

2022

Moving towards communication-oriented language teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective

Hien Thi Tran
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tran, H. (2022). *Moving towards communication-oriented language teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective*. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2573>

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2573>

Moving towards communication-oriented language teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective

This thesis is presented for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Tran Thi Hien

Edith Cowan University

School of Education

2022

ABSTRACT

Vietnam has been attempting to build its English learners' communicative abilities to improve the country's competitiveness in the global market. As a result, English language Teaching (ELT) reforms have been introduced in the educational system. Part of the reforms involves the implementation of mandatory primary English education following the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) despite a difficult history of CLT implementation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Primary English teachers have been a critical challenge for the success of a communicative curriculum in Vietnam. Teachers' CLT understanding and pedagogies from a socio-cultural perspective have been under-researched, especially those in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta region. In addressing this gap, this qualitative research, grounded in the Constructivist approach, aimed to explore how primary English teachers in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta understood and implemented CLT in their classrooms from a socio-cultural perspective. The research project targeted all public school primary English teachers in Phase 1 in one school district in the region through the use of an online questionnaire. Twenty-eight teachers participated in this phase, from whom eight were then purposively selected to voluntarily participate further in Phase 2. The purposive sampling was aimed to select a good representation of primary English teachers in the district regarding their genders, qualifications, training, and teaching experiences. Data collection for Phase 2 involved pre-observation interviews with individual teachers, in-class observations, and post-observations interviews with the use of stimulated video recall sessions. The major findings showed that there were misconceptions and/or contradictions in teachers' activity systems. Teachers did not understand CLT theory and practice, or their understanding was incomplete. Although they claimed they taught in the direction of CLT, their actual pedagogies featured traditional approaches with a focus on teaching language forms and vocabulary and with excessive use of techniques from the Audiolingual Method, the PPP model, and the Grammar-Translation Method. The findings also revealed that teachers' practices were driven by contextual factors such as Vietnamese educational traditions, needs from their ecological school communities, and their lack of sufficient and proper training of CLT pedagogies. Finally, teachers perceived both challenges and opportunities in moving towards communication-oriented language teaching. Proper and sufficient assistance needed to be provided to empower primary English teachers to fulfill the government's goals in building students'

communicative abilities. Some of the assistance consisted of, but not limited to, ELT policy significant changes or adjustments, teachers' professional development, improving teaching and learning conditions, and especially teachers' agentic power to act towards desired goals. The research implies that a top-down ELT policy without involving and informing by all stakeholders will not work successfully and effectively. Another implication is that those who have direct influence on teachers, e.g., local educational officials and school leaders, will be able to shape their practices. Finally, the research implies that a pure version of Western-based CLT cannot work well in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam without significant changes in the culturally embedded educational traditions.

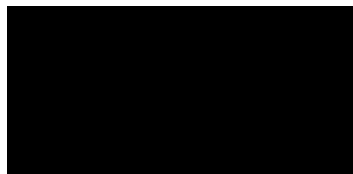
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- Incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or
- Contain any defamatory material.

I also grant permission to the Edith Cowan University Library to make duplicate copies of my thesis as required.

Signature:



Date: 08/12/2021

DEDICATION

“You have come a long way, honey!” is what my husband tells me every time when we connect our past and present.

“I love you, mom!” is what my son says and hugs me every day.

So, this is for my husband, Scott Brantley, and my son, Toby (Toby Vo Brantley/Vo Tran Quoc Khanh) who have accompanied me on my PhD journey in Australia. Scott and Toby, you two are my great source of love, strength, and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Vietnamese Government, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Australia, my ECU supervisors, all the primary schools and English teachers in Vietnam who participated in my research, and all of my family and friends. Thanks to all, my PhD journey, in general, and this thesis, in particular, is now becoming completed.

I am thankful for the ECU-VIED Joint Scholarship from the Vietnamese Government through MOET/VIED and ECU that has given me full financial support for my PhD study. Without the support, my study could not have been possible. I would also like hereby to send my thanks to all of the MOET/VIED's and ECU staff who have assisted me whenever I need assistance along my PhD journey. Names such as ECU School of Education, Graduate Research School (GRS), ECU Scholarships, ECU Student Hub, ECU IT Service, ECU Library, Bev Lurie, Dr. Sandra Medic, Dr. Cecily Scutt, Dr. Neil Ferguson, Dr. Jo McFarlane, Hoang Thi Kim Oanh (VIED), etc. have become so familiar as they have provided great support to me so far in my study. Also, I would like to say thanks to my school, Dong Thap University in Vietnam. Leaders from my university, my faculty, and my colleagues have helped me greatly in arranging for me to pursue my PhD study in Australia as well as giving me encouragement along the way.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my two supervisors at ECU, Dr. Christine Cunningham and Dr. Anamaria Paolino. They have shared with me their professional knowledge and expertise as well as provided me with their timely guidance and advice so that I can go forwards on my journey as a research student. Christine, you have always been with a great professional and academic vision when it comes to research matters. Annamaria, you have shared with me your profound knowledge in my research topic; and with an EFL research student like me, you have always been my great language editor. Since I arrived in Perth in the winter of 2017 and missed the first meeting with you two, my feelings of worries have gone to leave space for trust and confidence. I am now looking forwards to the future to apply what I have learned during my study into practice. All are thanks to your good and effective supervision, from which I have repeatedly nominated you two for the award of ECU School of Education Best Supervisory Team.

I would like to send big thanks to all of the primary schools and primary English teachers in the school district in Vietnam where I conducted my data collection. I am thankful to the 28 anonymous teachers who participate in answering the online questionnaire in Phase 1. You all silently helped me go forwards in my research without letting me know who you were to thank you in person. I really appreciate the support I received from all school leaders and staff from the eight primary schools that allowed me to conduct my data collection in Phase 2. To the eight teachers who gave me the chances to interview you and observe your classes, I cannot thank you enough for all of your assistance. I wish you all the best in your personal and professional lives.

Finally, I would like to send my deepest thanks to my family and friends, who have been a big part during my study journey abroad. While I still felt hesitated about my PhD study in Australia, my mother-in-law, Mary Brantley Kennard, as well as the whole family in the United States strongly encouraged me to go and gave my small family great support for the journey to take place. My mother, sisters, brothers, nieces, and nephews in Vietnam have given spiritual encouragement as well as taken care of my affairs at home so that I can study well far away from home. To the brother and nephew that I cannot meet again, this is also for you as I know you are watching over me from above. You two saw me off at the airport for my departure but will not be there on the day I come back. You are always in my thoughts and prayers. Brother Nine and Hau, I am about to complete my study and come back home. I pray that you two can go with father/grandfather to enter eternity in Buddhas' world. To Scott and Toby, you two have been with me every single day on this journey together. I have been blessed to have a whole family that is always beside me, loves and gives me full support. I could not have achieved this without you two. Finally, to all of my friends in Vietnam and the Vietnamese PhD students at ECU, thank you all for all of the encouragement, the memories and life stories that we share. I will forever cherish our friendship and look forwards to continuing having you in my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. The research.....	1
1.1.1. My story to the research project	1
1.1.2. The background to the research.....	3
1.1.3. The research problem.....	4
1.1.4. The research aims and questions	6
1.1.5. The significance of the research	7
1.1.6. The thesis organisation	7
1.2. The context of the research.....	9
1.2.1. The Vietnamese context	9
1.2.2. . Primary English education in Vietnam	12
1.3. Chapter summary.....	21
CHAPTER 2. THE LITERATURE REVIEW	22
Introduction	22
2.1. English and ELT in the concentric circles model	23
2.1.1. The concentric circles model of World Englishes	23
2.1.2. The influence of the West on ELT	25
2.2. Traditional language pedagogies	27
2.3. The Communicative Language Teaching approach	33
2.3.1. The birth of CLT.....	33
2.3.2. The communicative competence.....	36
2.3.3. Principles and characteristics of CLT.....	39
2.3.4. Classroom activities in CLT.....	49
2.3.5. The critique of CLT	55
2.3.6. The future of CLT.....	62

2.4.	CLT in EFL contexts.....	68
2.5.	The implementation of CLT in Vietnam	72
2.6.	The theoretical perspective	77
2.7.	The conceptual framework.....	83
2.8.	Chapter summary.....	85
CHAPTER 3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		86
Introduction		86
3.1.	The qualitative paradigm and qualitative research	87
3.2.	Methods of the research	88
3.2.1.	Methods of data collection.....	88
3.2.2.	Data collection procedure.....	97
3.2.3.	Data analysis	106
3.3.	Rigour	114
3.4.	Ethical considerations	117
3.5.	Chapter summary.....	118
CHAPTER 4. THE RESEARCH FINDINGS.....		119
Introduction		119
4.1. FINDINGS OF THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE – INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....		119
4.1.1.	General understanding about the primary English teachers.....	119
4.1.2.	Primary English teachers’ understanding of CLT and their pedagogies.....	123
4.1.3.	Teachers’ descriptions of challenges facing their practices & needs of help and support	128
4.1.4.	Summary	135
4.2. FINDINGS OF THE PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS – TEACHERS’ TRAINING BACKGROUNDS AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CLT		135
Introduction		135
4.2.1.	Teachers’ training backgrounds.....	136
4.2.2.	Teachers’ understanding CLT, their attitudes & claims of their CLT practices	152
4.2.3.	Teachers’ views towards CLT and traditional teaching approaches.....	159
4.2.4.	Teachers’ CLT practices in their descriptions.....	164
4.2.5.	Summary	169
4.3. FINDINGS OF THE IN-CLASS OBSERVATIONS – TEACHERS’ ACTUAL PRACTICES.....		169
Introduction		169
4.3.1.	Classroom activities	170

4.3.2. Classroom language	193
4.3.3. Summary	202
4.4. FINDINGS OF THE POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS – TEACHERS’ REFLECTIONS ON THEIR PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL MATTERS	202
Introduction	202
4.4.1. Teachers’ reflections about their teaching practices.....	202
4.4.2. Issues affecting teachers’ primary English practices	225
4.5. Chapter summary.....	255
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	256
5.1. Introduction and points of discussion.....	256
5.1.1. Summary of research findings	256
5.1.2. Reference to the research questions.....	259
5.1.3. The points of discussion.....	260
5.2. Misconceptions about CLT policies in the Vietnamese primary English education	261
5.2.1. The failure of considering the cultural appropriateness of CLT in Vietnam	261
5.2.2. The policy failure of definition in CLT implementation in primary English in Vietnam	270
5.3. Misconceptions about CLT curriculum in Vietnamese primary English education	272
5.4. Misconceptions about CLT pedagogies in the Vietnamese primary English education.....	276
5.4.1. Teachers’ misunderstanding of CLT as a cause for misconceptions about CLT pedagogies	276
5.4.2. Mismatch between what teachers understand about CLT and how they put their understanding into practice as misconceptions about CLT pedagogies.....	280
5.5. Contradictions about teacher agency to implement CLT in the Vietnamese primary English education	284
5.6. Does it matter?	290
5.7. Chapter summary.....	293
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	294
6.1. Overview	294
6.2. Addressing the research question	294
6.3. Limitations of the research	296
6.4. The research contribution	297
6.5. Implications.....	298
6.6. Recommendations for practice.....	299
6.6.1. Recommendations for educational policymakers and authorities.....	299

6.6.2. 6.6.2. Recommendations for educational authorities - DOETs'/BOETs' and academic inspectors.....	306
6.6.3. Recommendations for teacher education and professional development.....	307
6.7. Suggestions for future research.....	312
6.8. Concluding comments – reflections of my personal learning and teaching experience.....	313
REFERENCES.....	316
APPENDICES.....	330
APPENDIX 1A INVITATION LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS – PHASE 1 (English version).....	330
APPENDIX 1B. INVITATION LETTERS TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS – PHASE 1 (Vietnamese version) ...	333
APPENDIX 2A. INVITATION LETTER TO TEACHERS AND PROJECT INFORMATION – PHASE 2 (English version)	336
APPENDIX 2B. INVITATION LETTER TO TEACHERS AND PROJECT INFORMATION – Phase 2 (Vietnamese version).....	339
APPENDIX 3A. INFORMATION LETTER AND OBSERVATION PERMISSION (English version).....	342
APPENDIX 3B. INFORMATION LETTER AND OBSERVATION PERMISSION (Vietnamese version) ...	346
THƯ XIN PHÉP DỰ GIỜ LỚP HỌC	346
APPENDIX 4A. INFORMATION LETTER FOR CHILDREN’S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (English version)	350
APPENDIX 4B. INFORMATION LETTER FOR CHILDREN’S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.....	353
APPENDIX 5A. CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS (English version).....	356
APPENDIX 5B. CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS (Vietnamese version)	358
APPENDIX 6A. CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS (English version).....	360
APPENDIX 6B. CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS (Vietnamese version).....	362
APPENDIX 7A. CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN’S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (English version)	364
APPENDIX 7B. CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN’S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (Vietnamese version)	366
APPENDIX 8. GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY FOR TRANSLATION CHECKER	368
APPENDIX 9A. THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE (English version).....	369
APPENDIX 9B. THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE (Vietnamese version)	375
APPENDIX 10. CLASS OBSERVATION PROTOCOL	381
APPENDIX 11. PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW TOPICS	382
APPENDIX 12. POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW TOPICS	383

LIST OF TABLES

	<i>Page</i>
Table 1.1. <i>The Vietnamese educational management system</i>	11
Table 1.1 <i>Five versions of traditional approaches</i>	28
Table 2.2. <i>Some major principles of CLT</i>	40
Table 2.3. <i>Methodological principles of CLT</i>	41
Table 2.4. <i>Activities focusing on fluency and accuracy</i>	50
Table 2.5. <i>Characteristics of non-communicative and communicative activities</i>	51
Table 2.6. <i>The communicative continuum</i>	54
Table 2.1. <i>Class observation protocol</i>	96
Table 3.2. <i>An example of back translation technique</i>	109
Table 3.3. <i>An example of manual data coding of an interview</i>	111
Table 3.4. <i>An example of manual coding of an observation</i>	111
Table 3.5. <i>Strategies for ensuring rigour</i>	115
Table 3.1. <i>Summary of participants' background information</i>	120
Table 4.1. <i>Summary of major findings in the four data collection rounds</i>	257
Table 5.2. <i>Language-in-education planning goals</i>	262
Table 5.3. <i>Cultural differences between Collectivist societies and Individualist societies</i>	264
Table 5.4. <i>Cultural differences between large and small Power Distance societies</i>	265
Table 5.5. <i>Cultural differences between strong and weak Uncertainty Avoidance societies</i>	266
Table 5.6. <i>Cultural differences between Masculinity and Femininity societies</i>	267

LIST OF FIGURES

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Figure 1.1.</i> Training-the-trainer model of Project 2020	17
<i>Figure 1.2.</i> Primary English teacher re-training program	18
<i>Figure 2.3.</i> The concentric circles model by B. Kachru (1985, 1992)	24
<i>Figure 4.2.</i> A higher framework for developing a personal pedagogy	67
<i>Figure 2.3.</i> The conceptual framework for the current research	84
<i>Figure 3.1.</i> Map of Vietnam	89
<i>Figure 3.5.</i> The process from codes to themes	113
<i>Figure 4.6.</i> Teachers' workload	123
<i>Figure 4.7.</i> Teachers' understanding of CLT	124
<i>Figure 4.8.</i> Teachers' teaching practices	126
<i>Figure 4.9.</i> Teachers' challenges in their teaching practices	129
<i>Figure 4.10.</i> Teachers' needs of help and support	133
<i>Figure 4.11.</i> Teachers' training backgrounds	136
<i>Figure 4.12.</i> In-service training by Project 2020	138
<i>Figure 4.13.</i> DOET's in-service training	146
<i>Figure 4.14.</i> Teachers' expectations about professional training	149
<i>Figure 4.15.</i> Teachers' understanding of CLT	152
<i>Figure 4.16.</i> Teachers' views of CLT and traditional methods	159
<i>Figure 4.17.</i> The classroom activities in the teachers' actual practices	170
<i>Figure 4.18.</i> A collation of screenshots about teachers' explicit textbook teaching	172
<i>Figure 4.19.</i> A collation of memory-based game named What's missing	173
<i>Figure 4.20.</i> A collation of some features of teacher-fronted classrooms	178
<i>Figure 4.21.</i> A screenshot of explicit focus-on-forms instruction in Hong's class	180
<i>Figure 4.22.</i> A collation of vocabulary list in two observed classes	184
<i>Figure 4.23.</i> A student showing respect to her teacher in teacher-student interaction	187
<i>Figure 4.24.</i> Classroom language in teachers' actual practices	194
<i>Figure 4.25.</i> Teachers' opinions about MOET's approved textbooks	232

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOET	Bureau of Education and Training (i.e., district level)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COLT	Communication-Oriented Language Teaching
DOET	Department of Education and Training (i.e., provincial level)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
PCA	Principled Communicative Approach
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This opening chapter of the thesis will give an overview about the research and the research background context. Accordingly, there will be two major parts in the chapter: introduction about the research and introduction about the context of the research. The first part will present overall information about the research, which includes introduction about my own experience, general background to the research, the research problem as well as aims and questions. A thesis organisation will be outlined at the end of part one. The second part of the thesis will introduce the context of the research. Background information about the Vietnamese context such as the land, the people, the culture and the educational system will be briefly presented in the first section. The second section will highlight information about primary English education in Vietnam, which is the main area of the research. The section will provide historical information for background understanding about foreign language education and ELT, and especially primary English education policy and some critical issues surrounding it. Finally, a chapter summary will be placed at the end of the chapter to summarise the introduction.

