b). *Tiếng Anh 7 Sách Giáo Viên Tập 1*. Hanoi: Vietnam Education Publishing House.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research, 15*(9), 1277-1288.

Hu, G. (2002). Potential cultural resistance to pedagogical imports: The case of communicative language teaching in China. *Language, culture and curriculum, 15*(2), 93-105.

Hu, G. (2004). Pedagogical practices in Chinese EFL classrooms. *Asian Englishes, 7*(1), 42-59.

Hu, G. (2005). English language education in China: Policies, progress, and problems. *Language policy, 4*(1), 5-24.

Hu, G., & McKay, S. L. (2012). English language education in East Asia: Some recent developments. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development, 33*(4), 345-362.

Humphries, S., & Burns, A. (2015). 'In reality it's almost impossible': CLT-oriented curriculum change. *ELT journal, 69*(3), 239-248.

Hunter, A. D., & Brewer, J. (2002). Multimethod research in sociology. In C. Teddlie & A. Tashakkori (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 577-594). London, England: SAGE Publications.

Hutchinson, T., & Torres, E. (1994). The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal, 48*(4), 315-328.

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Inbar-Lourie, O. (1999). *The native speaker construct: Investigation by perceptions.* (Doctoral thesis). Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

Ivankova, N. V., & Creswell, J. W. (2009). Mixed methods. *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction, 23*, 135-161.

Jamieson, N. L. (1995). *Understanding Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jenkins, J. (2002). A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. *Applied linguistics, 23*(1), 83-103.

Jenkins, J. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching World Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *TESOL quarterly, 40*(1), 157-181.

Jihyeon, J. (2009). Key issues in applying the communicative Approach in Korea: Follow up after 12 years of implementation. *English Education Journal, 64*(4), 123-150.

Johnson, K. (1982). *Communicative syllabus design and methodology*. Oxford, England: Pergamon.

Johnson, K. (1983). *Functional materials and the classroom teacher: Some background issues*. London, England: Modern English Publication.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research, 1*(2), 112-133.

Ju, F.-a. (2013). Communicative language teaching (CLT): A critical and comparative perspective. *Theory & practice in language studies, 3*(9), 1579-1583.

Kachru, B. B. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, issues and resources. *Language teaching, 25*(1), 1-14.

Kam, H. W. (2002). English language teaching in East Asia today: An overview. *Asia Pacific journal of education, 22*(2), 1-22.

Kamhi-Stein, L., Aagard, A., Ching, A., Paik, M.-S. A., & Sasser, L. (2004). Teaching in kindergarten through grade 12 programs: Perceptions of native and nonnative English-speaking practitioners. *The CATESOL journal, 13*(1), 81-99.

Karavas-Doukas, E. (1996). Using attitude scales to investigate teachers' attitudes to the communicative approach. *ELT journal, 50*(3), 187-198.

Kasper, G. (2001). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied linguistics, 22*(4), 502-530.

Kawulich, B. B. (2005). *Participant observation as a data collection method.* Paper presented at the Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research.

Kennedy, C. (1987). Innovating for a change: Teacher development and innovation. *ELT journal, 41*(3), 163-170.

Kennedy, C., & Kennedy, J. (1996). Teacher attitudes and change implementation. *System, 24*(3), 351-360.

Kilickaya, F. (2004). Authentic materials and culture content in EFL classrooms. *The Internet ELT Journal, 10*(7). *Language Training, 38*(2), 20-23.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2008). A case study of teachers’ implementation of curriculum innovation in English language teaching in Turkish primary education. *Teaching and teacher education, 24*(7), 1859-1875.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). *English as a lingua franca in ASEAN: A multilingual model*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Kirkpatrick, R., & Bui, T. T. N. (2016). Introduction: The challenges for English education policies in Asia. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia*. New York, NY: Springer.

Kramsch, C. (1997). Guest column: The privilege of the nonnative speaker. *Publications of the modern language association of America, 112*(3), 359-369.

Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (1st ed.). London, England: Routledge.

Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). London, England: Routledge.

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993). Maximizing learning potential in the communicative classroom. *ELT journal, 47*(1), 12-21.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL quarterly, 35*(4), 537-560. doi:10.2307/3588427

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006a). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. *TESOL quarterly, 40*(1), 59-81.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006b). *Understanding language teaching from method to post-method*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kuo, I. C. (2006). Addressing the issue of teaching English as a lingua franca. *ELT journal, 60*(3), 213-221.

Lamie, J. M. (2000). Teachers of English in Japan: Professional development and training at a crossroads. *JALT journal, 22*(1), 27-45.

Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2002). University students' perceptions of native and non-native speaker teachers of English. *Language awareness, 11*(2), 132-142.

Le, V. C. (1999). *Language and Vietnamese pedagogical contexts.* Paper presented at the The 4th international conference on language and development, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Le, V. C. (2007). A historical review of English language education in Vietnam. In Y. H. Choi & B. Spolsky (Eds.), *English education in Asia: History and policies* (pp. 167-179). Seoul, Korea: Asia TEFL.

Le, V. C. (2011). *Form-focused instruction: A case study of Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices.* (Doctoral thesis). University of Waikato, New Zealand, Retrieved from https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/5253/thesis.pdf;jsessionid=C6E983FB97CEFD35F4729C64C4A39C95?sequence=3

Le, V. C. (2015). English language innovation for the Vietnamese secondary school: The Project 2020. In B. Spolsky & K. Sung (Eds.), *Secondary school English in Asia: From policy to practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Le, V. C. (2019). English language teaching in Vietnam: Aspirations, realities, and challenges. In H. T. M. Nguyen, T. T. M. Nguyen, & R. Barnard (Eds.), *Building teacher capacity in English language teaching in Vietnam: Research, policy and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors: A Vietnamese case study. *Prospect, 24*(2), 20-33.

Leavy, P. (2014). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lee, M. W. (2014). Will communicative language teaching work? Teachers' perceptions toward the new educational reform in South Korea. *Indonesian journal of applied linguistics, 3*(2), 1-17.

Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007). An array of qualitative data analysis tools: A call for data analysis triangulation. *School psychology quarterly, 22*(4), 557-584.

Lemke, J. L. (1990). *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Leung, C. (2005). Convivial communication: Recontextualizing communicative competence. *International journal of applied linguistics, 15*(2), 119-144.

Li, D. (1998). "It's always more difficult than you plan and imagine": Teachers' perceived difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. *TESOL quarterly, 32*(4), 677-703.

Li, D. (2001). Teachers' perceived difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. In D. R. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English language teaching: A reader* (pp. 149-166). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ling, C. Y., & Braine, G. (2007). The attitudes of university students towards non-native-speaker English teachers in Hong Kong. *RELC Journal, 38*(3), 257-277.

Littlejohn, A. (2011). The analysis of language teaching materials: Inside the Trojan horse. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (2nd ed., pp. 179-211). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Littlewood, W. (2007). Communicative and task-based language teaching in East Asian classrooms. *Language Teaching, 40*(3), 243-249.

Littlewood, W. (2011). Communicative language teaching: An expanding concept for a changing world. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. 2, pp. 541–557). New York, NY: Routledge.

Littlewood, W. (2014). Communication-oriented language teaching: Where are we now? Where do we go from here? *Language Teaching, 47*(3), 349-362.

Llurda, E. (2005). Looking at the perceptions, challenges, and contributions... or the importance of being a non-native teacher. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 1-9). Boston, MA: Springer.

Llurda, E., & Huguet, N. (2003). Self-awareness in NNS EFL primary and secondary school teachers. *Language awareness, 12*(3-4), 220-233.

London, J. D. (2010). Globalization and the governance of education in Viet Nam. *Asia Pacific journal of education, 30*(4), 361-379.

London, J. D. (2011). *Education in Vietnam*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Long, M. H., & Porter, P. A. (1985). Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. *TESOL quarterly, 19*(2), 207-228.

Ma, L. P. F. (2012). Strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs: Perceptions of NNESTs in Hong Kong. *Linguistics and education, 23*(1), 1-15.

Macdonald, D. (2003). Curriculum change and the post-modern world: Is the school curriculum-reform movement an anachronism? *Journal of curriculum studies, 35*(2), 139-149.

MacDonald, M. N., Badger, R., & Dasli, M. (2006). Authenticity, culture and language learning. *Language and intercultural communication, 6*(3-4), 250-261.

MacFarlane, K., & Woolfson, L. M. (2013). Teacher attitudes and behavior toward the inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties in mainstream schools: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Teaching and teacher education, 29*(1), 46-52.

Majhanovich, S. (2013). English as a tool of neo-colonialism and globalization in Asian contexts. *World studies in education*, *10*(1), pp.75-89.

Marland, P. W. (1995). Implicit theories of teaching. In L. W. Anderson (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of teaching and teacher education, 2*, 131-136.

Marlina, R., & Giri, R. (2014). *The pedagogy of English as an international language: Perspectives from scholars, teachers, and students*. New York, NY: Springer.

Mart, C. T. (2013). The audio-lingual method: An easy way of achieving speech. *International journal of academic research in business and social sciences, 3*(12), 63-64.

Martin, J. R. (1994). Reading positions/positioning readers: Judgment in English. *Prospect, 10*(2), 27-37.

Martin, J. R. (1995). Interpersonal meaning, persuasion and public discourse: Packing semiotic punch. *Australian journal of linguistics, 15*(1), 33-67.

Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond exchange: Appraisal systems in English. In S. Hunston & G. Thompson (Eds.), *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 142-175). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mason, B., Mason, DeWayne A., Mendez, M., Nelsen, G., & Orwig, R. (2005). Effects of top-down and bottom-up elementary school standards reform in an underperforming California district. *The elementary school journal, 105*(4), 353-376.

Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational researcher, 17*(2), 13-17.

Matthews, A. (1985). Choosing the best available textbook. In A. Matthews, M. Spratt, & L. Dangerfield (Eds.), *At the chalkface.* (pp. 202-206). London, England: Edward Arnold.

Maxwell, J. A., & Loomis, D. M. (2003). Mixed methods design: An alternative approach. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research, 1*, 241-272.