1.1. The research

1.1.1. My story to the research project

I come from Vietnam and have worked as an English teacher at a university in the Mekong Delta of the country since 1997 (and still currently holding a staff status at the school). I have a BA in English teaching and a Master in English Studies. My first language is Vietnamese, and I am also a fluent English user. When Project 2020 was launched, a short professional training program of teaching English to young learners was designed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) for in-service primary English teachers. MOET chose 18 training institutions in the country that would send their experienced English teachers to attend MOET's training workshop at major MOET's training centres. These teachers, called trainers of trainees (ToT), later would conduct training sessions to assist in-service primary English teachers' pedagogies in implementing the national primary English curriculum. My university was one of the MOET's 18 training partners to host training workshops for primary English teachers in the Mekong Delta region. In 2011, I was chosen to be a ToT, and attended the training program of teaching English to young learners, held by

MOET in the Central Vietnam. In 2012, I was also chosen to attend another training program of teaching English to adolescents, held by MOET in the North of Vietnam. In the same year, MOET sent me and several other English lecturers from the 18 institutions to New Zealand to take an eight-week training course of teaching English to young learners at Victoria University of Wellington. Going back to my university, I worked with many different groups of learners: English major students, non-English major students, pre-service secondary English teachers, in-service primary and secondary English teachers. My colleagues and I participated in Project 2020's primary English teacher training scheme by delivering training sessions to schoolteachers gather at my university or we travelled to other provinces in the Mekong region to conduct our training sessions. During those sessions, I learned and compiled teachers' stories about their practices. What teachers usually shared included things such as: "... but at my school, ...", "I cannot teach like that because ...", "If only my school leaders also participated in this training", etc. From there, terms such as "but it will depend", "but in their contexts" appeared in my mind. I felt that our enthusiasm and passion to change ELT were hit by the reality and realised that it would be very difficult to carry out changes.

Back in my family, I had a son who was going to a local primary school. One day, he came home and said his teacher chose him to attend an *English Speaking Contest* at the school level and asked me for additional help. My son was handed a pile of paper with speaking topics and ready-made paragraphs that he was supposed to learn by heart to attend the contest. Since then, I realised that I needed to teach my son to learn how to speak English gradually at home. However, learning along for him could be boring, so we invited one of his friends to come to learn together. Day after day, more and more parents came to ask for their children to join my 'home schooling English class'. Until a time when there were too many children for my home to host, parents asked me to open my private English classes and so I had a private business! I had a diverse range of learners from primary children to working people, but my focus was still primary English classes, where I applied what I learned from Project 2020 and my own ELT expertise and experience. The children in my classes learned English with songs, games, chants, and practiced speaking simple English through those activities. Nonetheless, the fun could not last long when both parents and students expected that I would use 'official' English textbooks, give students exercises and homework (certainly all on paper), score their papers, etc. That was because parents wanted to see 'concrete evidence' that their children

were learning and making progress, and also because it was the convention at (public) schools. We talked back and forth, and I eventually caved in. I taught like that for several months and then joined MOET's Project 911 to take a PhD course in Australia. With what I had been through in my ELT career, primary English continuously attracted my attention, and I decided my PhD research would be in this area. That was why I chose this research topic for my PhD study.

1.1.2. The background to the research

Realising the importance of foreign languages, especially English, in the development of the country in the globalisation era, the Vietnamese government wanted to make a revolution in the foreign language education. In 2008, the government issued a decision to launch a national project on teaching and learning foreign languages in the national educational system for the period 2008 – 2020 (or simply called Project 2020 from now on) (Government of Vietnam, 2008). The major mission of Project 2020 is to carry out a fundamental change in the methods of teaching and learning foreign languages, especially English, in the national educational system (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2017). In the framework of the Project, English is set as a compulsory subject in the educational system starting from primary education when students begin Year 3 throughout Year 5 instead of when they started secondary education as previously (L. C. Nguyen, Hamid, & Renshaw, 2016). As stated in the 2010 curriculum by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the English primary education is mainly aimed to develop primary students' English communicative competence, and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is chosen as the mandated way to teach primary English (MOET, 2010). In order to carry out the mandatory primary English education as stated, Vietnam rushed to conduct English textbook designs and teacher (re)training (Hoang, 2012, 2015a, 2016; Vu & Pham, 2014). It was suggested that Vietnam did not have sufficient conditions to implement such a mandated primary English communicative curriculum, especially with regards to the teacher resource (V. C. Le & Do, 2012; Moon, 2009; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011). Over the years of the primary English implementation, scholars and researchers have raised concerns about little progress in conducting changes at classroom practice level following the government's Project 2020 (more detailed review in Chapter 2). In 2016, the MOET's Minister admitted that it was improbable to achieve Project 2020's goals within the time frame (T. Nguyen, 2017). The government then issued the decision to extend

Project 2020 until 2025 (Government of Vietnam, 2017). Subsequently, the MOET also laid out directions to navigate the Project from 2017 – 2025 (MOET, 2018b). In 2018, the MOET also issued national general curricula for school education (from primary to junior and senior high schools) in which primary English curriculum was updated (MOET, 2018a). The updated curriculum basically keeps all of the 2010 curriculum and add more details about teacher and learner roles. Once again, CLT was the mandated approach for primary English in Vietnam. It will be only a few years left to reach 2025 when the Project is completed. It is necessary to look straight into classroom practices to see if Project 2020 and the issuance of national school curricula in 2018 (particularly in English education) have created changes and progress towards the Project's goals. On that background, this PhD research project was conducted to investigate if those changes and progress were in place.

1.1.3. The research problem

In the post-method era, people may question if it is still relevant to talk about CLT as it is not something new in ELT methodology. In fact, the approach has developed over five decades since its inception and is believed to have reached its turning point (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997). There has been a large body of research in CLT implementation in many countries the world (details in Chapter 2). It suggests that CLT is difficult and unsuccessful to be implemented in EFL contexts, in general, and in Vietnam, in particular. However, this topic should still be worth researching and addressing since CLT implementation was originated from a Vietnamese government's policy (and still in place) with a desire that the foreign language education policy will contribute to bring about socio-economic changes in the country. Much of this research area has been conducted during the course of Project 2020. However, it is still problematic that the problem of CLT implementation in Vietnam seems to have received little attention from top educational authorities to have appropriate measures to improve the situation. My research sought to provide fresh current insights of the problem and explore if changes have taken place at the classroom level, especially after the decision to extend Project 2020 until 2025 and the issuance of the 2018 national schools' curricular. The problem underpinning my research mainly involves Vietnamese primary English teachers' professional capacities and the conflict of Western values embedded in CLT with Vietnamese traditional cultural values in education.

In terms of the teacher issue, Vietnamese primary English teachers were not sufficient, ready, nor well-prepared for the CLT curriculum innovation (V. C. Le & Do, 2012; L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011, 2017). The teacher issue mentioned involved both quantity and quality of which there was a shortage of qualified teachers who could conduct CLT pedagogies as required in the primary English curriculum (MOET, 2010, 2018a). Contemporarily, there have been no official training programs specifically designed for training primary English teachers (Vu & Pham, 2014). Therefore, primary English teachers have been recruited from other sources such as secondary English teachers (C. D. Nguyen, 2018). To the best of my knowledge, in some rural locations where there was a limited supply of English teachers, teachers of other subjects who were viewed as able were even mobilised to teach primary English. In a rush to implement a primary English curriculum innovation, Vietnam among several other (Asian) EFL countries have faced problems with primary English teachers' pedagogical issues as well as their English competence (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014; Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015; V. C. Le & Do, 2012). Scholars and researchers have raised concerns about probabilities that English teachers' practices would bring about positive changes to develop students' communicative competence as Project 2020 set (Chapter 2). On the one hand, teachers' pedagogies were still traditional and focused on teaching language forms and vocabulary. On the other hand, Project 2020's in-service teacher training scheme in the early times was doubted to have been successful nor effective (P. H. Bui, 2016; P. H. H. Le & Yeo, 2016; V. C. Le, 2019).

Another problem for the CLT implementation in the Vietnamese context is a probable conflict of Western values embedded in CLT with Vietnamese traditional cultural values in education. CLT was born in the West and is considered value-laden (H. H. Pham, 2005; Sullivan, 2000). CLT represents a culture of learning that is contrastive to the Vietnamese one shown through the differences between progressivism and formalism as well as cultural differences between the West and the (Far) East in education (Guthrie, 2011; Hofstede, 1986). Teacher-centred approaches have been solidly supported by the socio-cultural context of Vietnam where the teacher take absolute control of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Meanwhile, CLT promotes a learner-centred approach in which the teacher steps aside to be a facilitator for learning and students actively take control of their learning process (more details in Chapter 2). Adopting CLT in the context of Vietnam can equally be considered

as changing educational styles from formalistic to progressive teaching, which have usually failed in many developing countries (Guthrie, 2011).

Despite the problems mentioned, the Vietnamese government and MOET have showed great determination in the ELT revolution through Project 2020. CLT is the chosen pathway for primary English in Vietnam in the early time of Project 2020 and it is reaffirmed in the 2018 national general education curricula. With a difficult history of CLT implementation in EFL contexts as well as in Vietnam, whether contemporary Vietnamese efforts would be sufficient to create changes in ELT through the CLT implementation in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam? It was just a few years ahead to reach 2025 and it was necessary to explore if primary English teachers' practices have changed towards meeting the government's and MOET's expectations for English education at schools. That was why this research was conducted.

1.1.4. The research aims and questions

Based on the research background and research problem, this study was aimed:

- To assist Vietnamese primary English teachers to improve their teaching practices towards building and developing learners' communicative abilities
- To explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT
- To discover if teachers are facing any challenges or having any opportunities in teaching towards building and developing students' communicative competence
- To investigate what help or support they need to improve their teaching practice

The research was designed to answer the central research question:

How do Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT from a socio-cultural perspective?

Four research sub-questions were raised to help answer the central question:

- (1) *What ELT pedagogies do Vietnamese primary English teachers use in their teaching?*
- (2) *How do they teach following the identified ELT pedagogies?*
- (3) *What informs Vietnamese primary English teachers' current ELT pedagogies?*
- (4) *Do Vietnamese primary English teachers perceive any difficulties and opportunities in implementing the primary English communicative curriculum, and what are they if any?*

1.1.5. The significance of the research

This research is significant for several reasons related to researching CLT implementation in Asian EFL contexts, in general, and in the Vietnamese context, in particular. First, the research connects CLT theory and practice with the Vietnamese ELT through the lens of socio-cultural perspective. It adds more evidence about the problematic workability of the copy and paste model of Western-based educational approaches into Asian cultures of learning. It confirms previous research about the importance of context when adopting an alien teaching approach into local contexts. Second, this research points out some current problems in ELT reforms in Vietnam. While policy comes from top authorities and teachers are considered agents of change, attention may have been distracted about the importance of school communities. They are local DOET, BOET, academic inspectors, school leaders and students' parents. They have their understanding, needs and expectations about what and how teachers should teach. They are the ones who can actually shape teachers' practices instead of policy from the government or MOET. Third, the research is significant in offering some implications and recommendation for practice in Vietnam regarding ELT methodologies and communicative goals. It brings evidence and arguments about powerful influences of underlying socio-cultural factors on the success or failure of implementing some alien teaching approach into the Vietnamese context. Based on the findings, the research recommends what may be more appropriate for Vietnamese ELT to move towards communication-oriented language teaching instead of some vague or pure version of CLT.

1.1.6. The thesis organisation

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the research project and the context of the research. The introduction to the research section briefly outlines why I chose the research topic, background to the research, the research problem, aims and research questions as well as the significance of the research. The context of the research section provides background understanding about Vietnam as a country with information about the land, the people, the culture and the educational system. As the research topic is about mandated CLT implementation in the primary English education, a more detailed introduction about primary English education in Vietnam is placed in Chapter One. The information includes a brief outline of foreign language education and ELT in Vietnam. It is followed with an overview of Vietnamese primary English education policy as

well as some critical issues in implementing primary English education in the framework of Project 2020.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature. It includes a brief description of English and ELT in the concentric circle model. Language pedagogies are followed with a review of traditional approaches and a great focus is put on the literature of CLT theory and practice. The chapter then continues with a review of CLT implementation in EFL contexts and in Vietnam. Based on the understanding of the literature, a conceptual framework is presented. Finally, the theoretical perspective employed for the research is described at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Three outlines the research design. It elaborates on the nature of the research and the consideration to conduct qualitative research within qualitative paradigm. It describes in detail the research methods of data collection, data collection procedure, data analysis as well as addresses research rigour and ethics.

Chapter Four presents the research findings. As the research project was conducted through two phases with four rounds of data collection, four parts were organised to present findings from the online questionnaire, the pre-observation interviews, the in-class observations, and the post-observation interviews. Since there is a large amount of data and there are four research finding chapters.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the research findings. The first part begins with a brief summary of the research findings and a reference to the research questions. Points of discussions are pointed out at the end of the first part. The discussion contains four points of discussion, which are misconceptions about CLT at policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and individual teacher levels. The discussion points in this chapter also sets the background for the Conclusion Chapter of the thesis.

Chapter Six wraps up the thesis with concluding research findings, implications and recommendations for practice. It also addresses limitations as well as contributions of the research and makes suggestions for further studies.

1.2. The context of the research

This section will introduce the research context. Two major topics will be covered: (1) general introduction about Vietnam as a country, and (2) primary English education in Vietnam.

1.2.1. The Vietnamese context

1.2.1.1. *The country*

Locating on the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is a small country with a diverse ethnicities and languages. The country's population is around 97 million, made up from 54 peoples with about 90% of Kinh people and the remaining 10 percent for other 53 peoples (Government Website, 2018). The official language of the country is Vietnamese, a language in the Mon-Khmer group using Latin alphabet, spoken by mainly Vietnamese people in Vietnam and about 4,5 million Vietnamese living around the world (Government Website, 2018; A. H. Pham, 2004). The Vietnamese ethnic minorities have their own first languages (L1) and learn Vietnamese to function in the society. All languages from other countries other than Vietnamese are treated as foreign languages (The Institute for Vietnamese Culture and Education, 2018).

The Vietnamese people have a long tradition of national pride, shown in their origin identity, cultural and language identity (Duong, 2014; T. H. Nguyen, 2002). According to the country's legend, all 54 peoples of Vietnam were born to the same Dragon Father and Fairy Mother. Therefore, they address one another as "*Đồng bào*" meaning to be born from the same womb (Duong, 2014). According to Duong (2014) and T. H. Nguyen (2002), Vietnamese people take pride in their four-thousand-year history of building and defending their country. During the long course of history, Vietnam was under over a thousand years of Chinese domination. It was later invaded by France, Japan and got influenced by American involvement in the American War (1954 - 1975). However, they defeated all of the invaders to regain independence and freedom. Despite being influenced by Chinese domination and Western civilisations, Vietnamese culture and language identity was still preserved (T. H. Nguyen, 2002).

The Vietnamese culture has been strongly influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism (Hang, 2017; V. C. Le, 2011; T. H. A. Nguyen, 2002; N. T. Phan, 2015; Trinh & Mai, 2018). These

influences have greatly defined Vietnamese educational traditions regarding the position of the teacher in the society and how knowledge is viewed. Guthrie (2011) elaborates that in Confucian traditions, the three most important people in the society are placed in the order of importance as the king – the teacher – the father. In the past, a person was automatically expected to firstly respect and be loyal to their king unquestionably and unconditionally, to listen to and obey their teachers secondly, and to their father thirdly. In the Vietnamese culture, teaching is considered one of the noblest jobs, and teachers are highly respected in the society as the only knowledge providers (V. C. Le, 2001). Confucianism and Buddhism have also influenced on how knowledge is viewed in the Vietnamese culture. Accordingly, knowledge is revelatory and independent from learners (Guthrie, 2011; N. T. Phan, 2015). Therefore, the process of teaching and learning is characterised as one to transmit or reveal knowledge from teachers to students. In classrooms, students usually listen carefully to their teachers and copy down what is said.

1.2.1.2. The educational system

In 2016, the Government of Vietnam issued a decision on the structure of the national educational system (Government of Vietnam, 2016). Accordingly, the educational system is divided into four areas of education: (1) pre-school education, (2) general education, (3) vocational and technical education and (4) higher education. This research explored primary English teachers' practices and thus relates to the general education system. There are three levels of schools in this kind of education:

- Primary schools: Children attend Year 1– Year 5 from 6 – 11 years old;
- Junior high schools: Students attend Year 6 – Year 9 from 12 – 15 years old;
- Senior high schools: Students attend Year 10 – 12 from 16 – 18 years old.

The Vietnamese educational system is described to be highly centralised and its management is top-down and inflexible (V. C. Le, 2015). The educational management system is hierarchical. It is divided into three levels: macro, meso and micro levels (M. D. Le, Nguyen, & Burns, 2021; Trinh & Mai, 2018) and can be summarised in the following table.

Table 5.1*The Vietnamese educational management system*

Macro	MOET	Top educational authorities who issue policy decisions, circulars, instructions, and curricula.
Meso	DOET (province)	Local educational authorities who issue DOET's decisions, guidelines and instructions. DOET is in charge of all districts' BOETs and senior high schools in its province.
	BOET (district/ town)	Having similar responsibilities as DOET above, but their scope of management is all junior high schools, primary schools, kindergartens and nursery schools in its district.
Micro	School (leaders)	Carrying out executive administration to run their schools

Table 1.1. above summarises how the Vietnamese hierarchal educational system is managed. At the top level, the MOET is in charge of the whole macro issues. They are responsible for policy planning, developing curricula, designing and approving school textbooks for their curricula as well as issuing their decisions, circulars, and instructions to carry out national educational policies. The meso level consists of provinces' Department of Education and Training (DOET) and the (provincial) districts' Bureau of Education and Training (BOET). Each province has one DOET and several districts' BOETs. In the hierarchical system, the DOET is one level below the MOET, and below it is districts' BOETS. While each DOET is in charge of its districts' BOETs and all senior high schools in its province, every BOET takes direct responsibilities for all junior high schools, primary schools, and pre-school education in its district. At the micro level are schools managed by school leaders. They execute and administrate to carry out decisions, directions, and guidelines issued by their DOET or BOET in their schools.

This research explored primary English teachers' practices, and thus its setting was primary schools whose were administrated by the district's BOET. According to H. P. T. Le (2020), in a district BOET, there will be an official who is in charge of English teaching and learning in their district. This official, often called an English specialist, is usually selected from a school in the district and has an English teaching background (i.e. English teacher). This

BOET's English specialist takes the responsibility to ensure ELT quality in the district through their supervision, class observations, and giving advice to primary English teachers. Their activities are called academic inspections. Usually when they conduct an inspection, they will invite some other (experienced) English teachers in the district together with leaders from the school they are to inspect to join. According to Q. N. Phan (2017), academic inspectors have very important voices and their advice is considered as guiding instructions for teachers.

1.2.2. . Primary English education in Vietnam

As my research was aimed to explore how primary English teachers have changed from traditional pedagogies to required CLT pedagogies, this section will provide information about primary English education in Vietnam within the scope of my research. The section will start with a general introduction about foreign language education and ELT in Vietnam. An overview of primary English education policy will follow. Finally, some critical issues in primary English education mandate in Project 2020 will be presented.

1.2.2.1. General introduction to foreign language education and ELT in Vietnam

The teaching of foreign languages in Vietnam has been closely related to the history of the country (Hoang, 2010). Foreign languages' positions in Vietnam have been decided by how each government in the course of history prioritised political relations with foreign countries throughout the nation's history (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2017).

During the period of French colonisation starting in the 1880s, French was prioritized because it was the language of the government and schooling at the time (H. T. Do, 2006a). When the French colonialists were defeated and withdrew from Vietnam in 1954, the country was divided into the North and the South. The North was controlled by the Communists and the South was governed by the Capitalists backed by the Americans (T. M. H. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). In the North, due to the alliance relationships with the Soviet Union and China, Russian and Chinese became the dominant foreign languages being taught in secondary and tertiary education. Meanwhile, English and French were favoured in the South with a shift changing from French to English as the most important foreign language (H. T. Do, 2006a). In 1975, the American War ended with the withdrawal of the Americans from the South and the unification of the country. Then the border war between Vietnam and China in 1979 broke the previous good relationship between the two countries. Chinese, French and English

virtually disappeared from schools, and Russian became the dominant foreign language in Vietnam until 1986 (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2017). With the collapse of the Soviet Union and socialism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, Vietnam carried out a reform in 1986 called *Đổi Mới* (Reform Era) (Hoang, 2010; L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016). Since 1986, Vietnam has been following an open-door policy and seeking to do business with the West. As a result, the Vietnam government decided that English must take a predominant role in the nation's socio-economic development (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2017).

The policy to make English the most important foreign language to be taught in the educational system has boosted ELT in Vietnam in both public and private sectors (H. T. Do, 2006a). However, the quality of ELT has remained a major concern ELT practices are still academic and exam-oriented (Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015; N. T. Nguyen, 2017). Despite learning English continuously from schools and then colleges or universities, most Vietnamese students have very limited abilities to communicate in English (V. C. Le, 2007, 2011). With the aim to prepare for a workforce that can use foreign languages and especially English to communicate in the global market, the Vietnamese government decided to introduce the National Foreign Language Project 2020 to improve the quality of teaching and learning English (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Within the scope of Project 2020, primary English education is mandatory for students from Year 3 to Year 5, and the policy will be detailed more in the following section.

1.2.2.2. Primary English education policy in Vietnam

Major key points in the primary English education policy of Project 2020 are shown mainly in the national 2010 primary English curriculum and the updated one in 2018 (MOET, 2010, 2018a). Among several points in the curriculum, two major ones include the aims and methodology for the primary English education.

With respect to the aims, the overall aim of primary English education is set to develop towards students' communicative competence and ensure learners' abilities to communicate in English (MOET, 2010). At the end of the primary education level, students' English proficiency is expected to reach level A1 (basic user) on the Common European Framework for Reference of languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). This means that learners must be able to communicate in English in four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communicative abilities at this level are defined on CEFR as:

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. (Council of Europe, 2001)

In the updated 2018 curriculum, the MOET change from CEFR as the reference framework to use the equivalent Vietnamese-developed framework called Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) (T. N. Q. Nguyen, 2018; T. P. T. Nguyen, 2018). Accordingly, primary students' learning outcomes are expected to reach Level 1 on the VSTEP framework, described very similarly to level A1 of CEFR above (MOET, 2018a, p. 8).

Regarding the methodology, the 2010 curriculum specifies Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the required approach to teach primary English. It also briefly describes teachers' and students' roles, learning activities. These descriptions are in line with the literature of CLT theory and practice (detailed in Chapter 2). The 2018 updated curriculum basically keeps all of the essence of the 2010 curriculum related to teaching methodology. It reaffirms CLT as the chosen methodology with a more detailed elaboration of teachers' and students' roles (MOET, 2010, 2018a).

1.2.2.3. Some critical issues in primary English education

There are multiple issues that need to be addressed for a healthy development of primary English education in Vietnam (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011; T. P. L. Nguyen & Phung, 2015; T. T. T. Nguyen, 2012). The issues to be presented in this section are chosen as they fit within the scope of my research. Therefore, this section will introduce four critical issues about (1) teachers' capacities, (2) teacher training, (3) pre-determined syllabus and textbooks, and (4) some structural conditions for the implementation of primary English.

Teachers' capacities

The issue of primary English teachers' capacities is related to teachers' English competence and teachers' pedagogies. Accordingly, a big challenge for the implementation of the primary English communicative curriculum involves teachers' low English proficiency and teachers' traditional pedagogies.

Teachers' capacities, specifically their low English language proficiency, is one big challenge for the implementation of the primary English communicative curriculum in Vietnam. Despite great efforts from educational agencies and individual teachers to improve the situation, it has remained as a critical issue about teachers' abilities. Several scholars and researchers such as T. M. H. Nguyen (2011), V. C. Le and Do (2012), V. C. Le (2015), and T. T. N. Bui and Nguyen (2016) have raised concerns about teachers' English abilities in conducting Project 2020's missions in foreign language teaching and learning reforms. The 2010 primary English curriculum requires that teachers must hold a degree in English teaching (three-year college or four-year university degree) and their English proficiency must be equivalent to Level B2 on the CEFR (independent user) (Council of Europe, 2001). In the Vietnamese educational system, it should be noted that the terms "college" and "university" refer to two different training institutions. N. T. Phan (2015) elaborated that a college mainly offer three-year training courses, and graduates from these colleges receive junior Bachelor Degree (three-year college degree). A university offer four-year (or more) training courses, and graduates will receive full Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees. A university can also offer three-year college courses, but a college cannot offer a four-year university courses.

In order to implement school English curricular innovations, according to Dudzik and Nguyen (2015), Project 2020 has conducted a nationwide massive assessment of English teachers' proficiency since 2011. Assessment findings showed that teachers' English proficiency was "alarming", of which 97 percent of 3,591 tested primary English teachers' proficiency was below the required benchmark (p. 48). Research findings from the study by V. C. Le and Do (2012) also confirmed the situation that primary English teachers' language proficiency was too limited and that they were not yet well-prepared for the implementation of primary English education regarding their English language competence.

Another challenge for primary English education regarding teachers' capacities is primary English teachers' pedagogies. For a long time, English teachers in Vietnam have been reported to be tied to traditional language pedagogies where teacher-fronted, knowledge-transmission and textbook-driven teaching styles dominate language classrooms (V. C. Le, 2001, 2011, 2015; V. C. Le & Barnard, 2009; V. C. Le & Do, 2012; L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011, 2017). For example, familiar Vietnamese school English teachers'

traditional pedagogies can be seen through the research findings' descriptions in V. C. Le and Barnard (2009):

The observations showed that the CLT innovation was not being implemented in the way outlined in the official curriculum document. Classroom teaching remained traditional, teacher-fronted and textbook-centred. Discrete grammar points were presented in minimal contexts (i.e., in isolated sentences), while grammar rules were provided explicitly, almost always in Vietnamese. Although the teachers did ask a lot of questions, they answered all of them themselves, with the pupils hardly involved in the classroom discourse ... For the skills lessons, teachers were preoccupied with finishing the textbook with little regard to how much the pupils learned, or to what extent the pupils could use English for communication. Vietnamese was frequently used, even for basic classroom instructions. During the skills lesson, the teachers gave the pupils a chance to practise reading aloud the texts written in the textbook, rather than helping them develop their language skills, or encouraging them to negotiate meaning among themselves, or with the teacher. (V. C. Le & Barnard, 2009, p. 25)

It is helpful to notice that teachers in the above study were advised to use CLT in their practices. However, they continued to follow conventional pedagogies instead of conducting teaching innovations. Although this is just one study in one location, people may see that it portrays familiarities in Vietnamese school English teachers' practices as "the situation elsewhere in Vietnam is similar politically, economically, socially, and educationally" (V. C. Le & Do, 2012, p. 120). With such traditional and conventional pedagogies, people may doubt if a teachers will effectively carry out classroom practice innovations as required in the 2010 primary English communicative curriculum.

Teacher training

The poor quality of English language education in Vietnam as described in T. M. H. Nguyen (2017) is asserted to have partly originated from lacking effective teacher training and teacher professional development (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). For the case of primary English teachers in Project 2020, Vietnam lacks both quantity and quality.

When Project 2020 was born, Vietnam did not have any official teacher training programs for primary English teachers (Vu & Pham, 2014). Therefore, English teachers for primary schools have mainly been recruited from ones who were trained to teach English to general learners (H. T. A. Nguyen, 2007). Primary English teachers can be deemed as inefficiently and inappropriately trained to teach English communicatively to young learners (Moon, 2005, 2009; T. M. H. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). With such a picture of teacher training, one of Project 2020's tasks was to conduct professional development for in-service primary

English teachers (or re-training). To facilitate English teachers' professional development training, the MOET issued the English Teacher Competency Framework in 2012, which aims to provide English teachers necessary knowledge and skills in five domains:

- Knowledge of subject matter (English) and curriculum;
- Knowledge of teaching
- Knowledge of learners
- Professional attitudes and values embedded across knowledge domains; and
- Learning in and from practice and being informed by context.

(Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015, p. 50)

Project 2020 then carried out nationwide primary English teacher re-training courses consisting of two areas: English language proficiency and primary English teaching methodology (P. H. Bui, 2016; P. H. H. Le & Yeo, 2016). Due to limited available resources for the nationwide re-training, a training-the-trainer model (ToT) was adopted (Vu & Pham, 2014). This training model can be summarised in the following figure.

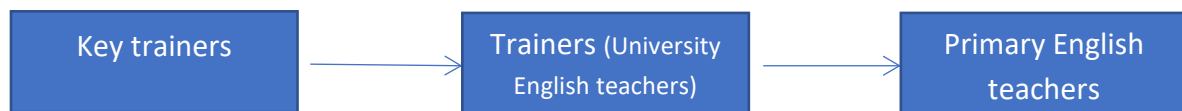


Figure 1.1. Training-the-trainer model of Project 2020

Figure 1 summarises the primary English teacher re-training scheme by Project 2020. Following this model, university English teachers (i.e., trainers) were selected (from 18 training institutions in Vietnam) to attend the training courses held in major regional universities. At those training courses, they were trained by key trainers (international ELT experts, specialists and Vietnamese qualified university English lecturers). After the training, the trainers returned to their institutions where they would host training sessions to primary English teachers gathered at their universities or they would travel to local DOETs' training locations to disseminate the re-training sessions. I myself was selected to participate in the program as a trainer in 2012 and attended the training course for trainers held in Danang University. As a result, I obtained the detailed program of the re-training (Figure 1.2).

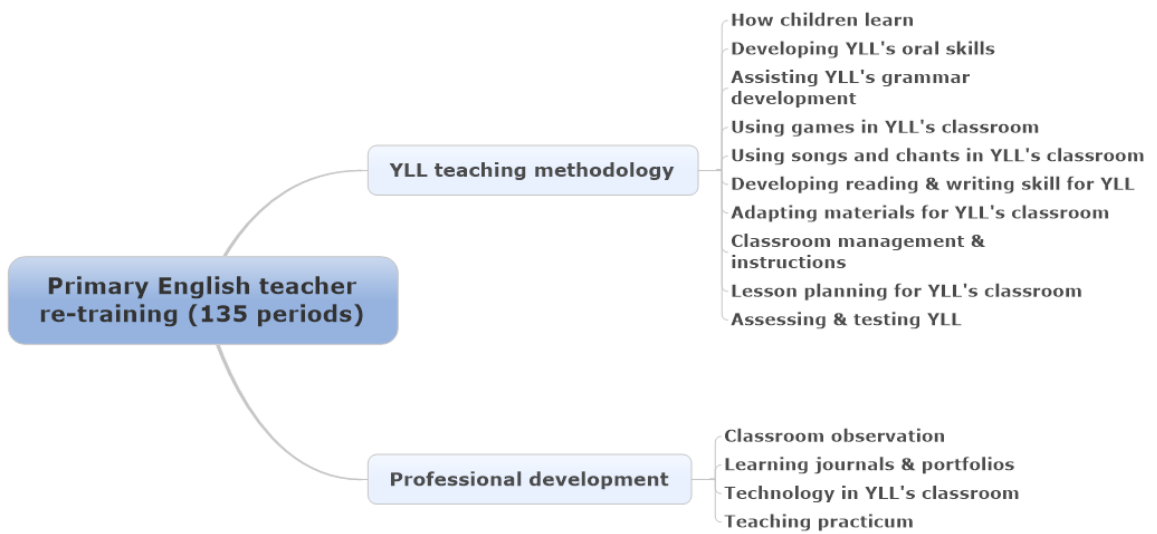


Figure 1.2. Primary English teacher re-training program

(Gathered from Project 2020's training handouts for training of trainers for in-service primary English teachers, held at Da Nang University in 2012)

Despite great efforts by Project 2020 in building primary English teachers' capacities through the re-training courses, the outcomes were not as good as expected. Several issues arose around the re-training sessions such as practicality, applicability, isolation from primary English teachers' contexts, inequitable opportunities for teacher participation, duplication of training contents and how much primary English teachers learned from the courses (P. H. Bui, 2016; Grassick, 2019b; P. H. H. Le & Yeo, 2016; V. C. Le, 2019; Vu & Pham, 2014). From (universities') trainers' perspectives, Vu and Pham (2014) found that although participant trainers felt satisfied about gaining knowledge of teaching English to young learners, they thought that the re-training courses lacked some practicality and connection with context. They needed a simpler approach with less theory and more hands-on experience. Some trainers also felt disconnected with teachers' contextual situations. When applying what they were trained to teach in-service teachers, a trainer reported that some primary English teachers left as they claimed they had attended similar training courses before. Another trainer also reported that some primary teachers came up to her during her training sessions and told her that: "Trainer, what you are teaching us works only in the book. You can hardly do it that way in reality" (p. 101). Similarly, Grassick (2019b) reaffirmed the situation about

the ToT training program. Although lecturer participants gained more understanding of primary English pedagogy, they did not have sufficient knowledge about their primary English teachers' contextual conditions. That made their re-training workshops for primary English teacher difficult to deal with teachers' contextual realities. From primary English teachers' perspectives, P. H. H. Le and Yeo (2016) and P. H. Bui (2016) reported quite similar findings. Teachers in their studies also expressed the needs for more practical training instead of theoretical contents as well as adding concerns about equal opportunities for all teachers to attend the training. In another larger-scale study, V. C. Le (2019) raised a concern whether teachers' learning took place in those mandatory training courses. He conducted field trips using focus group interviews and class observations with 101 teachers including primary, junior secondary and senior secondary school teachers from 11 provinces across Vietnam. His findings showed that although teachers claimed to have learned to improve their lessons and felt more confident in their teaching, their classroom practices suggested they did not learn much. Class observations revealed common patterns among teachers that teachers attempted to apply "some basic teaching techniques, largely games and the use of PowerPoints, without understanding the underlying rationale of those techniques. Teachers tended to use pointless activities that took up valuable class time in the name of fun and engagement" (V. C. Le, 2019, p. 70).

In summary, with the reality of teachers' insufficient abilities compared to the teachers' qualification demands from the primary English communicative curriculum, the MOET through Project 2020 have tried to target building English teachers' capacity. However, the attempts have not been fully successful nor effective. Therefore, issues about training sufficient qualified well-trained teachers for (primary) English education in Vietnam remains unsolved (Hoang, 2010; M. D. Le, 2018).