Mayring, P. (2004). Qualitative content analysis. In U. Flick, E. von Kardoff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative research* (Vol. 1, pp. 159-176). London, England: SAGE Publications.

McDonough, J. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT: A teacher's guide* (2nd ed. ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publication.

McDonough, J., & Shaw, C. (2012). *Materials and Methods in ELT: A teacher's guide* (3rd ed.). Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

McGrath, I. (2002). Materials evaluation and design for language teaching: Edinburgh textbooks in applied linguistics. *Applied linguistics, 101*, 57161.

Medgyes, P. (1994). *The non-native teacher*. London, England: Macmillan.

Medgyes, P. (2001). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. In M. Celce-Murci (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language.* (pp. 429-442). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Melchers, G., & Shaw, P. (2011). *World Englishes*. London: Routledge.

Mellegård, I., & Pettersen, K. D. (2016). Teachers' response to curriculum change: Balancing external and internal change forces. *Teacher development, 20*(2), 181-196.

Meurant, R. C. (2010). *EFL/ESL textbook selection in Korea and East Asia: Relevant issues and literature review.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Ubiquitous Computing and Multimedia Applications, June 23-25, Miyazaki, Japan.

Micklethwait, J., & Wooldridge, A. (1996). *The witch doctors: Making sense of the management gurus*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Miller, H. (1995). *The management of change in universities.* Buckingham, England: Open University/SRHE.

Mitchell, R. (1987). Research into communicative language teaching. *Annual review of applied linguistics, 8*, 109-125.

MOET. (2006). *Chuong trinh giao duc pho thong: Mon Tieng Anh [English curriculum for the secondary school]*. Hanoi, Vietnam

MOET. (2012). *Quyet dinh ve viec ban hanh chuong trinh giao duc pho thong mon Tieng Anh thi diem cap trung hoc co so [Decision on implementing piloted English curriculum for lower-secondary education]*. Hanoi, Vietnam

MOET. (2014). *The six-level language proficiency framework for Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam

MOET. (2018a). *Decision of the change of the project name*. Hanoi, Vietnam

MOET. (2018b). *Implementing the project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System" in the period 2017-2025.* Hanoi, Vietnam

Moodie, I., & Nam, H.-J. (2016). English language teaching research in South Korea: A review of recent studies (2009-2014). *Language teaching: Surveys and studies, 49*(1), 63-98.

Morgan, R. M. (1992). Educational reform: Top-down or bottom-up? *Educational technology, 32*(11), 47-51.

Morris, P. (1995). *The Hong Kong school curriculum: Development, issues and policies*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Morse, J. M. (2009). *Mixed method design: Principles and procedures*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast.

Moussu, L. M. (2002). *English as a second language students' reactions to non-native English-speaking teachers.* (Master thesis). Brigham Young University, Utah, USA.

Moussu, L. M. (2006). *Native and non-native English-speaking English as a second language teachers: Student attitudes, teacher self-perceptions, and intensive English administrator beliefs and practices.* (Doctoral thesis). Purdue University, Indiana, USA.

Mühlhäusler, P. (2002). *Linguistic ecology: Language change and linguistic imperialism in the Pacific region.* London, England: Routledge.

National Assembly of Vietnam. (2019). *Education Law*. Hanoi, Vietnam. Retrieved from https://luatvietnam.vn/giao-duc/luat-giao-duc-2019-175003-d1.html

National Bureau of Statistics. (2019). Publication on the 2019 census of population in Vietnam. Retrieved from http://tongdieutradanso.vn/cong-bo-ket-qua-tong-dieu-tra-dan-so-2019.html

Neuendorf, K. A. (2016). *The content analysis guidebook*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Nguyen, H. (2011). Primary English language education policy in Vietnam: Insights from implementation. *Current issues in language planning, 12*(2), 225-249.

Nguyen, H., Nguyen, H. T., Nguyen, H. V., & Nguyen, T. T. T. (2018). Local challenges to global needs in English language education in Vietnam: The perspective of language policy and planning. In C. C. S. Kheng (Ed.), *Un(intended) language planning in a globalising world: Multiple levels of players at work*. Warsaw, Poland: De Gruyter Open.

Nguyen, H., & Nguyen, Q. (2007). Teaching English in primary schools in Vietnam: An Overview. *Current issues in language planning, 8*(2), 162-173.

Nguyen, L., Hamid, M. O., & Renshaw, P. (2016). English in the primary classroom in Vietnam: Students' lived experiences and their social and policy implications. *Current issues in language planning, 17*(2), 191-214.

Nguyen, N. H. (2013). Vietnam's national Foreign Language 2020 Project: Challenges, opportunities, and solutions. Retrieved from http://bruneiusprogramme.org/wp-content/uploads/2013-ForumPublication-Complete.63-65.pdf.

Nguyen, N. T. (2017). Thirty years of English language and English education in Vietnam. *33*(1), 33-35.

Nguyen, T. H. (2002). Vietnam: Cultural background for ESL/EFL teachers. *The review of Vietnamese studies, 2*(1), 1-6.

Nguyen, T. M. P., Jin, P., & Gross, M. U. (2013). Confucian values in Vietnamese gifted adolescents and their non-gifted peers. *Gifted and talented international, 28*(1), 227-238.

Nguyen, V. H. (2002). *The ancient civilization of Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: The Gioi [World] Publishers.

Nguyen, X., Roemmele, D., & Robert, P. (2013). Education reform in Vietnam. *Journal of Asian critical education, 2*, 69.

Nguyen, X. V. (2002). English language teaching in Vietnam today: Policy, practice and constraints. In W. K. Ho & R. Y. Wong (Eds.), *English language teaching in East Asia today: Changing policies and practices* (pp. 455-474). Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Nishino, T. (2011). Japanese high school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding communicative language teaching. *JALT journal, 33*(2), 131-155.

Nishino, T., & Watanabe, M. (2008). Communication-oriented policies versus classroom realities in Japan. *TESOL quarterly, 42*(1), 133-138.

Nunan, D. (1987). Communicative language teaching: Making it work. *ELT journal, 41*(2), 136-145.

Nunan, D. (1988a). *The learner-centred curriculum*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1988b). *Syllabus design*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. *TESOL quarterly, 25*(2), 279-295.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (2001). English as a global language. *TESOL quarterly, 35*(4), 605-606.

Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL quarterly, 37*(4), 589-613.

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Stuttgart, Germany: Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Okoth, T. A. (2016). Challenges of implementing a top-down curriculum innovation in English language teaching: Perspectives of Form III English language teachers in Kenya. *Journal of education and practice, 7*(3), 169-177.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Teddlie, C. (2003). A framework for analyzing data in mixed methods research. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research, 2*, 397-430.

Orafi, S. M. S., & Borg, S. (2009). Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform. *System, 37*(2), 243-253.

Painter, C., Martin, J. R., & Unsworth, L. (2013). *Reading visual narratives: Image analysis of children's picture books*. London, England: Equinox Publishing.

Paltridge, B., & Phakiti, A. (2015). *Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource*. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Pandian, A. (2002). English language teaching in Malaysia today. *Asia Pacific journal of education, 22*(2), 35-52.

Park, H., Rehg, M. T., & Lee, D. (2005). The influence of Confucian ethics and collectivism on whistleblowing intentions: A study of South Korean public employees. *Journal of business ethics, 58*(4), 387-403.

Patel, M. F., & Jain, P. M. (2008). *English language teaching: Methods, tools and techniques*. Jaipur, India: Sunrise Publishers and Distributors.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). London, England: SAGE Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). London, England: SAGE Publications.

Penner, L. A., & Anh, T. (1977). A comparison of American and Vietnamese value systems. *The journal of social psychology, 101*(2), 187-204.

Pham, H. H. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT journal, 61*(3), 193-201.

Pham, H. L., & Fry, G. W. (2004). Education and economic, political, and social change in Vietnam. *Educational research for policy and practice, 3*(3), 199-222.

Pham, T. H. T. (2011). Doi moi (renovation) and higher education reform in Vietnam. *International journal of educational reform, 20*(3), 210-225.

Pham, V. B. (1999). *The Vietnamese family in change: The case of the Red River Delta*. Richmond: Curzon Press.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Phillipson, R. (2013). *Linguistic imperialism continued*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Philp, J., Walter, S., & Basturkmen, H. (2010). Peer interaction in the foreign language classroom: What factors foster a focus on form? *Language awareness, 19*(4), 261-279.

Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method - why? *TESOL quarterly, 24*(2), 161-176.

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. (2008). *Decision 1400: Teaching and Learning Foreign Language Education in the National Education System in the Period 2008-2020.* Hanoi, Vietnam.

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc. (2017). *The Project Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System in the Period 2017-2025*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Rahman, A. (2015). Secondary English education in Bangladesh: A critical review. In B. Spolsky & K. Sung (Eds.), *Secondary School English Education in Asia* (pp. 101-118). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rajagopalan, K. (2004). The concept of 'World English'and its implications for ELT. *ELT journal, 58*(2), 111-117.

Ralston, D. A., Nguyen, V. T., & Napier, N. K. (1999). A comparative study of the work values of North and South Vietnamese managers. *Journal of international business studies, 30*(4), 655-672.

Reves, T., & Medgyes, P. (1994). The non-native English speaking EFL/ESL teacher's self-image: An international survey. *System, 22*(3), 353-367.

Richards, J. C. (2001). The role of textbooks in a language program. Retrieved July 13, 2020 from http://www.professorjackrichards.com/pdfs/role-of-textbooks.pdf.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Unviersity Press

Richards, J. C. (2013). Curriculum approaches in language teaching: Forward, central, and backward design. *RELC journal, 44*(1), 5-33.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, W. M. (1964). The psychologist and the foreign-language teacher. *International journal of American linguistics, 32*, 63-74.

Rodgers, T. S. (2009). The methodology of foreign language teaching: Methods, approaches, principles. In K. Knapp & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning* (Vol. 6, pp. 341). Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.

Rose, D. (2014). Analysing pedagogic discourse: An approach from genre and register. *Functional linguistics, 1*(1), 1-32.

Rose, D. (2018). Pedagogic register analysis: Mapping choices in teaching and learning. *Functional linguistics, 5*(1), 1-33.