Pre-determined syllabus and textbooks for primary English

One critical issue challenging the Vietnamese primary English communicative curriculum is related to the mandatory use of pre-determined textbooks and strictly controlled syllabus. According to V. C. Le (2001), in Vietnam, the MOET designs national school curricula and sets schools' syllabus for the whole country. Also, the MOET is in charge of monitoring school syllabus implementation and sets important final school examinations. After being approved by the MOET, schools' syllabus and textbooks "become law that must

be strictly observed” (p. 37). Therefore, regardless of their own beliefs or opinions or whether they can manage to fulfil the syllabus within limited time allocations, all teachers must follow the approved syllabus (T. P. L. Nguyen & Phung, 2015). Teachers usually feel the need to “complete the syllabus”, which is very commonly understood as textbooks (V. C. Le & Do, 2012, p. 112). With approved textbooks as standard teaching materials and the misinterpretation of ‘testing only what students have learned’ principle, teachers usually choose to cover all textbooks’ contents for students’ tests and exams and also for proof of their compliance to the syllabus (M. D. Le, 2018; V. C. Le, 2001). These matters have challenged and hindered teachers’ practices in applying communicative pedagogies.

Classroom conditions for the implementation of primary English

Among many problems that Vietnamese ELT is facing is the classroom-level constraints, especially the physical conditions to assist English teachers’ classroom practices. Similar to several classroom-level constraints in other EFL countries (Butler, 2011, 2017), many Vietnamese English teachers have taught English in difficult conditions such as large class size, lack of facilities and resources to support teaching and learning, limited time allocation for English subject, students with mixed levels (V. C. Le & Barnard, 2009; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011; T. T. T. Nguyen, 2012). Common conditions for ELT in Vietnam are described in Hoang (2010) as follows:

... schools are often located in noisy places, with poor ventilation, overloaded beyond their capacity to classes of fifty or even sixty (students), with poor libraries and poorly paid staff ... Tape recorders, electronic equipment, and language lab do not exist in average schools except in the cities and in affluent private institutions. The only sure aids available are the blackboard and sometimes a cassette player, and the frequent voice heard is the teacher based on what she makes of the day’s textbook lesson. To make matters worse, class contact hours are few (only two or three hours week). (Hoang, 2010, pp. 15-16)

For the primary English implementation, the MOET’s guidelines are that each primary school at least should have “computers, a projector, a cassette player, a television, a CD/DVD player, speakers, microphone, flash cards and interactive images for use in English classes” (T. T. T. Nguyen, 2012, p. 128). However, according to the author, financial government subsidies cannot fund all schools in the countries and many schools, especially in rural areas, lack sufficient conditions for English teaching and learning. T. M. H. Nguyen (2011) asserted that the (teaching and) learning situation is a determining factor for the policy implementation

success. Even though in provinces where they claimed to have suitable conditions for primary English implementation, their class size, organisation (e.g. class inflexible seating arrangement with unmoveable students' tables and chairs) are very difficult for activity-oriented teaching methodology. It is concluded that primary schools in Vietnam need more adequate investments to improve the available physical conditions to assist the quality of English teaching and learning (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011).

1.3. Chapter summary

In summary, this opening chapter has introduced two major contents: the PhD research project and the context of the research. My research was situated in the Vietnamese context where the government has showed strong determination and great efforts in reforming foreign language teaching and learning, especially ELT, in general, and primary English education, in particular. Nevertheless, several critical issues, as briefly presented, have continued to challenge the success of the mandated primary English education following CLT in Vietnam. In order to see how and why it is challenging to establish CLT pedagogies in Vietnamese English classroom, the following chapter will review the related literature to give a more detailed and complete understanding of the research situation.

CHAPTER 2. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As my research was aimed to explore primary English teachers' Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) practices in Vietnam, this literature review will greatly focus on CLT. However, as CLT was born in the West and spread to other parts of the world being labelled as the best language teaching package, it may be useful to have a look at the concentric circles model of English at the first part of the chapter to understand the influence of the West on other parts of the world through the spread of English. The implementation of CLT suggests that there will be a shift from more traditional practices to CLT practices. Therefore, it is necessary to also have a look back at major traditional approaches and methods in language teaching and learning. This chapter will then provide a brief review of traditional language pedagogies in the second part. The third part of the chapter will provide a detailed presentation of CLT. With regards to CLT, the first section of the chapter includes a presentation of the development of CLT since it was introduced and then developed until today. Then a synthesis of CLT at the level of language theory and learning theory will be reviewed. Regarding the language theory, the most important concept of CLT, the communicative competence, will be presented. In terms of the learning theory, areas of coverage include the principles of CLT, communicative activities and the roles of teachers and learners in language classrooms. The section will continue with the critique of CLT in regard to its weak and strong points. The fourth part of the chapter will highlight the implementation of CLT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The fifth part will particularly introduce the CLT implementation in Vietnam where my research was conducted. The review will foreground possible problems or challenges of implementing CLT in contexts alien to CLT. It also pinpoints where my research fits into the CLT panorama in Vietnam. The adopted theoretical framework of the research, which is socio-cultural theory, will be presented in the sixth part. Finally, a conceptual framework of the whole research project will be formed in the seventh part, which will help navigate my research of the CLT implementation in the primary English education in Vietnam.

2.1. English and ELT in the concentric circles model

The English language has spread dramatically around the world during the past few decades (Maftoon & Esfandiari, 2013). This global widespread of English and English Language Teaching (ELT) has been impacted by the rising development of globalisation in conjunction with postcolonial trends (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). Within the relationship of English and ELT, the widespread of English globally also has its own influence on ELT (McKay, 2011). Therefore, in order to have better insights into how the widespread of English has affected on language in education around the world, Y. Kachru (2011) suggested that it is important to understand “the role that English plays, the status that it has and the purposes that it serves in different contexts” (p. 155). It is useful to first have a brief look at the concentric circles model of World Englishes (B. Kachru, 1985, 1992) and then the influence of the West on ELT.

2.1.1. The concentric circles model of World Englishes

A common traditional classification of English involves the use of such terms as: English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Accordingly, ENL is spoken in countries where English is people’s first language (e.g. Britain, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, also called the BANA contexts in Richards & Rodgers, 2014); ESL is spoken in countries where English plays an important intranational role, especially in post-colonial countries (e.g. Nigeria, India, Singapore); and EFL is spoken in countries where English is mainly spoken in classrooms and has no functional use outside classrooms (e.g. China, Japan, Korea). B. Kachru (1985) was the first to coin the term *World Englishes* and open the door for new ways to understand the spread of English around the world. B. Kachru (1985) classified the world’s English varieties using the concentric circles model, which is the now famous “three circles” model (Kirkpatrick, 2014, p. 33). In Kachru’s concentric circles model, the author described the spread of English from the Inner Circle to the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle based on historical contexts, statuses and functions of English around the globe, which is summarised in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 is not available in this version of the Thesis.

Figure 2.1. The concentric circles model by B. Kachru (1985, 1992)

Figure 2.1. shows Kachru's concentric circles models of World Englishes. The model indicates that English is spread from the Inner Circle countries such as Britain, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, where English is their native language, to the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries, where English is their second and foreign language respectively. According to Kachru (1985, 1992), countries in the Inner Circle provide norms (e.g. English textbooks) and are considered as norm providers. Countries in the Outer Circle, usually post-colonial countries, sometimes try to establish their local norms and are considered norm-developing. Countries in the Expanding Circle receive norms from the Inner Circle and are considered norm dependent. Kirkpatrick (2014) pointed out that while Kachru's concentric circles model appears to look similar to the classification of ENL, ESL, and EFL, there are two important differences. First, the ENL/ESL/EFL classification suggests that there are only ENL varieties while the Kachru's model allows for many different English varieties in the world. Second, the ENL/ESL/EFL distinction implies that the ENL varieties are inherently superior to others while Kachru's model argues that all Englishes are valid for their own contexts. Although Kachru's concentric circles model has been criticised for some reasons such as: oversimplification and unclear membership to the circles (Al-Mutairi, 2020), varieties of English determined geographically and nationally (Kirkpatrick, 2014), overlooking some areas and simplifying linguistic diversity (Maftoon & Esfandiari, 2013), his work is recognised to have set a foundation for a new discipline of World

Englishes, and is still valuable and influential in discussing English varieties in the world (Al-Mutairi, 2020; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Maftoon & Esfandiari, 2013).

The rapid movement of globalisation and the need for international communication have made English even more widespread globally, and the role of English in the Expanding Circle has been increased dramatically (Kirkpatrick, 2014). In a dynamic panorama of English varieties development and increasing number of speakers who use English to communicate internationally, terms such as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) have been used to refer to the global functions of English as a means to help people communicate across nations and cultures for political, business, academic and travel purposes (Y. Kachru, 2011; McKay, 2011). In this situation, the ELT profession has been booming globally, especially in the Outer and Expanding Circles (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Questions about which English model to be used as standard and which teaching approaches should be adopted for classroom teaching have been raised. The following section will look into these issues.

2.1.2. The influence of the West on ELT

As mentioned above, English has been spread from the Inner Circle countries to ones in the Outer and Expanding Circles. According to Pennycook (2017), many Westerners and non-Westerners have held the belief that 'the West is better' and this belief has facilitated the spread of English and ELT as well as teaching approaches promoted by the West. Since the Inner Circle is considered norm-providers, it is common that the Outer and Expanding Circles have taken the Inner Circle's English varieties as standards and teaching approaches promoted in that circle to be adopted in theirs (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Maftoon & Esfandiari, 2013; McKay, 2011; L. H. Phan & Le, 2013).

In discussing English as an International Lingua Franca pedagogy, McKay (2011) mentioned the tendency of Othering in ELT pedagogy. Othering refers to "the ways in which the discourse of a particular group defines other groups in opposition to itself; an Us and Them view that construct an identity for the Other and, implicitly for the Self" (Palfreyman, 2005; cited in Mc Kay, 2011, p.135). McKay (2011) pointed out that this Self-Other discourse has led to the idealisation of native speakers, or the issue of native-speakerism. Accordingly, British, American and Australian English (varieties) (i.e. English varieties in the Inner Circle) are usually considered standard English (Maftoon & Esfandiari,

2013; L. H. Phan & Le, 2013). In addition, it has traditionally been assumed that English native speakers naturally make the best or the superior and ideal English teachers (Phillipson, 1992, 1998, 2009). Although scholars have challenged this discourse over the years, this belief remains solidly resilient (Kirkpatrick, 2014). While this belief has positioned native speakers as the best teachers and norm-setters, it has also regarded non-native English teachers and learners as inferior and considered them as “incapable of participating in ‘modern’ methods of language learning” (McKay, 2011, p. 135). In the same vein, scholars such as Bax (2003), Bright and Phan (2011), and Phillipson (1992), criticised the discourse of ideal native-speakerism that it has undermined non-native English teachers by positioning native English teachers as experts in ELT. It has also created the attitude of devaluing locally appropriate teaching approaches and worshipping ones promoted in and by the West. As Pennycook (2017) mentioned the belief of ‘the West is better’ in ELT, it is evident in the implementation of CLT in many countries in the Outer and Expanding Circles’ countries (McKay, 2011). Although CLT has been criticised as inappropriate for other contexts outside the Inner Circle, many governments in the Outer and Expanding Circles have mandated CLT to be implemented in their national language curriculum (L. H. Phan & Le, 2013). McKay (2011) argued that the Othering discourse in ELT pedagogy has portrayed what comes from the Western Inner Circle as modern and desirable. It can be used to explain for the widespread of English and the dominance of CLT in ELT around the world.

In summary, this section has presented the English varieties or World Englishes through the lens of the concentric circles model by B. Kachru (1985, 1992). The spread of English originally from the Western Inner Circle to the colonial countries and then expanded into the Third World countries has resulted in a dynamic picture of a variety of World Englishes today. Together with the English language, Western values in the Inner Circle have also distributed around the globe to the other two circles, of which in this paper about ELT, they are shown through the implementation of Western ways of language teaching and learning approaches, particularly CLT. Within the scope of this research, language teaching approaches and methods will be reviewed starting from traditional pedagogies, which will be covered in the following section.

2.2. Traditional language pedagogies

Before reviewing language pedagogies, it is helpful to distinguish some terms usually used in language pedagogies which include approach, methodology, method, and technique. There are several sets of definitions of those terms such as ones from Richards and Rodgers (2001), Richards and Rodgers (2014), Brown (2007), Brown and Lee (2015). In order to avoid any possible confusion, this review will use definitions from Brown and Lee (2015) to define those terms, which are presented below:

- An approach involves theoretical positions and beliefs about language, language learning, and other aspects such as teaching, learners, institutional and societal factors, course purposes, and the applicability of all of those to specific educational contexts.
- A methodology involves pedagogical practices in general including theoretical underpinnings and related research. In other words, considerations related to how to teach belongs to a methodology.
- A method involves a set of classroom procedures or specifications designed to accomplish linguistic goals.
- A technique is any of a variety of exercises, activities or tasks used in language classrooms to carry out lesson objectives.

The L2 teaching world has gone through a history of over a hundred years' development seeking the best way to teach second or foreign languages. Along the course of history, a new approach or method came and then later was replaced by another. As Brown (2007) and Brown and Lee (2015) noticed, the replacement process usually takes place by the way of "changing winds and shifting sands" (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 17). It means that a new method broke from an old one but still took with it some positive features of the previous one. This notice from Brown (2007) and Brown and Lee (2015) is similar to the way Jin and Cortazzi (2011) re-evaluated traditional approaches to L2 teaching. Jin and Cortazzi (2011) argued that the word "traditional" in traditional language pedagogies is a paradoxical term. It is because an approach or method that is labelled "traditional" generally comes to mean that it is considered outdated and probably dysfunctional by the term users (p. 559). According to them, traditional approaches and methods of L2 teaching and learning are also often considered as the ones that existed before modern practices come into existence. However,

in reality, distinguishing lines of historical changes between one approach or method and another may be not clear. In addition, some more modern approaches still keep some traditional components packed within their broader orientations. Having a glance at books introducing approaches, methods and techniques in language teaching, one may have a feeling that old and new approaches and methods exist separately from one another. Interestingly, Jin and Cortazzi's (2011) categorisation of traditional language pedagogies show that they appear to have co-existed together over some span of time. Table 2.1 below shows a summary of the development of traditional language pedagogies in the world in their sense of "traditional".

Table 6.1

Five versions of traditional approaches

Table 2.1 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Table 2.1. shows the list of five versions of traditional approaches to language teaching and learning proposed by Jin and Cortazzi (2011). The first version from the list are the

Classical Grammar-Translation, also referred to as the Classical Method in its early times and later as the Grammar-Translation Method respectively (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Harmer, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). According to Jin and Cortazzi (2011) and Brown and Lee (2015), the classical tradition of Grammar – Translation was closely associated with the learning of Latin and Greek in the Western world, and with foreign languages in Asian countries. The goal of learning in this language pedagogy was to learn a language to read its literature so that learners could be mentally and intellectually beneficial resulting from the process of foreign language learning. It was characterised with some typical features such as: deductive grammatical teaching, grammatical analyses and explanations in L1, long lists of bilingual vocabulary, classroom instructions and communication in L1, extensive use of translation exercises to apply grammatical rules and practice, extended reading texts, negligence of oral skills (Brown & Lee, 2015; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). By the late 19th century, the Classical (Grammar-Translation) Method spread rapidly and became to be known as the Grammar Translation Method even though there was little to distinguish it from centuries-long foreign language teaching practices beyond its focus on grammatical rules and translation from a foreign to native language (Brown & Lee, 2015). Grammar-translation approaches in the 19th and 20th centuries were generally criticised for its failure based on the role of communication and oral skills development (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011). Richards and Rodgers (2014) pointed out that although the Grammar-Translation Method has still been widely practiced, it is a method that “has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory” (p. 7). Explaining for its life-long existence, Brown (2007) and Brown and Lee (2015) stated that the method remains attractive as it requires very little regarding teachers’ specialised skills. Furthermore, testing and assessment related to grammatical rules and translation is easy to design and objectively score. Richards and Rodgers (2014) added to the reasons for its withholding existence that the method gives teachers a sense of authority and control in the classroom as well as it works well in large classes.

The second version of traditional pedagogies is referred to as the wider grammar-translation. On the account of traditional approaches by Jin and Cortazzi (2011), this concept of traditional language approaches refers to the one with some mixed features of Grammar-

Translation Method with those of the Direct Method and Oral Situational Approach (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). Being disappointed with the Grammar-Translation Method, linguists, language teaching specialists and teachers pushed for the Reform Movement in language teaching, and led to the emergence of the Direct Method, originally known as the Natural Method in its early times (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The Direct Method appeared to be the direct opposite of the grammar-translation tradition as classroom instructions were conducted exclusively in the target language, and priority was given to oral skills although the teaching of the four skills (in the order of appearance as listening, speaking, reading and writing) occurs from the start (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The fundamental principle of the Direct Method was that learning a foreign language should be more like L1 learning (Brown & Lee, 2015), from which came the “monolingual principle” in language classrooms (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011, p. 564). The Direct Method enjoyed its popularity across private language schools in Europe and the United States at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. However, it was difficult to be implemented in public schools regarding constraints such as budget, class sizes, time and teachers’ skills (Brown & Lee, 2015). It was also criticised for overemphasising and distorting similarities between natural L1 acquisition and foreign language learning in classrooms, and failing to consider practical realities of the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Nonetheless, this method provided an interesting way to learn a language and later was elaborated into the Oral Situational Approach during the 1940s to 1960s (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The decline of the Direct Method during 1920s marked the prevalence of the Grammar-Translation Method although it was modified into what Jin and Cortazzi (2011) called wider grammar-translation (versions), which was a combination of some techniques from the Direct Method and more controlled grammar-based activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The third version of traditional language pedagogies is the Audiolingual Method (ALM) (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). The ALM was considered “one of the most viable of all language teaching revolutions in the modern era” (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 21). As Brown and Lee (2015) mentioned the “changing winds and shifting sands” (p. 17) when a new method or approach came into existence, the ALM carried forwards fundamental features of Direct, Oral and Situational approaches but

with additions of structural linguistics as its theory of language and behaviourism as its theory of learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), in the ALM, language was treated as a structurally related system for the meaning encoding consisting of phonemes, morphemes, words, structures and sentence types. Meanwhile, learners were viewed as organisms that could be directed by skilled training techniques such as drills, repetition and memorisation to produce correct responses with correct pronunciation, stress and intonation. The ALM reached its most widespread popularity during the 1960s and was then criticised for several reasons including its habit formation and overlearning, teacher's domination in the classroom, disappointing practical results, learners' inability to transfer what they learned into real communication outside classrooms (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

According to Harmer (2001), one variation of Audiolingualism was the PPP teaching model, which described classroom procedure following steps of Presentation – Practice – Production. In this model, the teacher firstly introduces a situation to give a context to the to-be-taught language (Presentation). Then students practise the language with accurate reproduction techniques such as choral and individual repetition drills and cue-response drills (Practice). Finally, students create their own sentences using the new learned language (Production). The PPP teaching procedure shared its similarities with the Audio-lingual method. However, the difference was that this procedure gave more meaning compared to the substitution drills by giving the contextualised situation to the language to be taught and students' making their own sentences at the end of the procedure. Like Audiolingualism, the PPP model was criticised for several reasons, one of which is related to its teacher-centred approach. In addition, the model seemed to assume that learners' learning underwent a straight line from nothing to sentence-based utterances and then immediate production while "human learning probably is not like that" (Harmer, 2001, p. 82).

The fourth version of traditional pedagogies is the mainstream EFL (English as a Foreign Language) traditions. Jin and Cortazzi (2011) stated that the mainstream EFL is a general term for the established mainstream approaches, especially in teaching EFL. Mainstream EFL traditions have an eclectic mixture from different approaches. They have absorbed some elements of traditional approaches and combined with some communicative activities due to the influence of CLT especially since the 1970s. With such a combination, Jin

and Cortazzi (2011) claimed that it might be radical to use the word *traditional* as a negative label for this approach compared to other traditional versions.

The fifth version of traditional pedagogies is humanistic or alternative approaches in language teaching. These approaches are also referred to as “designer methods” (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 23). During the periods from 1970s to 1980s, there was a major paradigm shift in language teaching. People quested for alternatives to grammar-based approaches and methods in several directions, one of which is CLT (detailed in the next part of the chapter). One of the directions in looking for alternatives is taking consideration of affective factors in L2 pedagogies. This direction led to the birth of several approaches and methods, labelled as humanistic approaches or designer methods such as the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). Those alternative approaches and methods focus on individual learners’ feelings and self-actualisation, communication with learners’ personal meaning, class atmosphere, peer support and quality of interaction through friendship, cooperation and mutual responsibilities among learners (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), those alternative approaches and methods were developed outside mainstream language teaching, from which they were not successful in attracting support. Nonetheless, each of them can be seen as “expressing important dimensions of the teaching and learning process” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 259).

In summary, the language teaching world has been through a history of over a century development. During the time, various approaches and methods came into existence as a result of continuous efforts looking for the best way to teach L2 or foreign languages. The emergence of a newer approach or method might put a label on the previous one as traditional. However, as Brown and Lee (2015) noticed the “changing winds and shifting sands” when a new approach or method was born, it still took with it some features of the previous one (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 17). Also the label *traditional* in Jin and Cortazzi (2011) suggests that some method existed prior to the birth of some newer one, and *traditional* does not really mean dysfunctional. The reality is that some traditional approaches and methods in language teaching listed above are still practiced in many parts of the world today (Brown & Lee, 2015; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Still, the development of

approaches and methods in language teaching appears that there has been a progression moving from more grammar-focused approaches towards more communication-oriented pedagogies. During the movement to look for alternative methods, besides the humanistic or designer methods, one other direction of the movement led to the birth of Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) with a strong focus on communication, which will be detailed in the following part.

2.3. The Communicative Language Teaching approach

This section provides the background information of CLT as a language teaching approach. With a historical look, it starts with the first two sub-sections about the development of CLT and the concept of communicative competence. The section will go on to highlight CLT key principles and characteristics of language teaching and learning today. Classroom activities in CLT will be introduced and subsequently, a presentation of CLT critique and the future of CLT will be located at the end of the section.

2.3.1. The birth of CLT

During the progression of many language teaching methods that have defined over a century of language teaching history, concepts of *communication*, *CLT* and *communicative competence* have dominated the discussions of foreign language teaching during the past few decades (Littlewood, 2011). CLT came into existence as the result of movements towards communicative purposes of language teaching and learning. In the 1960s and 1970s, people were disappointed with the failure of the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method in preparing learners for effective communication (Brown, 1987, 2007; Harmer, 2001; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). Understanding of CLT can be traced back to its developments in Europe and North America concurrently in the 1960s and 1970s.

In Europe, the birth of the communicative movement was related to the rapid increasing needs of communication in societies as waves of immigrants and guest workers who arrived to settle in Europe (Nunan, 2013; Savignon, 2002). In addition, it was also due to the changing educational realities in European societies in the 1960s and 1970s. European countries became increasingly interdependent, and the needs to teach adults the major languages of the European Common Market also increased (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). With such situations, the Council of Europe, an organization for cultural and educational

cooperation in the region, incorporated the writings of van Ek & Alexander and Wilkins to develop notional-functional syllabi for learners in which “language is viewed as meaning potential and the context of situation is viewed as central to understanding language system and how they work” (Savignon, 2002, pp. 1-2). The Council of Europe also sponsored and held international conferences, published books in language teaching and promoted developing alternative language teaching methods to meet the increasing needs of communication in the European Common Market, and thus nurtured the communicative movement in language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Meanwhile in North America, there was also a similar movement towards communicative goals in language teaching. The structural linguistic theory by the prominent American linguist Noam Chomsky was criticised. In the 1960s, people were concerned about “how Chomsky’s generative grammar was going to fit into our language classrooms and how to inject the cognitive code of language into the process of absorption” (Brown, 2007, p. 45). One prominent name representing the communicative movement was Hymes. Hymes (1972) coined the term *communicative competence* to oppose to Chomsky’s structural linguistics (see the following section 2.1.2 for more details). Hymes placed his focus on function and social context in language use. His scholarship brought about a perspective on language which was largely ignored in the United States where Chomsky’s structural linguistics was dominating across the country (Savignon, 2018). Hymes can be considered one of the linguists who laid the foundation for the communicative movement in language theory and language teaching in North America. Following Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980) and later Canale (1983) elaborated the term *communicative competence* (see the following section 2.1.2 for more details), which was considered a seminal and influential work in the area.

On the account of CLT by Richards and Rodgers (2014), great efforts by the Council of Europe as well as the writings of prominent British applied linguists such as Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Brumfit, Johnson, Halliday together with the work of American sociolinguists such as Hymes and Gumperz greatly contributed to the theoretical basis of a communicative or functional approach to language teaching. In addition, textbook writers, British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centres and governments rapidly accepted the ideas of communicative or functional approach to language teaching. All

of the above led to the prominence of what was known as the Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching.

Besides socio-economic forces as major factors that led to the birth of CLT in Europe and North America, CLT was also born under the influence of the Progressivism movement in education in the Western world (Finney, 2002). The Progressivism views is that education should enable individuals to “progress towards self-fulfilment”, a process in which their needs and interests as priorities instead of passively receiving knowledge or acquiring some specific skills (Finney, 2002, p. 73). Richards (2013) summarised some major characteristics of Progressivism in as follows:

- It places less emphasis on syllabus specification and more on methodological principles and procedures.
- It is more concerned with learning processes than predetermined objectives.
- It emphasizes methodology and the need for principles to guide the teaching learning process.
- It is learner-centred and seeks to provide learning experiences that enable learners to learn by their own efforts.
- It regards learners as active participants in shaping their own learning.
- It promotes the development of the learner as an individual.
- It views learning as a creative problem-solving activity.
- It acknowledges the uniqueness of each teaching-learning context.
- It emphasizes the role of the teacher in creating his or her own curriculum in the classroom.

(Clark, 1987; summarised in Richards, 2013, pp. 15-16)

According to both British and American proponents, CLT was described as an approach to language teaching and thus it was not a method (Brown, 1987, 2007; Harmer, 2001; Littlewood, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Savignon, 2018, 2002). The Communicative Approach was developed towards two aims: (1) to set communicative competence as the goal of language teaching and learning, and (2) to develop teaching procedures for the four language skills in which the interdependence of language and communication was acknowledged (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). During its decades of development, there have been various versions of CLT (Littlewood, 2007). Within the interest of my research, I find the distinction by Howatt (1984) suitable as my research of CLT is located in the Vietnamese EFL context. According to Howatt (1984), there are two versions, a strong and a weak version of CLT. In the sense of the strong CLT version, language is claimed to be acquired through

communication. One good term used to describe this version is “using English to learn it” (p. 279). On the other hand, the weak version of CLT places the importance on providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes. Therefore, a useful term to describe this version is “learning to use English” (p. 279). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), although there are various versions of CLT, one common thing to all of them is that they start from a communicative model of language and language use. In other words, they all have a focus on learners’ communicative competence, which will be discussed in detail in the following section.

In summary, the birth of CLT was a response to the paradigm shift in language teaching and learning in Western contexts and European markets. CLT was a product of European and American linguists’ progressive views about language as a means of communication. It was also a result of communicative movements as increasing immediate needs to communicate in L2 by foreign adults arriving in Western societies. As CLT was rooted in the concept of communicative competence, it is necessary to take a historical look at this concept, which will be presented in the next section.

2.3.2. The communicative competence

The Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) starts from a functional theory of language which focuses on language as a means of communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As previously mentioned above, the goal of language teaching in CLT is to develop learners’ communicative competence. There have been several scholars and researchers who defined or elaborated the term *communicative competence*. My review will focus on the work by Hymes, Halliday, and Canale and Swain as they are considered the ones who laid the cornerstones of *communicative competence*, which is the core of CLT.

The concept of communicative competence can be traced back to American sociolinguist Dell Hymes. In his work, Hymes (1972) clarified the terms *performance* and *competence* and coined the term communicative competence as opposed to Chomsky’s structural linguistics. In Hymes’ view, competence is “dependent upon both *knowledge* and (ability for) *use*” (p. 282). According to Hymes, communicative competence comprises of both knowledge and ability for use in regard to the following four components:

- (1) *Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible*

- (2) *Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible*
- (3) *Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate*
- (4) *Whether (and to what degree) something is done (performed).*

(Hymes, 1972, pp. 284-286)

Hymes summarised his theory of communicative competence that “the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to show the ways in which the systemically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour” (p. 286). Hymes proposed that knowing a language is not merely about knowing grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules. Instead, learners need to develop communicative competence, which is the ability to use the language they are learning effectively and appropriately in a given social context.

Another linguistic theory of communication to complement Hymes’ view is from Halliday’s functional linguistics, which was favoured in CLT theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Halliday (1975) described seven language functions that children perform when learning their first language (L1):

- (1) Instrumental: used to express basic needs
- (2) Regulatory: used to give orders
- (3) Interactional: used to create relationships with others
- (4) Personal: used to express personal feelings and opinions
- (5) Heuristic: used to discover and understand the environment
- (6) Imaginative: used to create a world of imagination
- (7) Representational: used to communicate information. (pp. 11-17)

From Halliday’s functional account of language use, learning a second language (L2) is viewed as acquiring linguistic means to perform those seven types of functions. Halliday’s view was in line CLT proponents that viewed language as a means of communication, a means of performing functions. To some extent, Hymes’ communicative competence and Halliday’s linguistic functions were similar at the point of “meaning potential” (Savignon, 2002), which lied in the scope of CLT – a focus on meaning.

Not long after Hymes and Halliday proposed their communicative competence and linguistic functions respectively, Canale and Swain (1980) elaborated the term *communicative*

competence, and later Canale (1983) refined it. Based on their work, communicative competence is described to include the four components:

- (1) Grammatical competence: includes the knowledge of syntax, phonology, morphology, and lexicology (i.e. knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions)
- (2) Sociolinguistic competence: involves social rules of language use (i.e. knowing how to vary language use according to the setting and the participants)
- (3) Discourse competence: is the ability to understand a message and how its meaning is presented in relation to the whole text and discourse (i.e. knowing how to produce and understand different texts)
- (4) Strategic competence: entails the strategies employed for successful communication, such as how to initiate, terminate, maintain, or repair a dialogue.

Recently, Littlewood (2011) refined the work of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) and added a fifth component to the communicative competence concept. Accordingly, he proposed adding sociocultural competence, which refers to the awareness of cultural knowledge and assumptions that may influence the meaning exchanges and may lead to misunderstanding as people communicate interculturally. This fifth component of sociocultural competence can be viewed as the expansion of the communicative competence model by Canale and Swain, but it can also be a broader view of what Canale and Swain identified as sociolinguistic competence (Savignon, 2002). In a more and more globalised world where L2 teaching in many countries are expected to equip their people to be able to communicate internationally (Littlewood, 2011), the refinement of communicative competence by Littlewood makes the concept more complete.

Since the birth of the term *communicative competence* by Hymes, the concept of communicative competence was continued to be elaborated and illuminated. The writings of other scholars and researchers such as van Ek, Bachman, Celce-Murcia et al., Savignon, and Littlewood all contributed to the evolution of the term *communicative competence*. Among all, the work of Canale and Swain (1980) is considered a seminal work in the field and “a more

pedagogically influential analysis” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 89). Therefore, in my research, I took the concept of communicative competence by Canale and Swain (1980) and refined by Littlewood (2011) to study the Vietnamese primary English teachers’ understanding of communicative competence and CLT theory and practices.

In summary, the concept of communicative competence has evolved since it came into existence thanks to great developments in cross-fields, especially in socio-linguistics and educational research (Savignon, 2018, 2002). The communicative competence is considered the core and the language theory of CLT. As the ultimate goal of CLT is to develop learners’ communicative competence, a question raised is how to develop learners’ communicative competence. As CLT is considered an approach and not a method, language teachers around the world may feel confused about what to do in their CLT practices (T. N. M. Nguyen, 2016). Over the time, what is known about CLT is a set of principles and characteristics of the approach inferred from CLT practices (Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014), which will be covered in the next section.

2.3.3. Principles and characteristics of CLT

According to Brown (2007), it is not easy to define CLT as it is a “unified but broadly based, theoretically well informed sets of tenets about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching” (p. 43). Brandl (2008) argued that CLT is frequently misunderstood regarding the sense that it is not a method by itself. It means that it is not a method in the sense by which content, a syllabus, and teaching routines are clearly identified. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) put it that “the comprehensiveness of CLT makes it somewhat different in scope and status from any other approaches or methods [...]. No single text or authority on it emerged, nor any single model that was universally accepted as authoritative” (p. 86). Brandl (2008) further elaborated that regarding theories of learning and effective teaching strategies, CLT does not have adherence to some particular single theory or method. Instead, CLT draws its theories about teaching and learning from a wide range of fields such as cognitive science, educational psychology, and second language acquisition (SLA) research. In this way, CLT “embraces and reconciles many different approaches and points of view about language learning and teaching, which allows it to meet a wide range of proficiency-oriented goals and also accommodate different learner needs and preferences” (Brandl, 2008, p. 6). Although there is not a single universally accepted model of CLT, there has been some degree

of consensus regarding the required qualities to label practices as CLT. Brandl (2008) asserted that CLT methodologies should be described as a set of macro-strategies or methodological principles to guide practices. This review focuses on a broad set of principles by Richards and Rodgers (2014), and a more detailed set of principles by Brandl (2008), which was refined and adapted from Doughty and Long (2003). The review also looks at how teachers' and learners' roles have changed in CLT as compared to those in traditional pedagogies

One set of CLT principles was synthesised by Richards and Rodgers (2014). The scholars discerned from CLT practices second language acquisition (SLA) research to provide an overall underlying learning theory of CLT. Accordingly, there are three umbrella principles of the approach: the communication principle, the task principle, and the meaningfulness principle, which is summarised in Table 2.2. below.

Table 2.2.

Some major principles of CLT

Principles	Meaning
Communication principle	Activities that involve real communication promote learning;
Task principle	Activities in which language is used for carrying meaningful tasks promote learning;
Meaningfulness principle	Language that is meaningful to learners support the learning process.

Note: Adapted from Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 90)

It can be seen from Table 2.2 that the three broad principles of CLT put the stress on communication and meaning. It can also be inferred from these broad principles that in language teaching practices, teachers need to organise activities with the focus on communication and meaning so that learners can use the learned language that is meaningful to them to communicate. This aspect will be discussed in the later section about communicative activities in language classrooms.

The set of principles by Richards and Rodgers (2014) provides language teachers broad pathway to guide them in the direction of CLT practices while Brandl (2008) refined and

adapted a more detailed methodological principles of CLT (and also of Task-Based Instructions) from Doughty and Long (2003). Originally, Doughty and Long (2003) proposed ten methodological principles for language teaching and learning, from which Brandl (2008) adapted and refined to create a set of eight principles to serve as a guideline for implementing CLT practices as shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3.