Royce, T. (1998). Synergy on the page: Exploring intersemiotic complementarity in page-based multimodal text. *JASFL occasional papers, 1*(1), 25-49.

Royce, T. (2007). Intersemiotic complementarity: A framework for multimodal discourse analysis. In T. Royce and W. Bowcher (Ed.), *New directions in the analysis of multimodal discourse* (pp. 63–109). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

Ruel, E., Wagner, W. E., & Gillespie, B. J. (2016). *The practice of survey research: Theory and applications*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Samarin, W. J. (1987). *Lingua franca*. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.

Samimy, K. K., & Brutt-Griffler, J. (1999). To be a native or non-native speaker: Perceptions of non-native students in a graduate TESOL program. In G. Brain (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 127-144). New York, NY: Routledge.

Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R. C. (1999). Communicative language teaching (CLT): Practical understandings. *The modern language journal, 83*(4), 494-517.

Savignon, S. J. (1991). Communicative language teaching: State of the art. *TESOL quarterly, 25*(2), 261-278.

Savignon, S. J. (2002). *Communicative language teaching: Linguistic theory and classroom practice*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Savignon, S. J. (2005). Communicative language teaching: Strategies and goals. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Savignon, S. J. (2008). *Interpreting communicative language teaching: Contexts and concerns in teacher education*. Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Savignon, S. J. (2017). Communicative competence. In J. I. Liontas & D. M. (Eds.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (pp. 1-7). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Sayer, P. (2015). 'More & Earlier': Neoliberalism and primary English education in Mexican public schools. *L2 journal, 7*(3), 40-56.

Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Schweisfurth, M. (2011). Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem? *International journal of educational development, 31*(5), 425-432.

Schweisfurth, M. (2015). Learner-centred pedagogy: Towards a post-2015 agenda for teaching and learning. *International journal of educational development, 40*, 259-266.

Seidlhofer, B. (2005). English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal, 59*(4), 339-341. doi:10.1093/elt/cci064

Seidlhofer, B. (2007). Common property: English as a lingua franca in Europe. In R. M. Morgan (Ed.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 137-153). Boston, MA: Springer.

Serafini, F. (2014). *Reading the visual: An introduction to teaching multimodal literacy*: Teachers College Press.

Sharifian, F. (2009). *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Sharifian, F. (2010). Glocalization of English in World Englishes: An emerging variety among Persian speakers of English. In M. Saxena & T. Omoniyi (Eds.), *Contending with globalization in world Englishes* (pp. 137-158). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Sharifian, F. (2013). Globalisation and developing metacultural competence in learning English as an international language. *Multilingual education, 3*(7), 1-11.

Sheldon, L. E. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT journal, 42*(4), 237-246.

Sikoyo, L. (2010). Contextual challenges of implementing learner-centred pedagogy: The case of the problem-solving approach in Uganda. *Cambridge journal of education, 40*(3), 247-263.

Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Simons, G. (2018). *Ethnologue*. 21st edt. Retrieved from https://www.ethnologue.com/language/eng

Simons, H. (2014). Case study research: In-depth understanding in context. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 455-470). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. (1975). Towards an analysis of discourse: The language of teachers and pupils. London: Oxford University Press.

Singh, M., Kell, P., & Pandian, A. (2002). *Appropriating English: Innovation in the global business of English teaching*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Spada, N. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Current status and future prospects. In R. M. Morgan (Ed.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 271-288). Boston, MA.: Springer.

Spelleri, M. (2002). From lessons to life: Authentic materials bridge the gap. *ESL magazine, 5*(2), 16-18.

Spolsky, B., & Moon, Y.-i. (2012). *Primary school English-language education in Asia: From policy to practice* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Routledge.

Spolsky, B., & Sung, K. (2015). *Secondary school English education in Asia: From policy to practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Steele, D., & Zhang, R. (2016). Enhancement of teacher training: Key to improvement of English education in Japan. *Procedia – social and behavioural sciences, 2*(17), 16-25.

Stemler, S. (2000). An overview of content analysis. *Practical assessment, research, and evaluation, 7*(1), 1-6.

Storch, N. (2001). How collaborative is pair work? ESL tertiary students composing in pairs. *Language teaching research, 5*(1), 29-53.

Su, S. (2005). *Globalization and English language education in Korea: Communicative competence in English as an international language through private sector education.* (Doctoral thesis). Arizona State University, Arizona, USA.

Swan, M. (1985a). A critical look at the communicative approach (1). *ELT journal, 39*(1), 2-12.

Swan, M. (1985b). A critical look at the communicative approach (2). *ELT journal, 39*(2), 76-87.

Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). *The new era of mixed methods*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

The National Assembly of Vietnam. (2013). *The Constitution of Vietnam*. Retrieved from http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/NuocCHXHCNVietNam/ThongTinTongHop/hienphapnam2013

Thompson, G. (1996). Some misconceptions about communicative language teaching. *ELT journal, 50*(1), 9-15.

Thompson, G., & Yanagita, M. (2015). Backward yakudoku: An attempt to implement CLT at a Japanese high school. *Innovation in language learning and teaching, 11*(2), 177-187.

Thoms, J. J. (2012). Classroom discourse in foreign language classrooms: A review of the literature. *Foreign language annals, 45*(s1), 8-27.

Tomlinson, B. (2003a). *Developing materials for language teaching*. London, England: Continuum.

Tomlinson, B. (2003b). Humanizing the coursebook. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Developing materials for language teaching* (pp. 139-156). London, England: Bloomsbury.

Tomlinson, B., & Dat, B. (2004). The contributions of Vietnamese learners of English to ELT methodology. *Language teaching research, 8*(2), 199-222.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2004). *Developing language course materials. Portfolio series# 11*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Tran, N. (2004). *Tìm về bản sắc văn hóa Việt Nam: Cái nhìn hệ thống–loại hình [Discovering the identity of Vietnamese culture: Typological-systematic views].* Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam: Ho Chi Minh City General Publishing House.

Truong, D. T. (2013). *Confucian values and school leadership in Vietnam.* (Doctoral thesis). Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

Truong, D. T., & Hallinger, P. (2017). Exploring cultural context and school leadership: Conceptualizing an indigenous model of có uy school leadership in Vietnam. *International journal of leadership in education, 20*(5), 539-561.

Truong, D. T., Hallinger, P., & Sanga, K. (2016). Confucian values and school leadership in Vietnam: Exploring the influence of culture on principal decision making. *Educational management administration & leadership, 45*(1), 77-100.

Truong, Q. (2013). *Vietnam: An emerging economy at a crossroads.* Working Papers 2013/09, Maastricht School of Management. Retrieved from https://ideas.repec.org/p/msm/wpaper/2013-09.html.

Truong, Q., & Vuong, N. T. (2002). Management styles and organisational effectiveness in Vietnam. *Research and practice in human resource management, 10*(2), 36-55.

Tsushima, R. (2012). *The mismatch between educational policy and classroom practice: EFL teachers' perspectives on washback in Japan.* (Doctoral thesis). McGill University, Canada.

Tudor, I. (1993). Teacher roles in the learner-centred classroom. *ELT journal, 47*(1), 22-31.

UNESCO, & MOET. (2015). *Education for all 2015 National Review: Viet Nam*. Retrieved from Hanoi, Vietnam: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232770_eng

Unsworth, L. & Cléirigh, C. (2009). Multimodality and reading: The construction of meaning through image-text interaction. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis (pp. 151-164). London, EnglandN: Routledge.

Unsworth, L., & Ngo, T. (2015). Vai trò của hình ảnh trong sách giáo khoa dạy tiếng Anh ở Việt Nam [The role of visual images in English textbooks in Vietnam]. The journal of language and life, *2015*(1), 93-99.

Van Ek, J. A. (1975). *System development in adult language learning: The threshold level in a European unit/credit system for modern language learning by adults*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED108482.pdf

Van Els, T. (1984). *Applied linguistics and the learning and teaching of foreign languages.* London, England: Hodder Arnold.

Van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*. London, England: Longman.

Van Lier, L. (2005). Case study. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Routledge.

Van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: Is meaning lost in translation? *European journal of ageing, 7*(4), 313-316.

Vu, T., & Febrianti, Y. (2018). Teachers' reflections on the visual resources in English textbooks for Vietnamese lower secondary schools. *TEFLIN journal: A publication on the teaching and learning of English, 29*(2), 266-292.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walsh, M. (2009). Pedagogic potentials of multimodal literacy. In L. Hin and R. Subramaniam (Eds.), *Handbook of research on new media literacy at the K-12 level: Issues and challenges* (pp. 32-47): Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Walter, M. (2010). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Wang, H. (2008). Language policy implementation: A look at teachers' perceptions. *Asian EFL journal, 30*(1), 1-38.

Wang, Q. (2007). The national curriculum changes and their effects on English language teaching in the People's Republic of China. In *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 87-105). Singapore: Springer.

Wang, W. (2014). Implementing the innovative 2003 English curriculum for senior secondary schools in China: Teachers' beliefs and practices. In D. Coniam (Ed.), *English language education and assessment* (pp. 35-50). Singapore: Springer.

Warden, C. A., & Lin, H. J. (2000). Existence of integrative motivation in an Asian EFL setting. *Foreign language annals, 33*(5), 535-545.

Waring, M. (2017). Management and leadership in UK universities: Exploring the possibilities of change. *Journal of higher education policy and management, 39*(5), 540-558.

Watson Todd, R., & Pojanapunya, P. (2009). Implicit attitudes towards native and non-native speaker teachers. *Systems, 37*(1), 23-33.

Wedell, M. (2009). *Planning for educational change: Putting people and their contexts first*. London, England: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems thinker, 9*(5), 2-3.

Wenger, E. (2011). Communities of practice: A brief introduction. Retrieved from https://www.ohr.wisc.edu/cop/articles/communities_practice_intro_wenger.pdf.

White, P. R. R. (2015). Appraisal theory. In K. Tracy, C. Ilie, & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction* (pp. 1-8). New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.

Widdowson, H. G. (1972). The teaching of English as communication. *ELT journal, 27*(1), 15-19.

Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D. (1972). Grammatical, situational and notional syllabuses. Paper presented at the third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Copenhagen, August 1972.