Methodological principles of CLT
Principles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use tasks as an organisational principle; 2. Promote learning by doing; 3. Input needs to be rich: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materials need to be authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands, - The teacher needs to maximise the use of the target language; 4. Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated; 5. Promote cooperative and collaborative learning; 6. Focus on form (as contrast to focus on forms) 7. Provide corrective feedback 8. Recognise and respect affective factors of learning

Note: By Brandl (2008, adapted from Doughty and Long, 2003)

Regarding the first principle of using tasks as an organisational principle, Brandl (2008) stated that traditional language pedagogies have used grammar topics or texts as a foundation for organising a syllabus. However, this approach has changed with CLT methodologies. The development of communicative skills is focused as a priority while grammar (of linguistic competence) should be introduced only as much as needed to support those skills. In this situation, tasks are a suitable choice to form the basis and long-term lesson plans. The rationale for using communicative tasks, according to Brandl, was grounded on contemporary theories of language acquisition and language learning and synthesised from the work of Long, Prabhu, Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun. Ahmadian (2016) elaborated that tasks can be considered “indispensable instruments” for the practice of language teaching and assessing thanks to their inherent qualities (p. 377). According to Brown (2007) and Littlewood

(2007), Task-based instruction is a perspective within a CLT framework that forces teachers to consider carefully classroom techniques related to important pedagogical purposes. This review is not aimed to go deeply into analysing communicative tasks. Instead, the task principle here is mentioned with a common view from task proponents, according to Brandl (2008), that in teaching and learning a L2, one of the best ways is to do it through social interactions. Among their various forms, pedagogical (communicative) tasks can help foster classroom interactional authenticity (Ahmadian, 2016). By engaging in completing tasks, students work together toward a clear goal with information and opinion sharing, meaning negotiating, and helping each other to comprehend language input and receive feedback on their language output.

The second principle is to promote learning by doing. Brandl (2008) asserted that this concept is not something new in CLT methodologies. Actually, it has been recognised and promoted as a fundamental principle underlying learning theory over the time by many authors, scholars, and educational researchers (Doughty & Long, 2003). One benefit of learning by doing is that “new knowledge is better integrated into long-term memory, and easier retrieved, if tied to real-world events and activities” (Doughty & Long, 2003, p. 58). According to Brandl (2008), this principle is also strongly supported by the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1995), an active approach to using language early on in second language acquisition (SLA) research. According to Swain (1985) and Swain and Lapkin (1995), output plays a very important role in SLA, and that learners need to produce language actively. They suggested that learners need to participate in communication, to struggle with their interlanguage to push out output, a step toward acquisition. By participating in communicative tasks, learners participating in meaning negotiation and input production, and thus assist their learning.

The third CLT methodological principle is that input needs to be rich. Brandl (2008) argued that when we develop and acquire our L1, we are exposed to an excessive amount of language patterns, chunks and phrases in various contexts and situations over many years. Such rich exposure to L1 helps us store the language in our brains that we can retrieve and access as whole chunks. It is certainly that in the language classroom, there is no way to replicate such L1 rich input to develop native-like language skills. However, teachers should try so that input provided needs to be as rich as possible. In the language classroom, the rich

input principle can be achieved through two channels: (1) using authentic materials, and (2) maximising the use of target language.

Firstly, CLT values authenticity in the language classroom as it is intended to be a place to prepare learners for real-life communication, and also because real communication is a defining characteristic of CLT (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 2006). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), authentic materials include text-based materials (e.g. textbooks or coursebooks), task-based materials (e.g. games, role plays, simulations, task-based communication activities), realia-based materials (e.g. from-life materials such as signs, magazines, newspapers, maps, pictures, etc.), and technology-supported materials (e.g. chat rooms, discussion boards, teleconferencing). Richards (2006) justified the use of authentic materials that they provide learners with real-life language use and expose learners to the target language. In addition, authentic materials relate more closely to learners' needs, and thus build a link between the language classroom and learners' needs in the real world. The use of authentic materials also supports a more active approach to teaching. This was explained by Brandl (2008) that its use allows teachers to develop their full potential, to design activities and tasks that match teachers' teaching styles and learners' learning styles. Although authentic materials have several benefits in the L2 language classroom, they are not always fully supported throughout the development of CLT. Critics of the authentic materials use argued that created materials can also be motivating to L2 learners, and maybe even more suitable as they are generally built around graded syllabi (Richards, 2006). Furthermore, Richards (2006) also stated that difficult and irrelevant language may be found in authentic materials; and its use may become a burden for teachers, especially non-native teachers (Brown, 2007). Savignon (2002) offered her view in this matter that it has to do with the teachers. She argued that a teacher with a grammar-translation material can certainly teach in the direction of CLT. She asserted, "What matter is the teacher's understanding of what language learning is and how it happens. The basic principle is that learners should engage with texts and meaning through the process of use and discovery" (Savignon, 2002, p. 22). This view is in line with Widdowson's that authentic materials are not the ultimate essentials provided that L2 teachers facilitate learning processes in authentic manners (Widdowson, 1987, as cited in Richards, 2006). Weighting both benefits as well as limitations of authentic materials use, Brandl (2008) offered a balanced approach to instructional materials that a

combination of both authentic and textbook-based materials, particularly at beginning levels, will help justify practices that are “pedagogically necessary and manageable” (p. 13).

Secondly, in terms of the rich input principle, the teacher needs to maximise the use of the target language. This is based on what Brandl (2008) called “maximum exposure hypothesis” (p. 14), or the (L2) language exposure principle (Dörnyei, 2013). It means that L2 learners need to be exposed as much as possible to the target language as the greater the amount of input, the greater the gains in the L2 (Cummins & Swain, 1986, as cited in Brandl, 2008). It should be noted that a maximum exposure to the target language does not need to entail a complete rejection of L1 use in the L2 classroom. Spada (2007) argued that avoidance of the learners’ L1 is one of the misconceptions about CLT. Based on SLA research, Spada (2007) justified that an appropriate use of L1 can be viewed as providing necessary scaffolding support as learners negotiate form and meaning. However, she cautioned that teachers should be careful about how much L1 use is productive in the L2 classroom. Especially in foreign language contexts where the learners’ exposure to the target language is restricted to the L2 classroom, it is advisable that L2 exposure should be maximised, and L1 use should be minimised. In the same vein, Larsen-Freeman (2000) called for “judicious use” of the learners’ L1 in CLT (p. 132). However, she encouraged that whenever possible, L2 should be used in both communicative activities and also in teachers’ giving instructions. The purpose is for students to realise that the L2 is not just a subject to be studied, but it is also a means for communication.

The fourth CLT methodological principle also relates to input, but in the sense that it needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated. Brandl (2008) explained that the meaningfulness of input means presented information must be relatable to the learners’ existing knowledge. In addition, Brandl (2008) also argued that input cannot be meaningful if it is not comprehensible to learners. For learning to take place, learners must be able to understand most of what is presented. The principle of meaningful and comprehensible input is not something new in CLT. According to Spada (2007), SLA research in the 1980s played important roles in shaping understanding about CLT, and such influential work included the (comprehensible) Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1984). He proposed that to assist L2 learning to take place somewhat similar to L1 acquisition, learners need to be exposed to meaningful and motivating input that is just slightly beyond their current level of linguistic competence

but sufficiently comprehensible for them to understand. In order for input to be meaningful and comprehensible to learners, it should be elaborated (Brandl, 2008), which Doughty and Long (2003) called elaborating input. Brandl (2008) convinced that teachers can elaborate input through a thoughtful plan in which how input should be presented. In doing so, they need to pay attention to designing suitable learning tasks with mindful consideration of task choices, levels of difficulty, learners' processing skills, and scaffolding strategies.

The fifth CLT methodological principle is to promote cooperative and collaborative learning. In his work, Brown (2007) characterised and distinguished a cooperative and collaborative classroom. In a cooperative classroom, students work together in pairs and groups (and not competitive) to share their information and support each other or one another to successfully achieve their set learning goals. Brown (2007) distinguished that cooperative learning does not imply collaboration. In cooperative learning, the teacher structures and gives directions to students about how to work in pairs or groups. On the other hand, in collaborative learning, students engage and interact with more capable others (e.g. teachers, peers) to receive assistance and guidance. According to Brandl (2008), cooperative and collaborative learning have been recognised as strong facilitators of learning. The important aspect of learning in these situations is what happens during the learner-teacher and learner-learner interactions. Brandl (2008) argued that an interaction involves both input and production, and learners cannot just simply listen to input. They need to be active participants in conversations to interact and negotiate the input type they receive. During interactions, conversational participants negotiate meaning, and by doing that they make changes in their language, a step that assists language acquisition or learning. Brandl (2008) acknowledged that this principle of cooperative and collaborative learning is built on the work of Long (1983), known as the Interaction Hypothesis. According to Long (1983), during interactions, learners modify language input such as asking for clarification or confirmation. By doing this, they negotiate meaning and create comprehensible input, and it in turn promotes acquisition. Together with the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1984), the Interaction Hypothesis by Long (1983) has left a significant impact on the CLT evolution. As mentioned above, Swain (1985) also added the Output Hypothesis into shaping the current CLT practices in which teachers need to understand and put into their practices with consideration of the relationships among input, interaction and output.

The sixth CLT methodological principle is the focus-on-form principle. Along the CLT evolution pathway, there have been debates about whether explicit teaching of grammar should be incorporated in CLT practices or teachers should just let learners figure out the language rules themselves in the spirit that language learning will take care of itself (Brandl, 2008; Harmer, 2001). However, that CLT is an approach to L2 instruction that focuses on meaning to the exclusion of any attention to language form is a misconception about CLT (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Dörnyei, 2013; Savignon, 2002; Spada, 2007). In fact, “CLT was not conceptualised as an approach that was intended to exclude form but rather one that was intended to *include communication*” (Spada, 2007, pp. 275-276). It is important to acknowledge that the focus-on-form principle does not equate with a “back-to-grammar tendency” (Dörnyei, 2013, p. 165). It is necessary to distinguish the terms *focus on forms* and *focus on form* (also called form-focused instruction) instructions. A *focus on forms* approach represents a traditional approach to teaching grammar where students learn isolated linguistic structures in a sequence that are predetermined and imposed on them while meaning is often ignored (Brandl, 2008). In contrast, *focus on form* or form-focused instruction is an approach to language teaching that concerns both communicative meaning and linguistic features of a language in which attention is primarily put on meaning with some degree of attention paid to form (Dörnyei, 2013). Brandl (2008) added that in the focus on form approach, grammar can be taught explicitly with an emphasis on form-meaning connection, within contexts and through communicative tasks. Therefore, a focus on form principle is fully compatible with the CLT in that it foregrounds the meaningfulness principle of language tasks (Dörnyei, 2013). Once again like the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, teachers should pay attention to a balanced approach between form and meaning (Spada, 2007). In her view, Savignon (2002) also justified the inclusion of metalinguistic awareness in CLT, but she emphasised that focus on form cannot replace practice in communication.

The seventh CLT methodological principle is to provide corrective feedback. Brandl (2008) noticed that there are two categories of feedback: positive and negative feedback. Teachers give positive feedback when they confirm or praise students’ responses’ correctness while negative feedback is given to correct students’ errors. Just like the exclusion of explicit teaching of grammar in CLT, no explicit feedback on learners’ errors is also a misconception in CLT practices (Spada, 2007). Using results from SLA research, Spada (2007) and Brandl

(2008) justified that there is more and more research evidence that giving explicit corrective feedback strongly facilitates L2 learning. In CLT, the type of corrective feedback is widely encouraged and accepted is “implicit and indirect and does not interfere with communication” (Spada, 2007, p. 277). However, Spada (2007) stated that there is not sufficient evidence to support the claim that implicit and indirect corrective feedback are most effective in CLT classrooms. Instead, there is growing evidence that more explicit corrective feedback appears to be more effective where learners’ attention is put primarily on meaning and content. Regarding giving feedback, Harmer (2001) reminded that teachers should not forget that students making mistakes or errors during learning is part of their developmental errors. Errors are part of students’ interlanguage, a learner’s version of language they have during any stage of their language development, which is continuously reshaped as they aim towards full mastery (R. Ellis, 2008). When giving corrective feedback, teachers should treat it as helping the reshaping process rather than telling students that they are wrong. Harmer (2001) also offered his view that in giving feedback, it depends on the type of activities if it is an activity for accuracy or fluency. Teachers need to decide whether a particular learning activity designed to expect students’ accuracy or to expect students to use their learned language as fluently as possible. Therefore, in CLT practices, teachers need to distinguish between non-communicative activities (also called pre-communicative learning by Littlewood, 2011) and communicative activities. Accordingly, corrective feedback can be given to students to point out the mistakes they are making during non-communicative activities. However, during communicative activities, it is advisable that teachers should not interrupt students during the flow of communication to point out their mistakes to drag the activities back to non-communicative ones. Using SLA research, Harmer (2001) argued that interrupting students during communicative activities may even “raise stress levels and stop the acquisition process in its tracks” (p. 103). Harmer (2001) also viewed that nothing in language teaching is certainly simple as black and white, and it is the teacher who should know what is best to do. The teacher should know when, how and to whom to give corrective feedback in order to assist students’ language development.

The eighth CLT methodological principle is to recognise and respect affective factors of learning. Over the time, SLA research has demonstrated consistent relationships between learners’ attitudes, motivation, anxiety, and achievement in L2 learning (Brandl, 2008). This

review is not intended to go deeply into learners' various affective variables. Instead, this principle is viewed as a reminder that teachers should take into consideration during their practices that they should create a good learning environment where students feel motivated and not afraid to take part in learning activities in the classroom. By doing that, students' L2 learning can be assisted and improved (Brandl, 2008; Brown, 2007).

As the language teaching paradigm shifted from traditional pedagogies to CLT, the roles of teachers and learners have also drastically changed. Instead of being an all-knowing bestower of knowledge (Brown, 2007), the teacher in CLT takes on new roles as a facilitator for and monitor of learning while learners become interactors and negotiators in the learning process (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In CLT practices, the teacher steps back from the position of controlling everything in the classroom to become a facilitator and a guide in students' learning activities. According to Littlewood (1981), in a communicative activity, the teacher should avoid unnecessary intervention as it may prevent learners from genuinely involving in the activities and thus hinder their communicative skill development. Nonetheless, it does not mean that teachers merely become passive monitors. It is just that their functions becomes "less dominant than before, but no less important" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 19). Instead, teachers will monitor and provide advice or assistance when needed. Also, they will observe students' strengths and weaknesses to cater for later. Therefore, it is assumed that teachers have no direct roles in communicative activities. There will be some activities where teachers can be co-communicators provided they are not dominant. Their participation is to give students guidance and stimuli during the activities. In terms of learners' roles in CLT classrooms, students must become active learners. They need to participate in cooperative and collaborative activities to achieve their learning goals rather than relying on the teacher as a role model. In other words, CLT has led teacher-centred towards learner-centred classrooms. However, Spada (2007) provided her view that this change is not at the total extreme from two sides of a spectrum. Instead, a combination of learner-centred activities and teacher-fronted activities appear to be more effective in L2 classrooms today. This view is in line with learning activities compatible with CLT practices today, which will be described in the next section.

In summary, during the development of CLT, several CLT proponents, scholars and researchers have developed sets of CLT principles and characteristics. Those principles and

characteristics have overlapped here and there to evolve along the way as research into SLA has provided more and more understanding about SLA and helping shape current CLT practices. It can be seen from Brandl (2008) that CLT today has made a reconciliation with traditional language pedagogies. Since the birth of CLT in Europe and elsewhere in the world, CLT has evolved from the classic CLT during the 1970s – 1990s (Richards, 2006) with the spirit that “language learning will take care of itself” (Harmer, 2001), or “using English to learn it” as in the strong CLT version (Howatt, 1984). Until recently as described above in this section, CLT does not reject language form or corrective feedback in L2 classroom provided classroom practices have a balance of meaning and form. In carrying out the CLT goal, i.e. achieving communicative competence, teachers need to organise classroom activities designed towards achieving CLT learning goals. The next section will cover classroom activities compatible with current CLT practices.

2.3.4. Classroom activities in CLT

It can be inferred from the characterisation of CLT in the above section that current CLT practices are a reconciliation between traditional pedagogies and more progressive approaches. CLT is currently a more balanced approach to L2 teaching with a focus on both meaning and form aiming to lead learners to their full mastery of communicative competence. Therefore, classroom activities in CLT practices include activities that help learners achieve all components of communicative competence. As it can be pointed out from the CLT methodological principles above, classroom activities include those that focus on both fluency and accuracy activities. However, it is repeatedly reminded that the focus of classroom activities should be put primarily on meaning with a consideration of form connected to meaning. It is necessary to identify classroom activities that can help lead learners to achieve communicative competence.

According to Richards (2006) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), classroom activities are considered compatible with CLT if these activities: (1) enable learners to achieve the curriculum’s communicative objectives, (2) engage learners in communication, (3) require the use of communicative processes such as negotiation of meaning, information sharing, and interaction. Richards (2006) stated that one of the main goals of CLT is to develop learners’ fluency in using language. Teachers can help develop students’ fluency by organising learning activities in which students need to interact with each other to negotiate meaning to achieve

the learning goals. He offered a distinction between activities focusing on fluency and accuracy, which is summarised in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4.

Activities focusing on fluency and accuracy

Table 2.4 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Richards (2006) also gave interesting examples of fluency and accuracy tasks with a reminder that the use of pair and/or group work does not necessarily mean that it is a fluency-based activity, or a communicative activity. This was also mentioned in Spada (2007) that the use of group work has been so closely associated with CLT to the point that it has become a misconception. According to Richards (2006), using group work does not always mean that it is a communicative activity if the goal is not set for communication. In his illustration, he characterised several contrastive group work activities. For example, in one activity, students work together in groups to create a dialogue, in which a customer is trying to return a faulty goods, and a store clerk promises an exchange or a refund. The students later act out their dialogues for the whole class. This is identified as a fluency task, or a communicative activity. In another activity, students are put to work in groups of three to practice the falling intonation of Wh-questions (i.e. Who, What, Where, etc.). In each group, two students practice the dialogue. The third one plays the role of a monitor or a referee, who checks if the other two are using the correct intonation pattern and correct them when necessary. The three students take turns to rotate their roles within the group while the teacher goes around

listening to the groups and correcting their language where necessary. This group work is identified as an accuracy task as the focus is on the accurate use of language and not on communication.

It is undeniable that in CLT practices, teachers need to organise communicative activities so that students can practice communication to achieve communicative competence. Harmer (2001) offered a distinction of non-communicative and communicative classroom activities, which is summarised in the table below.

Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 has been removed from this version of the Thesis

According to Harmer (2001), CLT activities should involve students in real or realistic communication where successful achievements of communicative tasks they are performing is more important than the accuracy of language they use. What matters in CLT activities are that students should have a desire and a purpose to communicate. The attention should be put on what they are saying or the messages rather than on some language form. Students should use a variety of language instead of one single language structure. In addition, teachers should not try to intervene into the activities, and the materials they rely on do not dictate what particular language forms students use. However, he noticed that in reality not all classroom activities occur at either extreme of the communicative continuum (Table 2.5). Some activities may be more towards the non-communicative end while some others are further towards communicative direction.

Larsen-Freeman (2000) also informed a set of three criteria to decide if an activity is truly communicative. Accordingly, communicative activities must have three characteristics: (1) information gap, (2) choice, and (3) feedback. Firstly, there is an information gap in a

conversational exchange between two partners if one knows something while the other does not. An example is that “If we both know today is Tuesday and I ask you ‘What’s today?’ and you answer, ‘Tuesday,’ our exchange is not really communicative” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 129). Secondly, in real communication, participants have choices of what they will say and how they will say it to communicate. When students are tied to say something in a particular way, they have no choices of form and content, and therefore, the activity they are doing is not genuinely communicative. Thirdly, in a conversational exchange, the speaker needs to receive feedback from the listener to evaluate whether their communication purposes have been achieved (i.e., negotiation of meaning). If the speaker does not receive any responses from the listener, the exchange is not really communicative.

In CLT practices, teachers organise classroom activities so that students can practice using the language they are learning to develop their communicative competence. In CLT practices, Richards (2006) also provided a useful distinction of three different types of practice: mechanical practice, meaningful practice, and communicative practice. Accordingly, mechanical practice involves controlled practice activities in which students may not need to understand the language they are practicing but still successfully carry out the activities (e.g. repetition drills, substitution drills in practicing some certain grammatical item). The second type of practice is meaningful practice, which involves practice activities with a combination of both language control and meaningful choice. In this kind of practice, teachers still take control of the language to be practiced, but students can make meaningful choices during practice activities. An example of this type of practice is when students learn and practice the use of prepositions denoting locations. Teachers may give them a street map with buildings located in different positions and a list of prepositions they will choose from. Students will practice answering such questions as: “*Where is the supermarket?*”, “*Where is the cinema?*”. In responding to those questions, students must make choices based on the locations of the identified places. Their choices to answer those questions make the practice meaningful but still controlled by teachers. The third type of practice is communicative practice. This involves activities where students practice using language in communicative contexts, with real information being exchanged and the language use is not completely predictable. An example of this kind of practice may be when students talk about their neighbourhoods with different places and locations.

The above categorisation of classroom practice by Richards (2006) is similar to the way Littlewood (1981) classified classroom activities in the early times of CLT development. Littlewood (1981) combined both structural and functional views in suggesting classroom activities in CLT practices. According to Littlewood (1981), two important aspects of communicative skill include (1) the ability to find language which conveys some intended meaning effectively in a particular situation, and (2) the ability to take into consideration of the social meaning as well as the functional meaning of different language forms. In his view, a competent communicator must be able to choose language which is both functionally effective and socially appropriate to their situations. Therefore, teachers should devise classroom activities that reflect these two aspects of communicative skill. Littlewood (1981) classified CLT activities into two major types: functional communication activities and social interaction activities. Functional communication activities may include learning tasks such as: students comparing sets of pictures to find out similarities and differences, finding a sequence of events in a set of pictures, finding missing features in a map or a picture, giving instructions on how to draw something, completing a map, following directions, solving problems from shared clues. Social interaction activities may include: conversations, discussions, role plays, simulations, debates (Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Recently, in an attempt to combine both current language teaching theories and accumulated classroom experiences especially experiences of teaching English in Asian English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, Littlewood (2013) aimed to link the broader perspective of communicative competence, a major impetus of CLT, with a five-category continuum of classroom activities. This continuum is ranged from analytical learning (which focuses mainly on separate aspects of language use) to experiential learning (which focuses mainly on the holistic language use for communication) (see Table 2.6 below).

Table 2.6.

The communicative continuum

Table 2.6 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Note. Reproduced from Littlewood (2013, p.12)

Littlewood (2013) explained that for those teachers who are used to traditional pedagogies with controlled, form-oriented activities, the continuum provides them with a framework to innovate and expand their practices. They may maintain their traditions in the first two categories, and then expand gradually into the other three categories of activities. Therefore, they can shift their practices little by little toward leading students to achieve communicative competence but still maintain a security and value sense of their roles.

In summary, activities that are compatible with current CLT practices are unlimited provided they cater for students' achievements of communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In organising classroom activities in CLT, teachers need to consider the balance of form and meaning, or structures and functions. As seen from the CLT methodological principles above, the balance of form and meaning does not mean that current CLT practices are merely a come-back to teaching grammar or linguistic forms. Instead, CLT does not exclude form but include meaning (Spada, 2007). Language form must exist in relation with meaning. After all, all the teachers do in classrooms are to lead students towards communicative competence. All activities teachers organise in classrooms should be toward this goal of CLT. There can be non-communicative and pre-communicative activities in CLT, but all of those are to prepare for communication to take place. Those activities must be connected with, or there must be follow-up communicative activities so that students can practice using language to achieve communicative competence.

2.3.5. The critique of CLT

Since its introduction, CLT has drawn great attention from many stakeholders in the world of L2 teaching and learning. As Spada (2007) stated, CLT is “the most influential approach” and “the most researched approach to second/foreign language teaching in the history of language teaching” (p. 283). During its course of development, CLT has gained both positive and negative critique.

CLT is not an exception of a natural cyclical process that L2 teaching approaches and methods tend to undergo. The process involves a method or approach first to be proposed, then accepted, applied, and finally criticised (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997). The literature on CLT has highlighted several points of its negative criticism in terms of:

- (1) Problem of identity;
- (2) CLT “attitudes”;
- (3) Reflection of native-speakerism;
- (4) The effectiveness of CLT;
- (5) The applicability of CLT in different cultures of learning.

All of the above points of negative criticism of CLT will be described in detail in the following part of this section.

The first highlighted point of CLT criticism is its problem of identity. It means that CLT lacks clarity and consistency in its definitions and conceptualisations, and thus there have been so many different interpretations and implementations of CLT since its birth (Dörnyei, 2013; Spada, 2007). The literature on CLT has been so tremendous to the point that recently Littlewood (2011) revisited the term CLT mentioning a recurrent comment about CLT that “nobody knows what it is” (p.541). According to Brown and Lee (2015), it is difficult to offer a formal definition “as all-encompassing as CLT”. Since CLT came into existence with earlier seminal works until recent ones, “we have interpretations enough to send us reeling” (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 31). Harmer (2003) pointed out the problem with CLT identity is that “the term has always meant a multitude of different things to different people” (p. 289). Similarly, Spada (2007) agreed that “What is Communicative Language Teaching? The answer to this question seems to depend on whom you ask” (p. 272). She proved her point by giving a demonstration of asking the question to two different groups of people. The first was a group of experienced second and foreign language teachers, who answered that CLT is a meaning-based, learner-centred approach in L2 teaching where fluency is prioritised over accuracy, and the focus is on message production and comprehension. The second group was her colleagues, who said that CLT is an approach in L2 teaching which is primarily meaning-based and attention is paid to both fluency and accuracy. Over the course of development of several decades, CLT has been so diverse that people can argue that the term has almost lost its meaning (Bax, 2003; Harmer, 2003; Spada, 2007). In addressing a provocative call from Bax (2003) to call for rejecting and demolishing CLT, Harmer (2003) voiced his opinions that CLT is not “a decriable phenomenon anymore (except in the very vaguest way – e.g. we want students to communicate)” (p. 288). According to Littlewood (2011), the identity problem of CLT originated from several factors, one of which involves the discussion of two CLT versions: a strong version of CLT and a weak version of CLT (in section 2.2.1). Related to that, when people discuss CLT, it is often unclear if they are talking about CLT in the sense of an overarching curriculum framework to achieve communicative goals or in the sense of a methodology in which students are always engaged in communication. Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) explained that the diversity of CLT with the existence of many manifestations is due to the lack of firm linguistic guidelines in the approach. It has led to various communicative approaches that share only one general goal, namely, to prepare learners for real-life communication rather than linguistic accuracy. According to Littlewood (2011) and Spada (2007), the problem of CLT

identity is even more complicated as several other ways of L2 instructions have been delivered are also labelled or grouped in the CLT family. Among them, there are task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Littlewood, 2011), content-based teaching, and participatory-based teaching (Spada, 2007). Spada (2007) stated that although they have different foci and goals, they are granted entry into the CLT family for sharing two common principles: a focus on meaning and learner-centred interaction. She also pointed out that a possible distinguishment among them appears to be the content of instruction rather than the methodology. The identity problem of CLT can be best summarised by the story that “as with the tale about the five blind men who touched separate parts of an elephant and so each described something else, the word ‘communicative’ has been applied so broadly that it has come to have different meanings for different people” (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 1997, p. 143).

The second point in the negative criticism is the “CLT attitude”. Since its emergence, CLT has dominated the field of L2 and foreign language teaching (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Harmer, 2001). CLT has been spread around the world as a package of ideas and practices in language teaching labelled with the word “top-quality” (Littlewood, 2011, p. 550) that is fit to be exported worldwide (Littlewood, 2011; H. H. Pham, 2005). With a dominant position in the field of L2 and foreign language teaching, CLT has influenced how people view it. People have developed “CLT attitude”, a point of critique stated by a very strong attacker of CLT, Bax (2003). Piling and synthesising his own experience in working with different people from different countries in the field of language pedagogy, Bax (2003) pointed out that many native and also non-native language teachers, trainers, material writers are operating with the CLT attitude because of the popularity and dominance of CLT. Accordingly, the CLT attitude involves ways of thinking that:

- *Assume and insist that CLT is the whole and complete solution to language learning;*
- *Assume that no other method could be any good;*
- *Ignore people’s own views of who they are and what they want;*
- *Neglect and ignore all aspects of the local contexts as being relevant.*

(Bax, 2003, p. 280)

Bax (2003) believed that people would not say this attitude explicitly, but it almost has been an unconscious set of beliefs. He also argued that the cause of this attitude lies in an obsession with CLT and its priorities. People may call it an approach, not a method, but it is not deniable against the fact that CLT priorities relate to methodology ultimately in one way

or another. CLT is seen as “the way we should teach” without considering context of teaching and learning, a very important aspect in language pedagogy (p. 280). Bax (2003) went on to conclude that it is time to replace CLT with an approach that put context at the heart of the profession. The belief about the CLT attitude by Bax (2003) was also supported by L. H. Phan and Le (2013), who criticised that CLT is usually labelled as “the best practice”, “the way to go”, “the way to teach” and “the remedy” to improve English language education in the world (pp. 221-222). According to the scholars, the import of CLT into other foreign contexts other than the West has posed a threat and has also challenged local teachers’ professional identities.

The third point in the negative criticism of CLT is that CLT reflects native-speakerism or “Western” origins (Brown & Lee, 2015). The critique involves arguments that CLT communicative orthodoxy reflects cultures of teaching and learning closely bound to those of native English speaking countries such as Britain, Australia and North America, or BANA contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). It is argued that most of the CLT literature is a reflection of “primarily BANA understanding of teaching, learning, teachers, learners, and classrooms” (p. 104). The point of the critique is that teaching methods and approaches developed in BANA contexts may not necessarily transfer to others where cultures of teaching and learning are different; and if doing so, it may be not suitable nor effective. In the same vein, H. H. Pham (2005) questioned if native speakers’ of English communicative competence is appropriate in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. He argued that the most accepted model of communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980) comprises the knowledge that the authors believed a native speaker possesses. Posing a native speaker’s communicative competence on EFL learners may cause issues contradicting with local cultural norms and values and thus may also challenge those learners’ identities (H. H. Pham, 2005). Using the work of Berns, H. H. Pham (2005) argued that one’s communicative competence is shaped by the socio-cultural context in which a language is used. Therefore, it is a controversy that EFL learners should develop native-like communicative competence shaped in different socio-cultural contexts.

The fourth point in the negative criticism of CLT is related to its effectiveness. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the goal of CLT is to develop learners’ communicative competence. In CLT practices, teachers are encouraged to engage learners in real

communication to help them achieve communicative goals. However, CLT has been criticised for being insufficient in helping learners achieve their full communicative competence. In their critique of CLT, Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) pointed out that one of the issues accounting for CLT problems lie within the pedagogical treatment of linguistic forms in CLT. Accordingly, they argued that a pure functional approach to language and language use cannot be the sole answer to the whole complicated business of communication. Although linguistic competence is included in the whole communicative competence, many CLT advocates have neglected it and accepted that learners develop this kind of competence indirectly as a result of their engagement in communicative activities. However, more and more research in SLA has suggested the other way that more direct approaches to L2 teaching appear to be more effective regarding this matter (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Dörnyei, 2013; Spada, 2007). Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) noticed that terms such as “consciousness raising”, “input enhancement”, “language awareness”, and “focus on form” in the literature of SLA research support the belief that making learners aware of structural regularities and formal properties of the target language greatly leads to an increase of language attainment rate. Another aspect that Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) discussed in terms of the CLT effectiveness is the development of L2 learners’ formulaic language use. In their views, although CLT targets learners’ nativelike fluency, the approach is not quite effective in helping L2 learners to achieve it. Quite a great deal of SLA research into L2 learners’ development of various components of communicative competence recently suggested that L2 learners have problems with formulaic language use. According to this view, native speakers of a language possess a great number of language chunks, which are used to build blocks in their speech. When they communicate, it is effortless for them to retrieve those chunks, and thus allow them to pay attention to other aspects of communication. However, L2 learners usually lack a repertoire of such language chunks; and it makes them tend to make sentences together word by word or from scratch. This process takes up most of their cognitive capacity and hinders the development of nativelike fluency. Another voice of CLT criticism regarding its effectiveness is from Dörnyei (2013). In his work, Dörnyei (2013) asserted that implicit learning (i.e. a type of learning in which learners acquire skills and knowledge automatically, or without conscious awareness nor attempt to learn; this is different from explicit learning when learners consciously and deliberately attempt to learn) does not lead to sufficient progress in L2 attainment for many school students. He stated that a typical CLT classroom is viewed as a place where it should replicate the L1 acquisition

process as much as possible to provide learners with plenty of authentic language input to feed the learners' implicit learning processes. Dörnyei (2013) stated that implicit learning is effective in generating native-speaking L1 proficiency in infants. However, he said that strong evidence from both empirical research comparing implicit and explicit instruction and experiences in educational contexts in immersion programmes suggests that simple exposure to natural language input does not appear to be effective for mastering a L2 at a later stage in one's life. This is backed by Lightbown and Spada (2013) that there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis that language learning will take care of itself (as claimed in CLT) if L2 learners are just merely exposed to meaning in comprehensible input. Dörnyei (2013) called for an integration of both implicit and explicit learning procedures to lead learners towards achieving their communicative competence.

The fifth point in the negative criticism of CLT is its applicability in different cultures of learning. CLT is viewed to be difficult to be implemented in non-BANA contexts, especially in the Expanding Circle's EFL contexts, due to cultural and contextual factors. This point of critique will be discussed in detail in a later section, 2.4, regarding CLT in EFL contexts.

For an approach to have gone through the course of development of over half a century like CLT and still to be mentioned in language curriculum around the world, it is probably positive aspects of the approach that help it withstand the time. Beside the negative critique, CLT has also received positive assessment from scholars in the L2 teaching world. The first point in the positive CLT critique is that CLT is considered as one of the humanistic approaches to language teaching and learning (H. H. Pham, 2005, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Thamarana, 2015). Thamarana (2015) pointed out that CLT is a L2 teaching approach that is beneficial for language learners in several ways. Accordingly, CLT is praised for motivating learners to use the language they are learning by themselves, enabling learners to use language in communicative situations to satisfy their needs to communicate in real life, and putting learners at the centre of the learning process. In addition, CLT sets the goal of language teaching to develop learners' communicative competence so that they can be able to communicate effectively in real life. This goal is humanistic and is consistent with the long-term goal of ELT in many contexts around the world (H. H. Pham, 2005, 2007). The second point in the positive critique of CLT is its representation of an effort to combine language form and meaning in the field of L2 education (Spada, 2007). CLT was born as a result of

dissatisfaction with preceding methods and approaches, which focused on the explicit presentation of grammatical forms and structures or lexical items without adequate preparation for learners to use language effectively and appropriately in real communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Littlewood, 2011). With respect to that, even as a very strong critical voice to reject CLT, Bax (2003), agreed that CLT has contributed well to the language teaching profession for many years. He valued that CLT was popular for one of its functions as a corrective to address the shortcomings of other previous approaches and methods, such as Grammar-Translation and the Direct Method. Larsen-Freeman (2000) argued that the common goal of most language teaching approaches and methods is for students to communicate in the target language. However, over the time, people realised that to be able to communicate, it requires more than linguistic competence; it requires communicative competence. Larsen-Freeman (2000) went on to praise that CLT's greatest contribution is "asking teachers to look at what is involved in communication" (p. 134). If language teachers really want their students to communicate using the target language, then they need to truly understand what it entails in being communicatively competent. The point made by Larsen-Freeman (2000) is in line with Swan (1985b). Like Bax (2003), Swan (1985a) and Swan (1985b) published a series of two articles to strongly criticise CLT, especially fallacies about CLT and its inappropriateness in EFL contexts. However, in the end, Swan (1985b) had to agree that CLT has directed L2 teaching profession to pay attention to the importance of other aspects of language besides structural meaning, and thus has helped those involved to analyse and teach the language of interaction. In addition, he stated that CLT has promoted a methodology that relies less on mechanical teacher-centred practice and more on real-life exchange simulation. Swan (1985b) concluded that all of those are very valuable; and even though there is a great deal of theoretical confusion about CLT, he admitted that "it is difficult not to feel that we are teaching better than we used to. By and large, we have probably gained more than we have lost from the Communicative Approach" (Swan, 1985b, p. 187).