Wilkins, D. (1976). *Notional syllabuses: A taxonomy and its relevance to foreign language curriculum development.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Wolfe, S., & Flewitt, R. (2010). New technologies, new multimodal literacy practices and young children's metacognitive development. *Cambridge journal of education, 40* (4), 387-399.

World Bank. (2019). Annual GDP growth. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=VN

Wright, S. (2002). Language education and foreign relations in Vietnam. In J. W. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language policies in education: Critical issues* (pp. 225-244). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Yao, H.-c., & Yao, X. (2000). *An introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Zhang, F., & Liu, Y. (2014). A study of secondary school English teachers' beliefs in the context of curriculum reform in China. *Language teaching research, 18*(2), 187-204.

Zheng, X., & Borg, S. (2014). Task-based learning and teaching in China: Secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices. *Language teaching research, 18*(2), 205-221.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Teacher Survey

A1. English version

TEACHER SURVEY

This survey asks for information about your perceptions and teaching practices within the new national English language curriculum for lower-secondary schools in Vietnam.

All information collected in this study will be treated confidentially. There will be no potential to identify any individual respondent to the questionnaire. When you have completed this questionnaire, please press "Finish Survey" button at the end of the page.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

PART 1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

2. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

☐ PhD ☐ Master
☐ Bachelor (4 years) ☐ Bachelor (3 years)

3. How long have you been working as a teacher of English?

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 2 - 5 years
☐ 6 - 10 years ☐ 10 - 20 years
☐ > 20 years

4. What is your current English proficiency level?

☐ A1 ☐ B1 ☐ C1
☐ A2 ☐ B2 ☐ C2

PART 2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NEW CURRICULUM

5. Please indicate your perception on the necessity of the curriculum renewal.

☐ Not necessary ☐ Somewhat ☐ N/A ☐ Necessary ☐ Very necessary

6. Please indicate your perception on the feasibility of the overall goal of the new curriculum.

Overall goals of the curriculum	***Unachiveable***	***Partially achievable***	***Achievable***
After finishing Grade 9, students achieve A2 level of proficiency on the CEFR.	☐	☐	☐
English teaching at lowersecondary schools helps students practise and develop their abilities to communicate actively and confidently in English	☐	☐	☐

PART 3. UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICES OF CLT

7. What specific knowledge/skills do your students need to improve?

(You can select more than one)

☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☐ Reading
☐ Writing ☐ Grammar ☐ Vocabulary
☐ Pronunciation

8. What do you think Communicative Language Teaching – CLT involves?

(You can select more than one)

☐ A learner-centred pedagogy
☐ A teacher-centred pedagogy
☐ Primarily focusing on developing student communciative competence in English
☐ Primarily focusing on grammar
☐ Ecouraging interactions in English between teachers-students, students-students
☐ Using only English in the classroom, and avoid using Vietnamese
☐ Teachers select and design activities and materials suitable to the need, interest and level of students.
☐ Others *(if any, please specify):*

____

____

____

____

9. In your teaching practice, do you tend to focus more on:

- ☐ grammar and vocabulary
- ☐ the four skills
- ☐ speaking
- ☐ whatever students need for the exams
- ☐ others *(if any, please specify):*

____

____

____

____

10. What factors hinder the communcative language classroom in your context?

(You can select more than one)

- ☐ Students' lack of motivation to use English for communication
- ☐ Teachers' low level of proficiency
- ☐ Teachers' lack of understanding of how to create a CLT classroom
- ☐ Lack of teaching and learning materials and classroom resources
- ☐ Limited number of instructional hours
- ☐ The use of Vietnamese in class
- ☐ Washback effect of examinations
- ☐ No opportunities for students to communicate in English outside classrooms
- ☐ Other factors *(if any, please specify):*

____

____

____

____

A2. Vietnamese version

BẢNG CÂU HỎI

Bảng câu hỏi này bao gồm các câu hỏi liên quan đến quan điểm cá nhân của giáo viên về mục tiêu và phương pháp giảng dạy chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo. Thông tin trong bảng câu hỏi này sẽ được bảo mật. Thầy (Cô) vui lòng chọn phương án đúng nhất với mình hoặc trình bày quan điểm của mình vào phần trống.

Trân trọng cám ơn Thầy (Cô)!

PHẦN 1. THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN

1. Giới tính của Thầy (Cô)

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

2. Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của Thầy (Cô)

☐ Tiến sĩ ☐ Thạc sĩ
☐ Cử nhân đại học ☐ Cử nhân cao đẳng

3. Kinh nghiệm giảng dạy tiếng Anh của Thầy (Cô)

☐ < 1 năm ☐ 2 - 5 năm
☐ 6 - 10 năm ☐ 10 - 20 năm
☐ > 20 năm

4. Trình độ tiếng Anh của Thầy (Cô)

☐ A1 ☐ B1 ☐ C1
☐ A2 ☐ B2 ☐ C2

PHẦN 2. QUAN ĐIỂM VỀ CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIẾNG ANH THÍ ĐIỂM

5. Thầy (Cô) đánh giá thế nào về mức độ cần thiết của việc cải cách dạy và học Tiếng Anh trong trường THCS ở thời điểm hiện tại?

☐ Không cần thiết ☐ Chưa thực sự cần thiết
☐ Không có ý kiến gì ☐ Cần thiết

6. Thầy (Cô) đánh giá thế nào về mức độ khả thi của các mục tiêu chung mà chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm đề ra?

Mục tiêu chung	*Không thể đạt được*	*Chỉ đạt được phần nào*	*Có thể đạt được*
"Sau khi học xong Chương trình tiếng Anh THCS, học sinh có thể đạt được năng lực giao tiếp tiếng Anh tương đương Cấp độ A2"	☐	☐	☐
"Dạy và học tiếng Anh ở THCS giúp học sinh rèn luyện và phát triển năng lực giao tiếp tiếng Anh một cách chủ động và tự tin, tạo tiền đề cho việc sử dụng tiếng Anh như một công cụ trong học tập và trong đời sống xã hội"	☐	☐	☐

PHẦN 3. HIỂU BIẾT VÀ THỰC HÀNH CLT

7. Thầy (Cô) thấy kỹ năng mà học sinh của Thầy (Cô) còn yếu? *(Thầy (Cô) có thể lựa chọn nhiều hơn một phương án)*

☐ Nghe ☐ Nói ☐ Đọc
☐ Viết ☐ Ngữ pháp ☐ Từ vựng
☐ Phát âm

8. Theo Thầy (Cô), đường hướng Dạy Ngôn ngữ Giao tiếp (Communicative Language Teaching - CLT) mà chương trình tiếng Anh mới yêu cầu có đặc điểm gì? *(Thầy (Cô) có thể lựa chọn nhiều hơn một phương án)*

☐ Lấy người học làm trung tâm
☐ Lấy giáo viên làm trung tâm
☐ Tập trung chủ yếu vào phát triển phát triển năng lực giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh cho học sinh
☐ Dạy Ngữ pháp đóng vai trò chủ đạo
☐ Dạy kỹ năng giao tiếp là chủ yếu, tránh dạy nhiều Ngữ pháp
☐ Giáo viên chủ động trong việc lựa chọn ngữ liệu và hoạt động phù hợp với sở thích, nhu cầu và khả năng của học sinh
☐ Hoạt động trên lớp được thiết kế linh hoạt và đa dạng để học sinh có thể luyện tập cá nhân, theo cặp, hoặc nhóm
☐ Sử dụng tiếng Anh hoàn toàn trên lớp, không sử dụng tiếng Việt
☐ Tăng cường tương tác bằng tiếng Anh giữa giáo viên với học sinh, học sinh với học sinh
☐ Khác *(nếu có):*

____

____

9. Thầy (Cô) chú trọng phát triển kỹ năng nào cho học sinh?

- ☐ Ngữ pháp và từ vựng
- ☐ Bốn kỹ năng (nghe, nói, đọc, viết)
- ☐ Kỹ năng nói
- ☐ Kỹ năng cần thiết để đi thi
- ☐ Khác *(nếu có):*

____

____

____

10. What factors hinder the communcative language classroom in your context? *(You can select more than one)*

- ☐ Học sinh không có nhiều động lực sử dụng tiếng Anh trong lớp và ngoài lớp
- ☐ Giáo viên chưa tự tin với khả năng giao tiếp và phát âm bằng tiếng Anh
- ☐ Thiếu cơ sở vật chất, thiết bị và tài liệu dạy, học
- ☐ Sĩ số lớp đông, khó triển khai hoạt động giao tiếp và quản lý lớp
- ☐ Thời lượng học trên lớp ít
- ☐ Giáo viên và học sinh sử dụng nhiều tiếng Việt trên lớp
- ☐ Áp lực từ thi cử vẫn tập trung nhiều vào từ vựng và ngữ pháp
- ☐ Giáo viên chưa hiểu rõ về CLT và cách áp dụng vào lớp học
- ☐ Other factors *(if any, please specify):*

____

____

____

Appendix B. Classroom Observation Protocol

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Date: ______________________________ Time: ______________________

Teacher: ____________________________ Class: ______________________

School Name:_________________________ Visit No. ____________________

Brief description of the lesson

Lesson: ____

____

Lesson Objectives:

____

____

____

____

____

Materials Used (including textbook, workbook, handouts, or PowerPoint, etc.)

____

____

____

____

Classroom Setting (space, seating arrangements, environment, etc.)

____

____

____

____

____

PART A: CLASSROOM EVENTS

Time	Activities	Student Organisation			Content	Student Modality					Materials
		Class	Pair/ Group	Indiv.		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Other	(type/source)

PART B: COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES

Use of target language	
Information gap (the information requested/exchanged is unpredictable)	
Sustained speech (length of teacher and student turns/student and student turns)	
Students' discourse initiation (frequency of self-initiated turns by students)	
Form restriction (Choral work, restricted or unrestricted use of forms by students)	

General comments:

The teaching method(s) used

____

____

____

____

The role of the teacher/ students

____

____

The use of textbook

Does the teacher strictly follow and cover all the content in the textbook?

____

____

Are there any exercises/activities complied by the teacher using different resources?

____

____

Further notes

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

Appendix C. Interview Protocols

C1. Interview protocol for teachers

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer: _______________________ Date: _________________________________

Interviewee: _______________________ School:_________________________________

Background information

1. Which school are you currently working for?
2. How long have you been teaching English? How long have been working with the new curriculum textbooks?

Attitudes towards curriculum innovation and theoretical principles underlying the curriculum

1. What do you think about the necessity of the current English curriculum reform?
2. Have you read the curriculum document?
3. Do you think your students can reach A2 level of English proficiency after finishing lower-secondary schools? Why/Why not?

Understanding of CLT

4. Have you heard about CLT?
5. What do you think CLT involves? How do you know about that?
6. What do you think about the role of grammar teaching and learning?
7. Do you think CLT is suitable to your students in your local context? Why/Why not?

Curriculum practices

1. What do you think about new Tieng Anh textbooks?
2. Do you strictly follow the textbook and always cover all textbook content? Do you use any supplementary materials in your teaching?
3. What do you think your students need to improve (speaking, listening, reading, writing, pronunciation, grammar)?
4. How to help the students improve their ability and motivation to speak in English in the classroom? And outside the classroom?
5. What challenges do you face when using communicative tasks in the classroom? Do you design the tasks yourself or use from the textbooks?
6. Do you prefer using English or Vietnamese as the language of instruction in your teaching? Why?
7. How do you assess your students' progress?
8. What challenges (including internal and external constraints) you face when using the new textbooks?

Professional development

1. How much training do you receive every year?
2. Who deliver the training? What is the content of the training?
3. Does the training help you with what you need for your teaching?
4. Do you think you need more training in order to work with the new curriculum more effectively?
5. Do you have difficulties in your professional development?
6. Do you have any recommendations or comments about the training or workshops that your local department of education and training should organise for teacher professional development?

Appendix C2. Interview protocol for school principals

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Interviewer: ________________________ Date: __________________________________

Interviewee: ________________________ School:_________________________________

Understandings of and attitudes towards curriculum innovation

1. What do you think about the necessity of the current English curriculum reform?
2. Do you think your students can reach A2 level of proficiency after finishing lower-secondary school? Why/Why not?
3. Have you heard about CLT, the designated pedagogy underpinning the new curriculum? How do you know about that?

Constraints to the implementation

4. What do you think about the challenges/constraints that your school/teachers/students face when implementing the new curriculum?
5. What do you think about the measures/ways to remove/limit those constraints?
6. Teacher professional development
7. How often teacher in-service training is organised?
8. Are there any other supports to the teachers and school facilities in order that the new curriculum is implemented?

Appendix D. Ethics Approval[2]

RESEARCH SERVICES
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, COMPLIANCE AND INTEGRITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

LEVEL 4, RUNDLE MALL PLAZA
50 RUNDLE MALL
ADELAIDE SA 5000 AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE +61 8 8313 5137
FACSIMILE +61 8 8313 3700
EMAIL hrec@adelaide.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Number 00123M

Applicant: Dr J Walsh

School: School of Humanities

Project Title: Project 2020 - An investigation of the principles and practices within the Vietnamese national English language curriculum for lower-secondary classrooms

---

The University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions)

ETHICS APPROVAL No: H-2017-027 **App. No.: 0000022231**

APPROVED for the period: 09 Mar 2017 to 31 Mar 2020

Thank you for your response, dated 06.03.17, to the matters raised. It is also noted that this project involves PhD student Thao Thi Vu.

DR JOHN TIBBY
Co-Convenor
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group
(Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions)

DR ANNA OLIJNK
Co-Convenor
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group
(Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions)

[2] *The title of the study has been changed to "English Language Curriculum Reform at the National Level: A Case Study of Intentions and Realities in Viet Nam".*

Appendix E. Consent Form

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	Project 2020 – An investigation of the principles and practices within the Vietnamese national English language curriculum for lower-secondary classrooms.
Ethics Approval Number:	H-2017-027

2. I have had the project, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. My consent is given freely.

3. I have been given the opportunity to have a member of my family or a friend present while the project was explained to me.

4. Although I understand the purpose of the research project it has also been explained that involvement may not be of any benefit to me.

5. I have been informed that, while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged.

6. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

7. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

8. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: ____________________ Signature: _______________________ Date: __________

Researcher/Witness to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to _______________________________________

(print name of participant)

and in my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature: __________________ Position: _________________________ Date: __________

Appendix F. Participant Information Sheet

F1. Participant Information Sheet for Teachers

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

For Teacher

PROJECT TITLE: Project 2020 – An investigation of the principles and practices within the Vietnamese national English language curriculum for lower-secondary classrooms.

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2017-027
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. John Walsh
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Thao Thi Vu

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This project aims to explore the principles and practices within the new national English language curriculum for the lower-secondary level in Vietnam. This new curriculum, employing a communicative language teaching approach, targets English communicative competence and is expected to bring about the desired changes in English teaching and learning in schools. Since 2012 the new English curriculum has been piloted in a number of lower-secondary schools across the country. However, there is widespread concern that the implementation of this new curriculum might not lead to the expected increases in the targeted proficiency level among the students. Questions to be asked include:

(i) what do the teachers think about the changes;
(ii) how will the new curriculum be actually be implemented by teachers and students in classrooms;
(iii) is there any mismatch between the curriculum rhetoric and curriculum practices.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Thao Thi Vu. This research will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr John Walsh and Dr William Winser.

Why am I being invited to participate?

As you are a teacher of English at a lower-secondary school and directly involved in the teaching of English under the new curriculum, your information provided will be of great significance to this project.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to complete online questionnaires to ascertain your understanding and attitude towards the curriculum innovation, as well as challenges you face as part of the curriculum implementation. Based on the information provided in the questionnaires, you may be invited to participate in an in-depth interview and asked for permission to observe your classroom teaching. Your participation will be entirely voluntary. It is not a requirement from your school or the Division of English Language Education.

How much time will the project take?

The time required for the questionnaire and/or interview will be approximately 15 minutes and approximately 20 minutes respectively. These times will be explained to you and your participation will be voluntary.

Classroom observations will be only conducted based on your permission. If you find that the observations are resulting in any discomfort or pressure on you or your students, you will have the right to withdraw from the research without any penalty.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
It is anticipated that participation in the research will be a positive experience for the teachers. No physical harm will come to any participants.

What are the benefits of the research project?

As curriculum and policies are designed based on senior decision makers' views, the information provided by participants will be of great importance for concluding whether the innovative curriculum works in practices and whether any adjustments are needed for more effective implementation. As the teachers are the key stakeholders in the curriculum reform and it will be important to listen to and document their voices.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

What will happen to my information?

Participant identities will not be published during the data collection process. It will not be necessary to make public the participation of individual teachers and their classrooms. Each classroom teacher will be deidentified and data collected from each classroom will create a body of information which is independent of individual teachers.
All data will be deindentified at source. The online questionnaire will be antonymous.
The data will be stored on a network computer in the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide.
The teachers will be able to review their own transcripts prior to the publication of the thesis.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Contact details of researchers:

Thao Thi Vu: School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: thao.vu@adelaide.edu.au Phone: 0420859460

Dr John Walsh School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: john.walsh@adelaide.edu.au Phone: 83135196

Dr William Winser School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: bill.winser@adelaide.edu.au

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number **H-2017-027**). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding a concern or complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 6028
Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au
Post: Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

A link to the online survey will be sent to you via your email address you provide to the researcher. Arrangements for interview will be made upon your convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Thao Thi Vu
John Walsh
William Winser

F2. Participant Information Sheet for School Principals

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

For the School Principal

PROJECT TITLE: Project 2020 – An investigation of the principles and practices within the Vietnamese national English language curriculum for lower-secondary classrooms.

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2017-027
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. John Walsh
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Thao Thi Vu

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This project aims to explore the principles and practices within the new national English language curriculum for the lower-secondary level in Vietnam. This new curriculum, employing a communicative language teaching approach, targets English communicative competence and is expected to bring about the desired changes in English teaching and learning in schools. Since 2012 the new English curriculum has been piloted in a number of lower-secondary schools across the country. However, there is widespread concern that the implementation of this new curriculum might not lead to the expected increases in the targeted proficiency level among the students. Questions to be asked include:

(i) what do the teachers think about the changes;
(ii) how will the new curriculum be actually be implemented by teachers and students in classrooms;
(iii) is there any mismatch between the curriculum rhetoric and curriculum practices.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Thao Thi Vu.

This research will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr John Walsh and Dr William Winser.

Why am I being invited to participate?

As you are a Head teacher of the school and directly involved in the teaching of English under the new curriculum, your information provided will be of great significance to this project.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to participate in an in-depth interview and asked for permission to observe classroom teaching in your school. Your participation will be entirely voluntary.

How much time will the project take?

The time required for the interview will be approximately 20 minutes. These time will be explained to you and your participation will be voluntary.

Classroom observations will be only conducted based on your permission and the teacher's permission. If you find that the observations are resulting in any discomfort or pressure on you, the teacher or your students, you will have the right to withdraw from the research without any penalty.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
It is anticipated that participation in the research will be a positive experience for the teachers. No physical harm will come to any participants.

What are the benefits of the research project?

As curriculum and policies are designed based on senior decision makers' views, the information provided by participants will be of great importance for concluding whether the innovative curriculum works in practices and whether any adjustments are needed for more effective implementation. As the teachers are the key stakeholders in the curriculum reform and it will be important to listen to and document their voices.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

What will happen to my information?

Participant identities will not be published during the data collection process. It will not be necessary to make public the participation of individual teachers and their classrooms. Each classroom teacher will be deidentified and data collected from each classroom will create a body of information which is independent of individual teachers.
All data will be deindentified at source. The online questionnaire will be antonymous.
The data will be stored on a network computer in the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide. The teachers will be able to review their own transcripts prior to the publication of the thesis.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Contact details of researchers:

Thao Thi Vu: School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: thao.vu@adelaide.edu.au Phone: 0420859460

Dr John Walsh School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: john.walsh@adelaide.edu.au Phone: 83135196

Dr William Winser School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics
Email: bill.winser@adelaide.edu.au

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number **H-2017-027**). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding a concern or complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 6028
Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au
Post: Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

You can arrange a schedule for interview upon your convenience.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely,
Thao Thi Vu
John Walsh
William Winser

Appendix G. Sample Analysis

G1. Appraisal Analysis

#	Appraisal language	Source	Target	Attitude type
1	I am **totally happy** with the curriculum.	Teacher A	The curriculum	Inscribed Positive Affect
2	When working with the new curriculum, I found that **obviously** it has **more advantages** over the old one in that it can help to develop students' language skills	Teacher A	The curriculum	Inscribed Positive Appreciation
3	The new curriculum is designed to develop students' language competence. Based on that aim, we focus on helping students practice their English skills.	Teacher A	The curriculum	Invoked Positive Appreciation
4	The textbooks are designed with a corporation of the four language skills, together with grammar.	Teacher A	Textbooks	Invoked Positive Appreciation
5	Another principle is student-centeredness, which is different from the old curriculum which is teacher-centered.	Teacher A	The curriculum	Invoked Positive Appreciation
6	However it [the curriculum] is **still inferior** compared to some other programs I know.	Teacher A	The curriculum	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
7	I think 70 percent of the students in this school can achieve that level [Level A2]	Teacher A	Goal achievement	Invoked Negative Appreciation
8	The **biggest drawback** is that it's **too long** to be covered in 45 minutes.	Teacher A	The curriculum	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
9	Furthermore, the class size is **too big** for all students to have chance to practice.	Teacher A	Constraints Class size	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
10	It'll be much more beneficial if there are about 15 to 20 students in one class. But for classes of more than 40 students, it's **much more difficult**.	Teacher A	Constraints Class size	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
11	For **weak** students, I have to encourage them by asking them questions in class. I also try to increase the amount of work groups, so that the students can interact with each other.	Teacher A	Students	Inscribed Negative Judgement
12	Sometimes I **can't** because of **limited class time**, **large class** and the **long syllabus** need to be covered.	Teacher A	Constraints	Inscribed Negative Appreciation

#	Appraisal language	Source	Target	Attitude type
13	The challenge I face is the learning environment. For schools in rural areas, there are **no chance** for using English outside the classroom	Teacher A	Constraints	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
14	I meant the **limited** amount of English uses among the students.	Teacher A	Constraints	Inscribed Negative Appreciation
15	Yes, I am **happy** with the new curriculum.	Teacher B	The curriculum	Inscribed Positive Affect
16	I **like** the textbooks and visual illustrations.	Teacher B	The curriculum	Inscribed Positive Affect
17	In terms of knowledge, I think it's **suitable**,	Teacher B	The curriculum	Inscribed Positive Appreciation

G2. Textbook analysis

Year 6 Unit 1 My New School

Summary

Mechanical Practice	15	35%
Meaningful Practice	18	40%
Communicative Practice	11	25%
	44	**100%**
Speaking	11	25%
Listening (comprehension)	1	2%
Listening (integrated)	[8]	[18%]
Reading	8	18%
Writing	3	7%
Grammar	11	25%
Vocabulary	7	16%
Pronunciation	3	7%
	44	**100%**

YEAR 6

Unit 1. My new school

#	Mechanical practice	Section	Activity	Meaningful Practice	Section	Activity	Communicative Practice	Section	Activity
1				Are these sentences True or False	Getting Started	1a			
2				Find these expressions in the conversation	Getting Started	1b			
3				Pratice these expressions	Getting Started	1c			
4							Can you extend the conversation?	Getting Started	1d
5				Listen and read	Getting Started	2a			
6							Work in pairs. Write a poem	Getting Started	2b
7	Match with words with the school things	Getting Started	3						
8							Look around. What other things do you have in your classroom?	Getting Started	4
9	Listen and repeat	A Closer Look 1 (Vocab)	1						
10	Work in pairs. Put the words into groups	A Closer Look 1 (Vocab)	2						
11	Put the words into the blanks	A Closer Look 1 (Vocab)	3						
12							Write sentences about yourselves	A Closer Look 1 (Vocab)	4
13	Listen and repeat	A Closer Look 1 (Pronunciation)	5						
14	Listen and put the words into groups	A Closer Look 1 (Pronunciation)	6						
15	Underline the sounds	A Closer Look 1 (Pronunciation)	7						
16				Write the correct word forms to complete the interview	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	1			
17				Correct the sentences based on the interview	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	2			

18				Works in pairs. Make questions and answers	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	3			
19				Listen and underline present continuous verb tense	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	4			
20	Complete sentences using correct verb forms	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	5						
21	Choose the correct verb tense	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	6						
22				Read the email and underline verb tense	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	6a			
23							Compare your week with Vy's week	A Closer Look 2 (Grammar)	7
24				Read and tick the questions you think are suitable to ask a new friend	Communication	1			
25				Work in groups. Take turns to interview the others using the quiz	Communication	2a			
26							Class presentation	Communication	2b
27							Look at the pictures. What do they tell you about the schools	Skills 1 (Reading)	1a
28				Read the texts quicky	Skills 1 (Reading)	1b			
29				Find the words in the text. What do they mean?	Skills 1 (Reading)	2			
30				Read again and complete the sentences	Skills 1 (Reading)	3			
31							Talk about your school	Skills 1 (Speaking)	4
32				Listen and choose the correct answers	Skills 2 (Listening)	1			
33	Correc the punctuation in these sentences	Skills 2 (Writing)	2						
34				Correct the punctuation in the passage	Skills 2 (Writing)	3			

35							Create a webpage	Skills 2 (Writing)	4
36	Write the words to match the picture	Looking Back (Vocab)	1						
37	Match the words in the two columns	Looking Back (Vocab)	2						
38	Listen and write down the words	Looking Back (Vocab)	3						
39	Complete the sentences with correct verb tenses	Looking Back (Gram)	4						
40	Complete the sentences with present continuous tense	Looking Back (Gram)	5						
41				Complete the text with the correct verb forms	Looking Back (Gram)	6			
42				Match the questions with the answers	Looking Back (Communication)	7			
43							Role play: Work in pairs. Ask and answer	Looking Back (Communication)	8
44							Project: Work in groups. Discuss your dream school	Project	

G3. Classroom Discourse Analysis

Lesson 4. Normal School. Rural district

Unit 4. Lesson 3. A Closer Look 2

SUMMARY

Total number of exchanges	**90**	**100.0%**
Teacher talks	1,715	73.1%
Student talks	630	26.9%
Teacher-initiated exchanges	85	100%
Student-initiated exchanges	-	-
Knowledge exchanges	66	73.3%
Action exchanges	14	15.6%
Mixed	7	7.8%
Regulative'	-	-
Basic exchanges (IRF)	48	53.3%
Extended exchanges (over 3 moves)	42	46.7%
The use of English	2,013	85.8%
The use of Vietnamese	332	14.2%

Total word count: 2,345

#	Spk	Exchange	Role	Participation	Phase	Source
1		…				Textbook
	S	Truc is… shorter than… Chi.	K2	S1	Propose	
	T	Truc is shorter than… Chi.	K1		Affirm	
2		Okay another answer. Thao?	dK1	S2	Focus	
	S	Truc is taller than Tung.			Propose	
	T	Truc is taller than Chi.	K1		Affirm	
3	T	Okay now what about superlative? Who can make sentence with superlative. Kiet?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	It is the…	K2	S3	Propose	
	T	The most …?	K1		Focus	
	S	Exciting film.	K2		Propose	
	T	It is the most exciting film. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
4	T	Now you?	dK1	S4	Focus	
	S	Long is the tallest….	K2		Propose	
	T	Long is the tallest in your…?	K1		Focus	
	S	In your ….	K2		Repeat	
	T	Class.	K1		Focus	
	T	Okay.	K1		Affirm	
5	T	Today we continue know more about comparison. Let's begin a closer look 2.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	We learn… in the lesson… two. [write on the board]	K1	Class	Prepare	Board
6	T	Now look at these.	A2	Class	Direct	Manga
	T	I have two comics…. two comics [hold two comics]. Yes.	K1		Prepare	
	T	Now what do you think about 'detective Conan'? Is it interesting? Is Conan interesting? Ly?	dK1	S5	Focus	
	S	Yes.	K2		Propose	

7	T	Now what about Doraemon? Is it Doreamon interesting? Nga?	dK1	S6	Focus	
	S	Yes.	K2		Propose	
	T	So you can say… Doraemon is as interesting as Conan. So you can say… [write on the board] Conan is as interesting as Doraemon.	K1	Class	Elaborate	Board
8	T	Now class repeat. Conan is as interesting as Doraemon.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] Conan is as interesting as Doraemon.	A1	Class	Repeat	
9	T	Again.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] Conan is as interesting as Doraemon.	A1	Class	Repeat	
10	T	Thu?	A2	S7	Direct	
	S	[read] Conan is as interesting as Doraemon.	A1		Repeat	
11	T	In Vietnamese? Vietnamese?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Conan …	K2		Propose	
12	T	Viet Anh?	dK1	S10	Focus	
	S	Conan thu vi hon Doreamon.	K2		Propose	
	T	Thu vi hon? Ngoc?	K1		Reject	
	S	Em thua co la Conan thu vi nhu la Doreamon.	K2	S8	Propose	
	T	Right. Conan thu vi nhu la Doreamon or Conan thu vi bang Doreamon. Yes.	K1		Affirm	
13	T	Do you think pop music? Is pop music exciting [wrong pro]? Quynh?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Yes.	K2	S9	Propose	
14	T	How about opera? Is opera exciting? Long?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	No.	K2	S11	Propose	
	T	No. Yes.	K1	Class	Affirm	
	T	So you can say … opera is not as… exciting as… pop music.	K1	Class	Elaborate	
15	T	Now class repeat. 'Opera is not as exciting as pop music'.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] Opera is not …as exciting … as…	A1	Class	Repeat	
	T	Opera is not as exciting'.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] 'Opera is not as exciting'.	S1	Class	Repeat	
	T	As pop music'.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] 'As pop music'.	A1	Class	Repeat	
16	T	Again. The whole sentence.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	drill] Opera is not as exciting as pop music.	A1	Class	Repeat	
	T	[write the sentence on the board]				Board
17	T	Now you again.	A2	S12	Direct	
	S	Opera is not as exciting as pop music.	A1		Repeat	
18	T	In Vietnamese, Duong?	dK1	S13	Focus	
	S	Opera khong thu vi nhu nhac pop.	K2		Propose	
	T	Opera khong thu vi nhu nhac pop hay la khong hay nhu nhac pop.	K1		Affirm	
19	T	So when do we use as adjective as? As adjective as? Hien please?	K1	Class	Focus	
	S	We use as adjective as to compare two thing and two people.	K2	S14	Propose	
	T	We use as adjective as to show that two things are similar. Yes.	K1		Affirm	
20	T	And what about not as adjective as? When do you use it? Dat?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la not as adjective as to mean something more or less than something.	K2	S15	Propose	
	T	Yes so we use to mean something more or less than something else.	K1	S14	Affirm	
21	T	Okay, can you give me the form as as adjective as? Hien?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	Ss	S + be + as adjective as+ S	K2	Class	Propose	Board

	T	[write the form on the board]	K1	Class	Affirm	
22	T	Again… when do we use this form? Ngoc? When do we use this form?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	When we…	K2	S8	Propose	
	T	Show two…	K1		Focus	
	S	Show two …	K2		Repeat	
	T	Are similar or…	K1		Focus	
	S	not	K2		Propose	
	T	Not similar…yes…	K1		Focus	
	T	in Vietnamese we call? Chung ta goi day la so sanh gi nhi?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	Ss	So sanh ngang bang.	rch		Propose	
	T	Subject as adjective as nguoi ta goi la so sanh ngang bang dang khang dinh. If we add not it means so sanh ngang bang dang phu dinh.	K1	S8	Elaborate	
23	T	Now can you make sentence with this form? Can you make sentence with this form?	dK1		Focus	
	T	Make sentence with as adjective as and as not adjective as. Ngoc please.	dK1	S8	Focus	
	S	Cooking is as interesting as singing.	K2		Propose	
	T	Yes cooking is as interesting as singing.	K1		Affirm	
24	T	Okay, another? Huong?	dK1	S16	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la gardening is as interesting as writing.	K2		Propose	
	T	Writing?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	S	Dancing.	rch		Identify	
	T	Gardening is as interesting as dancing. Yeah	K1		Affirm	
25	T	Another answer, Nhoc Anh?	dK1	S17	Focus	
	S	Playing football is… as interesting as… playing…	K2		Propose	
	T	Playing football is as interesting as playing…?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	S	Volleyball.	K2		Propose	
26	T	You can use another adjective not interesting. Em co the su dung tinh tu khac interesting.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	Ngoc Anh?	dK1	S18	Focus	
	S	(…) not as small as…	K2		Propose	
	T	Duong is not as… small as…	K1		Focus	
	S	Long.	K2		Propose	
	T	Okay.	K1		Affirm	
27	T	Khanh?	dK1	S19	Focus	
	S	My room is not as beautiful as your room.	K2		Propose	
	T	Yes.. my room is not as beautiful as your room.	K1		Affirm	
28	T	Phuong Anh.	dK1	S20	Focus	
	S	Lan is as clever as Hoa.	K2		Propose	
	T	Lan is as clever as Hoa. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
29	T	Now look at this CD. Look at this CD.	A2	Class	Prepare	
	T	Are they different? Are they different? Ngoc? Are they different?	dK1		Focus	
	S	No.	K2	S8	Propose	
	T	No… yes.	K1		Affirm	
		Are they the same? Are they the same? Same?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	S	Giong nhau.	K2		Propose	
	T	Are they the same? Co giong nhau khong?	K1 tr		Focus	
	S	Yes.	rtr		Propose	

	T	So you can say this CD is the same as that CD. [write the sentence on the board – students take note]	K1		Elaborate	
30	T	Now listen and repeat. This CD is the same as that CD.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] This CD is the same as that CD.	A1		Repeat	
31	T	Huyen?	A2	S21	Direct	
	S	This CD is the same as that CD.	A1		Repeat	
32	T	In Vietnamese? In Vietnamese? Bac?	K1		Focus	
	S	Dia CD nay giong nhu dia CD kia.	K2	S22	Propose	
	T	Okay dia CD nay giong nhu dia CD kia.	K1	S13	Affirm	
	T	Now when do we use the same as? When do we use the same as? Duong?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	S	Em thu co la to show…simi…	rch		Propose	
	T	Ah similarity.	K1		Affirm	
	T	We use to show similarity.	K1		Elaborate	
	T	Similarity?	K1(ch)		Focus	
	S	Giong nhau.	rch		Propose	
33	T	Vay khi nao chung ta su dung cai cum tu nay nhi? In Vietnamese, Duong?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la khi chi su giong nhau.	K2	S13	Propose	
	T	Ah khi chi su giong nhau.	K1		Affirm	
34	T	Now can you give me the form?	dK1		Focus	
	T	This CD… is…	K1		Prepare	
	S	Subject …	K2		Propose	
	T	Subject 1 is…	K1		Focus	
	S	The.	K2		Propose	
	T	The same as… subject 2.	K1		Elaborate	
35	T	Now what do you think about pop music and opera. Are they the same? Khanh?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	No.	K2	S19	Propose	
	T	No they aren't.	K1		Affirm	
	T	So you can say the pop music is different from the opera. [write the sentence on the board – the Ss take note]	K1		Elaborate	Board
36	T	Now class repeat. The pop music is different from the opera.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[drill] the pop music is different from the opera.	A1		Repeat	
37	T	Now Kien.	A2	S23	Direct	
	S	The pop music is different from the opera.	A1		Repeat	
	T	Again… different from the opera.	A2		Direct	
	S	Different.	A1		Repeat	
38	T	So when do you use different from? Phuong?	dK1	S24	Focus	
	S	[read the textbook] different from to say that two … or more things are not similar.	K2		Propose	
	T	To show that two or more things are not similar.	K1		Affirm	
	T	In Vietnamese?	K1 ch		Focus	
	S	(…)	rch		Propose	
	T	Can you write the form of 'different from'? Can you give the form?	K1 ch		Focus	
	S	Subject	K2		Propose	
	T	[write on the board]			Affirm	
	S	Different from.	K2		Propose	
	T	Different from… subject 2. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
39	T	Now you make sentence…. sentences with this form. Now make sentences. Hieu?	dK1	S25	Focus	
	S	Football… is different from… volleyball.	K2		Propose	
	T	Yes… football is different from volleyball.	K1		Affirm	

40	T	Ngoc?	dK1	S26	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la my homework is different from Lan homework.	K2		Propose	
	T	My homework is different from Lan homework. **Very good.**	K1		Affirm	
41		Duong?	dK1	S13	Focus	
	S	City life is different from … country life.	K2		Propose	
	T	Okay city life is different from country life. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
42	T	Thao?	dK1	S2	Focus	
	S	My (…) is different from (…)	K2		Propose	
	T	Speak louder. Speak louder.	A2		Direct	
	S	Your room now is different from your room five years ago.	K2/A1		Propose	
	T	Ah your room now is different from your room five years ago. **Thank you.**	K1		Affirm	
43	T	Now when we understand comparison better, we move to exercise 1. **Exercise 1.** Put 'as' or 'from' in the gap.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	Ly, what do you have to do in exercise 1? Bai tap 1.	tr	S5	Focus	
	S	Em thua co dien as hoac from.	rtr		Propose	
	T	Dien as hoac from vao cho trong.	K1		Elaborate	
44	T	One minute for you.	A2		Direct	
	T	[Ss do the exercise in their textbook]	A1		Concur	
45	T	Okay… now have you finished? Have you finished?	K1		Prepare	
	T	Chi?	dK1	S27	Focus	
	S	[read the first sentence]	K2		Propose	
	T	Thank you. One you put 'as'.	K1		Affirm	
46	T	Two? Thao?	dK1	S2	Focus	
	S	[read the second sentence]	K2		Propose	
	T	Two … put 'as'. **Well done.**	K1		Affirm	
47	T	Three? Phuong Anh?	dK1	S20	Focus	
	S	[read the third sentence]	K2		Propose	
	T	Three put… 'as'.	K1		Affirm	
48	T	Number 4? Duy?	dK1	S28	Focus	
	S	[read the forth sentence]	K2		Propose	
	T	'Different' not 'difficult'. Okay.	K1		Reject	
	T	Different from.	K1		Affirm	
49	T	Five, Bich Ngoc?	dK1	S8	Focus	
	S	[read the fifth sentence]	K2		Propose	
	T	Now I want you when you stand up you speak louder.	A2		Direct	
	T	So number five you put…? Em phai dung?	dK1		Focus	
	S	As	K2		Propose	
	T	Okay, as.	K1		Affirm	
50		Six? Nhu?	dK1		Focus	
	S	[read the sixth sentence]	K2	S29	Propose	
	T	Six is 'as'	K1		Affirm	
	T	How can you translate this sentence?	K1 ch		Focus	
	S	(…)	rch		Propose	
	T	Luon luon ban ron nhu mot chu ong.	K1		Affirm	
	T	Does your mother the same with the mother in this sentence?	K1 ch		Focus	
	S	Yes.	rch		Propose	
	T	Mothers are always busy.	K1		Elaborate	
51	T	Now look at exercise 2.	A2	Class	Prepare	
	T	Read the requirement of exercise 2. Lien?	A2	S30	Direct	
	S	[read the requirement]	A1		Read	

	T	So what do you have to do?	tr		Focus	
	S	(…)	rtr		Propose	
	T	Speaker louder.	A2		Direct	
	S	(…)	A1		Propose	
	T	Dien mot trong nhung cum tu sau day vao cho trong. So I think … we can…listen (…)	K1	Class	Elaborate	[T did not use the pictures in the book]
52	T	Now look at the phrase 'as narrow as'… narrow…	K1		Prepare	
	T	Ngoc?	dK1	S26	Focus	
	S	Rong. [wide]	K2		Propose	
	T	Rong? No.	K1		Reject	
		Opposite rong. Opposite.	K1		Focus	
	Ss	Hep. [narrow]	K2	Class	Propose	
	T	Hep.	K1		Affirm	
53	T	Now you complete this passage.	dK1		Direct	
	Ss	[Ss do the exercise]	K2			
54	T	Okay are you ready?	K1	Class	Prepare	
	Ss	Yes.	K2f			
55	T	One. Lien?	dK1	S30	Focus	
	S	(…)	K2		Propose	
	T	Number one you put…?	K1tr		Focus	
	S	The same as.	rtr		Propose	
	T	The same as.. **Well done.**	K1		Affirm	
56	T	Two Hieu?	dK1		Focus	
	S	The same as.	K2	S25	Propose	
	T	The same as? Do you agree?	tr		Focus	
	Ss	No.	rtr		Propose	
	T	Now another idea.	K1	Class	Reject	
	T	Long?	dK1	S11	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la as quiet as.	K2		Propose	
	T	Right. As quiet as.	K1		Affirm	
57	T	Three... Phuong?	sK1		Focus	
	S	Different from.	K2	S24	Propose	
	T	Different from. Different from.	K1		Affirm	
58		Four. Duc Duy?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	As narrow as.	K2	S28	Propose	
	T	As narrow as. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
59	T	Five? Five? Chi?	dk1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la friendly as.	K2	S27	Propose	
	T	Friendly as. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
60		And six. Six. Nga?	dk1	Class	Focus	
	S	The same as.	K2	S6	Propose	
	T	The same as. Okay.	K1		Affirm	
61	T	Now you read the whole passage. Hien?	A2	Class	Direct	
	T	The whole class look at the book and listen to her.	A2		Direct	
	S	[read the whole passage]	A1	S14	Read	
	T	OK **very good**.	A2f		Praise	
62	T	Now your homework… you write a passage about the changes in village. Write a passage about the changes in village…. Use these comparison okay?	K1	Class	Focus	
	T	What we have to do Thao?	tr	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la phai viet mot doan van noi ve su thay doi cua lang que su dung so sanh.	rtr	S2	Propose	
	T	Okay	K1		Affirm	

63	T	**Exercise three**. Look at exercise three. [Read] 'Work in pairs… compare the two music clubs in the town Young Talent and Nightingale'.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	Young Talent in Vietnamese? Young Talent? Who knows? Duong?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Tai nang tre.	K2	S13	Propose	
	T	Okay tai nang tre.	K1		Affirm	
64	T	Nightingale?	dk1	Class	Focus	
	T	A kind of bird… this bird sing very beautifully… Mot loai chim… nightingale… it sings very beautiful. Loai nao hot rat hay?	K1		Prepare	
	Ss	Chim son ca.	K2		Propose	
	T	Chim son ca.	K1		Affirm	
65	T	Okay … you work in pairs compare the two music clubs in town.	A2	Class	Direct	
	T	Now look at the table... how many adjectives are there? Thao?	dk1		Prepare	
	S	There are six.	K2	S2	Propose	
	T	Yeah there are six adjectives.	K1		Affirm	
66	T	Now you look at the first adjective… 'old'. Viet Anh?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la 'gia'.	K2	S10	Propose	
	T	Gia.	K1		Affirm	
67	T	Friendly. Duy? Friendly.	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la than thien.	K2	S28	Propose	
	T	Right.	K1		Affirm	
68	T	Safe? Linh?	dK1		Focus	
	S	An toan.	K2	S31	Propose	
69	T	Large. Hieu?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Rong.	K2	S25	Propose	
70	T	Expensive. Quynh?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Dat.	K2	S9	Propose	
71	T	Famous. Chi?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Noi tieng.	K2	S27	Propose	
	T	Right.	K1		Affirm	
72	T	You look at adjective 'old'.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	How many stars has Young Talent got? How many star?	dK1		Focus	
	Ss	Sao.	K2		Propose	
	T	How many? How many stars? Ngoc?	K1tr		Focus	
	S	Two.	rtr	S8	Propose	
73	T	Now what about Nightingale? How many?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Three.	K2		Propose	
	T	So you can compare… Young Talent is not as old as Nightingale…. Or Nightingale is older than Young Talent.	K1		Elaborate	
74	T	Now you work in pairs and… compare two clubs… two music clubs.	A2	Class	Focus	
	T	Are you clear?	tr		Focus	
	Ss	Yes.	rtr			
	T	Work in pairs not individual.	A2	Class	Direct	
	Ss	[Ss work in pairs] **[-> working]**	A1		Concur	
75	T	Now stop.	A2	Class	Direct	
		Adjective 'friendly'. Duong? Duong and Huyen.	dK1	S13 S14	Focus	
	S	Young Talent is more friendly than Nightingale.	K2	S13	Propose	
	S	Nightingale is not as friendly as Young Talent.	K2	S14	Propose	

	T	**Perfect** yes…	K1		Praise	
76	T	'Safe'… what about 'safe'? Thu and Huong?	dK1	S7 S16	Focus	
	S	Young Talent is not as safe as Nightingale.	K2	S7	Propose	
	S	Nightingale is safer than Young Talent.	K2	S16	Propose	
	T	Yes.	K1		Affirm	
77		Last. Duy and Phuong?	dK1	S28 S24	Focus	
	S	Young Talent is larger than Nightingale.	K2	S28	Propose	
	T	Larger than Nightingale.	K1		Affirm	
	S	Nightingale … not as large … as Young Talent.	K2	S24	Propose	
	T	Is. Nightingale is not… as large as Young Talent.	K1		Affirm	
78	T	Now what about expensive… expensive. Viet Anh and Ngoc.	dK1	S10 S26	Focus	
	S	Young Talent … is not as…expensive as… Nightingale.	K2	S10	Propose	
	T	Now how many stars has Young Talent… have? Young Talent has how many stars? May sao nhi?	K1tr		Focus	
	S	Ba.	rtr	S10	Propose	
	T	What about Nightingale? How many stars?	tr		Focus	
	S	Young Talent is as expensive as Nightingale.	K2		Propose	
	T	Or?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Nightingale is… the same as Young Talent.	K2	S26	Propose	
	T	The same as…. The same expensive as Young Talent.	K1		Affirm	
79	T	Now famous. Hieu and Huyen.	dK1	S25 S21	Focus	
	S	Young Talent is not… as famous as Nightingale.	K2	S25	Propose	
	S	Nightingale is famous…	K2	S21	Propose	
	T	Famous… long adjective. Famous is long adjective.	K1		Elaborate	
	S	Nightingale is more than Young Talent.	K2	S21	Propose	
	T	Nightingale is more famous than Young Talent. Now again Huyen.	K1		Elaborate	
	S	Nightingale is more famous than Young Talent.	K2	S21	Repeat	
	T	Okay yes.	K1		Affirm	
80	T	Okay I like English.	K1	Class	Prepare	
		Do you like English, Phuong Anh?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Yes.	K2	S17	Propose	
	T	[write on the board] Phuong Anh says I like English.	K1		Affirm	Board
81	T	Now what about you Ngoc? Do you like English?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Yes.	K2	S8	Propose	
	T	Yes, I do.	K1		Affirm	
	T	So I can say… Ngoc can say… I like it too. Ngoc can say I like it too.	K1		Elaborate	
82	T	So 'too' what does it mean? What does it mean? Duy?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Em thua co la qua.	K2	S28	Propose	
	T	Qua? No.	K1		Reject	
		In this case it is not mean qua. Lan Anh?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Cung.	K2	S32	Propose	
	T	Right… it is 'cung'.	K1		Affirm	
83	T	Okay when do we use 'too'? When do we use 'too'? Thao?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	I .. use 'too' to express agreement with a positive … statement [read from the book].	K2	S2	Propose	

	T	Yes… we use too to express an agreement with a positive statement.	K1		Affirm	
		In Vietnamese?	K1ch		Focus	
	S	Chung ta dung too de dien ta su giong nhau o cau khang dinh.	rch	S2	Propose	
	T	Dung roi. Chung ta dung too de dien ta su dong tinh o cau khang dinh. Cau trong khang dinh chung ta dong y voi y kien do chung ta dung too.	K1		Elaborate	
84	T	Yes. Where is too? Where does it stand? Where does too stand? Too dung o vi tri nao? Dat?	dK1	Class	Focus	
	S	Cuoi cau.	K2	S15	Propose	
	T	Cuoi cau la gi nhi? Hien?	dK1		Focus	
	S	Too at the end of the sentences.	K2	S14	Propose	
	T	Yes. Chung ta dung too de bieu dat su dong tinh khang dinh va too dung o cuoi cau.	K1		Affirm	
	T	Too stand at the end of the sentences. So we use too to express agreement with a positive sentences… and it stand at the end of the sentences.	K1		Elaborate	
85	T	Okay now you work in pairs and make sentences with too. You work in pairs and make sentences with too.	A2	Class	Direct	
	T	[Ss work in pairs]	A1			
86	T	Face to face.	A2		Direct	
		[Ss work in pairs]				
87	T	Now stop.	A2		Direct	
		Please stop. Duy and Phuong Anh.	A2	S28 S20	Direct	
	S	[holding the book] I like cooking.	K2	S20	Propose	
	T	You like cooking.	tr		Affirm	
	S	I like it too.	K2	S21		
	T	Do you cook well? Duy do you cook well?	K1ch		Focus	
	S	… Yes.	rch	S21	Propose	
88	T	Another, Long and Linh.	dK1	S11 S31	Direct	
	S	I like play with Duy.	K2	S11	Propose	
	T	You like play… play with Duy.	tr		Affirm	
	S	No I don't like.	K2		Propose	
	T	Later you will learn how to express don't like.	K1		Elaborate	
89	T	Now Dat and Nhu.	dK1	S15 S29	Direct	
	S	I like dancing.	K2	S15	Propose	
	S	I like it too.	K2	S29	Propose	
90	T	Now you … use another verb not like.	K1	Class	Prepare	
	T	**[bell rings]**				
	T	Next we will continue…now your homework … learn this structure by heart and write a passage about the changes in the village.	K1	Class	Direct	
	T	Thank you for your listening.				
	Ss	[Stand up] [drill] Goodbye teacher. See you again.				
	T	See you again.				