In summary, CLT has marked a revolution in the field of L2 teaching. The language teaching profession has witnessed a paradigm shift from traditional approaches and methods to a progressive CLT approach. CLT has been praised for several of its features during its development. However, its development has reached a climax and it has faced downtime as more criticism against it appears. As Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) mentioned the cyclical

development that a L2 teaching method and approach undergoes, the final stage of its development involves criticism that calls for either the reform and revision or the complete rejection of them to replace it with another. With CLT, it has faced both calls for reform and/or revision (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Dörnyei, 2013; Littlewood, 2011, 2013, 2018) and rejection of the approach (Bax, 2003). It is questioned if CLT is still relevant today in the world of L2 and foreign language teaching. The following section will present the literature about the future of CLT.

2.3.6. The future of CLT

In the 21st century, after several decades of CLT development, one may ask if talking about CLT is still relevant today (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997) or if the term CLT still serves a useful function (Littlewood, 2011). That question is raised as the world of L2 teaching and learning is believed to be in the time of post-method era (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Littlewood, 2011, 2018).

According to Brown (2007) and Brown and Lee (2015), post-method era in language teaching refers to a concept that has arisen around the turn of the 21st century describing the need to put to rest the limited concept of method as it was used in the previous century. In this modern time, one may not deny that there is not one single best method, or there will never be a method for all (Brown & Lee, 2015; Littlewood, 2013). Moreover, several methods and approaches overlap with one another, and also teachers claim that they are using some method but actually they are using different ones (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Littlewood, 2011, 2018; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). By the 21st century, the L2 teaching profession has gained more and more understanding in SLA. Also, it has recognised that the diversity of language learners in different contexts around the world require language teachers to follow an eclectic informed approach, in which a blending of tasks or activities designed for different specified groups of learners studying languages for specific purposes in different geographic, social and political contexts is needed (Brown & Lee, 2015). In this situation, there have been calls for rejecting CLT on one side, and reforming or revising CLT on the other side as mentioned previously in this chapter.

A prominent voice representing a radical call for rejecting CLT is Bax (2003). He blamed that the dominance of CLT with CLT attitude (mentioned in section 2.1.5) has led to the

negligence of teaching and learning contexts. This is especially problematic in EFL situations. Bax (2003) argued that if one accepts that context is important, then it is time to replace CLT with another approach, the Context Approach. This Context Approach puts context at the ultimately important position before deciding what and how to teach in any given classes. He went on to suggest that the Context Approach will be an eclectic one taking place within a framework of generating communication. Teachers need to be as attentive as possible to contextual factors, which will be prioritised over methodological aspects. CLT in this approach will not be forgotten, but “it will not be allowed to overrule context” and it should be placed where it belongs, in “second place” (Bax, 2003, pp. 285-286). As Bax’s (2003) call for rejecting CLT is considered as radical and provocative (Littlewood, 2011), several authors and researchers have pointed out problems with CLT and called for reforming or revising CLT in the new era. These calls in the literature involves two major directions: (1) transforming CLT with evidence from SLA research, and (2) adapting and modifying CLT to suit with local contexts.

Discussing CLT’s problems, Celce-Murcia et al. (1997), Dörnyei (2013), and Spada (2007) asserted that CLT has arrived at a turning point and has undergone a transformation. Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) stated that as more evidence in SLA research has assisted understanding of effective L2 learning, a more direct and systematic approach to teaching communicative language abilities appears to be emerging gradually. The authors convinced that explicit and direct teaching and learning are re-gaining more significance in teaching L2 abilities and skills. For example, Dörnyei (2013) stated that explicit instructions have good effects on students’ L2 retention based on a synthesis of his previous research. Recently, a study by Ahmadian (2020) reaffirmed that explicit instruction was more effective than implicit instruction in terms of students’ L2 production and comprehension. Promisingly, students’ improvements were also remained in delayed post-test after the study. Celce-Murcia et al. (1997), Dörnyei (2013), and Spada (2007) also insisted that CLT should be revised to transform into an approach that can bridge the gap between current research on communicative competence aspects and actual CLT practices. The revised CLT approach can potentially synthesise “direct, knowledge-oriented and indirect, skill-oriented teaching approaches” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997, p. 148). In this same vein, Dörnyei (2013) proposed a revised model

of CLT which he called Principled Communicative Approach (PCA). Using SLA research findings, Dörnyei (2013) justified his base to form the PCA, which includes seven principles:

- PCA should be meaning-focused and personally significant;
- PCA should include controlled practice activities;
- PCA should provide learners with explicit initial input;
- PCA should seek an optimal balance between implicit and explicit instruction;
- PCA should recognise the importance of the target formulaic language;
- PCA should provide learners with exposure to large amount of L2 input;
- PCA should provide ample opportunities for true L2 interaction, preferably with a specific formal or functional focus.

It can be seen that in PCA, Dörnyei (2013) preserved CLT foundation principles such as focusing on meaning, focusing on learners, and focusing on L2 interaction while adding explicit instruction, controlled practice and formulaic language into his proposed PCA. Dörnyei's PCA proposed for the 21st century appears to be in line with the view of a weak version of CLT (Howatt, 1984; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Regarding adapting CLT to fit with local contexts, H. H. Pham (2005) furthered the belief from Sullivan (2000) that CLT is value-laden. Accordingly, CLT reflects Western cultures' values and beliefs, shown through the use of terms such as "involve learners, allow learners' choices, changed in the roles assigned, monitoring learning, breaks down hierarchic barriers" to describe CLT (pp. 6-7). H. H. Pham (2005) argued that the matter is these terms show ideological values about choice, freedom, and equality, which are not universal. He set out constraints when applying CLT in different learning contexts and supported the belief that the Western versions of CLT (e.g. a strong CLT version) should not be imposed on non-Western language classrooms without adaptations and modifications. Stating that the goal of CLT – to develop learners' communicative competence – is equally applicable in both Western and non-Western learning environments, H. H. Pham (2005) called for re-defining CLT and re-examining traditional views. On the one hand, if CLT is to be applied in different parts other than the Western world, a broader notion of CLT is needed to leave room for adaptations to

suit local socio-cultural environments in which real communication is characterised and defined. On the other hand, teachers should also re-think and adjust their beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning or teachers' and learners' roles.

With the spread of CLT outside of BANA contexts or the Western Inner Circle (mentioned in section 2.1.5) to reach other parts of the world of the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle (B. Kachru, 1985, 1992), CLT has gradually swayed from a classic and strong CLT towards a weaker CLT. According to Nunan (2013), the weak version of CLT has gained more significance in L2 teaching in recent years. It can be seen through the review so far that it appears SLA research together with teaching and learning contexts that have navigated the transformation of CLT, which has taken place coincidentally with the post-method era in L2 teaching (Brown & Lee, 2015). Going back to the question if talking about CLT is still relevant today (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997) or if the term CLT still serves a useful function (Littlewood, 2011), the literature shows that it is not the time to abolish or underestimate the term CLT. However, CLT in the current time should be referred to as an "umbrella term" (Harmer, 2007, p. 70; Littlewood, 2011, p. 542), or a broadly based approach (not as a method) (Brown & Lee, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014) that inter-weaves a set of "principles and foundation stones of SLA" (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 31). Although the implementation of CLT in non-Western contexts may cause problems and lead to a rejection of Western transferred techniques, H. H. Pham (2007) argued that it is doubtful people reject the CLT spirit, formulated from two aspects: (1) Learning is likely to take place when classroom practices are made real and meaningful to learners, and (2) the goal of language learning is to teach learners to be able to use language effectively for their real communicative needs (H. H. Pham, 2007, p. 196). With that CLT spirit, Littlewood (2011) asserted that the term CLT is still useful to remind one that the aim of language teaching is not to teach "bits of language" but to develop learners' abilities to communicate (p. 542). Viewed as a prominent proponent of a weak version of CLT (Nunan, 2013), Littlewood (2007, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018), led by the CLT spirit, supported CLT adaptations to make it fit with different contexts, and proposed an alternative name for CLT, which is *Communication-Oriented Language Teaching* (COLT) to avoid any possible ambiguity and misleading message that the term CLT carries (also about misconceptions, mentioned in Spada, 2007). He convinced that COLT is not only uncontroversial in terms of the goals of teaching (for successful communication), but it also allows flexibility with regards

to the means to suit various contexts. According to Littlewood (2013), COLT is viewed as a context-sensitive language pedagogy for communication, from which teachers in different places in the world can be set free from such concepts as *traditional* and *CLT*. They should be able to choose teaching ideas, activities, and techniques from a universal, transnational pool that has been built up over the years. They should be able to evaluate if those can help create meaningful learning experiences that lead to learners' communicative competence in their contexts. Littlewood (2013) asserted that viewing CLT from this perspective will lead to the disappearance of CLT as a distinct methodology. What is important about CLT now should not be about a set of ideas and techniques, but it should be the spirit of CLT (H. H. Pham, 2007). Littlewood (2011, 2013, 2018) used a five-category communicative continuum framework to guide teachers with the COLT (please see section 2.1.4 for detailed description). Briefly, the framework consists of five categories ranging from the left to the right: (1) non-communicative learning, (2) pre-communicative language practice, (3) communicative language practice, (4) structured communication, and (5) authentic communication. Teachers may spend time in categories one and two on the left to prepare learners with necessary language, but they gradually need to aim towards the right to engage students in communication to develop their communicative competence. With the situation of post-method era in the 21st century, Littlewood (2018) recognised that individual teachers are not expected to adhere to a single prescribed method anymore. Instead, they have freedom to develop their own teaching approaches to fit their contexts and conditions. However, their freedom should be directed in the spirit of "with freedom comes responsibility" (p. 1223). Teachers should not be tied to fixed techniques, but they have to be guided by clear principles to lead their practices. Using three overlapped sets of principles for L2 teaching that were built based on SLA research findings by Ellis (2005), Richards (2006) and the Principled Communicative Approach by Dörnyei (2013), Littlewood (2018) built his COLT's macro-principles to guide L2 teachers' individual teaching approaches. In addition, he also complemented his COLT with a higher-level framework for teachers' actions, which consists of two dimensions: (1) engagement and (2) communicativeness. The COLT higher-level framework for developing a personal approach is presented in Figure 2.2 below.

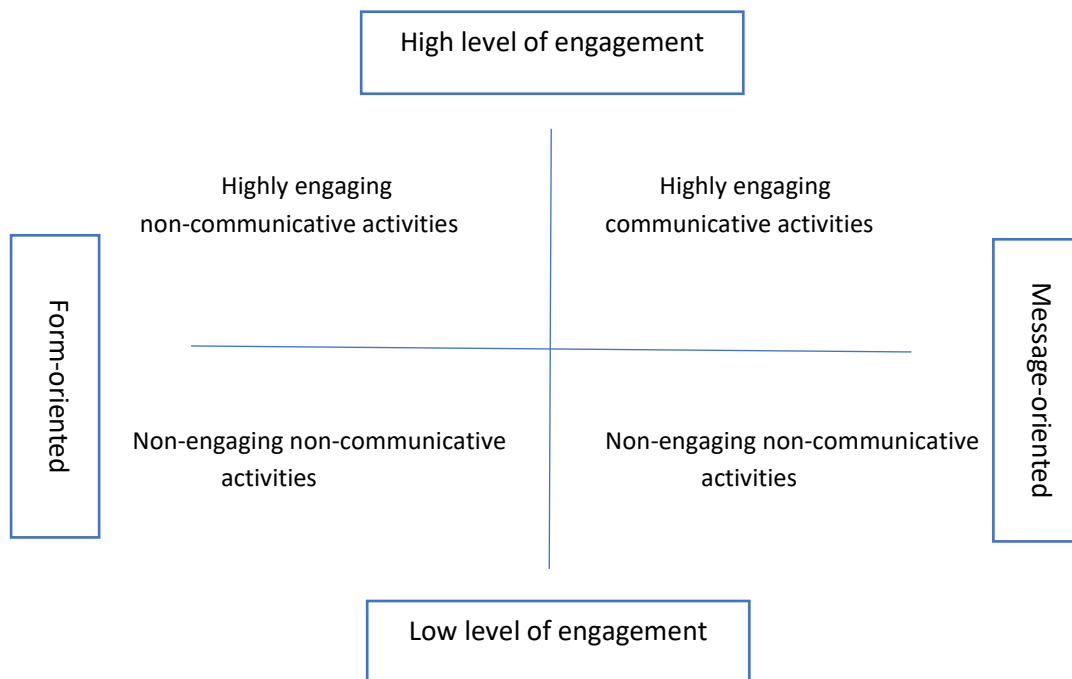


Figure 2.2. A higher framework for developing a personal pedagogy

(Note: reproduced from “Developing a Personal Approach to Teaching Language for Communication” by Littlewood, 2018, *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, p.1225)

Figure 2.1. shows Littlewood’s (2018) higher-level framework for developing a personal pedagogy within the Communication-Oriented Language Teaching, COLT. The horizontal line represents the dimension of communicativeness, and the vertical line is for the dimension of engagement. These two dimensions, as explained by the author, represent two superordinate requirements of L2 pedagogy based on his understanding of the nature of language teaching. Accordingly, the two requirements are that:

- Learning activities should engage learners deeply and personally as much as possible as only by this way that learning takes place.
- Learning activities should aim towards the goal of communicative competence as only by this way that leaning proceeds following the appropriate direction.

The communicativeness dimension helps guide teachers in organising their learning activities in that they need to move from the left further towards the right as students gradually gain and expand their communicative competence. Specific learning activities in the communicativeness dimension is briefly described in the five-category continuum above (and details in section 2.1.4). While teachers can exploit all categories in the continuum of the

communicativeness, the engagement dimension helps guide teachers that students' levels of engagement in learning activities should be as high as possible. It can be seen that the work by Littlewood (2011, 2013, 2018) is an attempt to revise CLT in the post-method era when teachers develop their own individual teaching methodologies, informed and guided by their understanding of macro principles of SLA and their training in language pedagogies.

In summary, CLT has emerged and evolved for over five decades now. Since its emergence being considered as "an automatic solution to all the problems of language teaching" (Morrow & Johnson, 1983; cited in Littlewood, 2018, p.1222), CLT has been under criticism as it has not worked the miracle it was supposed to be. There have been calls for abolishing as well as revising CLT. Stepping into the post-method era, CLT today is still defended for its humanistic CLT spirit (H. H. Pham, 2007). However, CLT has undergone a transformation process as L2 teaching is informed more and more by SLA research. CLT has also been transformed to make it more appropriate in different L2 teaching and learning contexts around the world. L2 teaching world today appears to support the belief that L2 teachers should build their own informed and principled eclectic approaches and methodologies to suit their teaching and learning contexts (Brown & Lee, 2015; Littlewood, 2011, 2013, 2018). With the emergence of teachers' individual context-sensitive pedagogies, CLT, at least with its spirit, is still expected to be around to lead L2 pedagogies towards learners' abilities to communicate until something new emerges and is accepted just like CLT itself over five decades ago.

2.4. CLT in EFL contexts

CLT was born in Inner Circles' countries where English is a native language (ENL) and (foreign) people learn English as a Second Language (ESL), but it has been spread to the extreme of Expanding Circles' countries where English is a foreign language (EFL) (Ahmad & Rao, 2012; B. Kachru, 1992; Wei, Lin, & Litton, 2018). Among many EFL countries, Asian, especially East Asian nations have been viewed as "major recipients" of CLT since its birth in the 1970s (Littlewood, 2011, p. 550). As my research was conducted in the Vietnamese EFL context, this section will mainly focus on the implementation of CLT in the (East) Asian region. To better understand the CLT implementation in EFL contexts, it is helpful to notice the difference between ESL and EFL language environments in these EFL countries first.

In questioning the universal relevance of CLT, Greg Ellis (1996) and Wei et al. (2018) specified the differences between ESL and EFL to highlight a mismatch for EFL learners regarding CLT's instrumental aim and learners' situations. Accordingly, ESL learners have a much greater need to communicate in the target language, and they also have more opportunities to immediately practice new learned L2 in real-life situations. Also, learners' L2 acquisition also takes place a great deal outside the language classroom, and teachers just need to arrange to facilitate their L2 learning. By contrast, EFL is "always a cultural island" where EFL teachers take the role of sole providers of the target language (Greg Ellis, 1996, p. 215). While ESL is designed to prepare learners to function in the society, EFL is a part of school curriculum and is subject to contextual factors such as governments', local communities' as well as school leaders' support.

According to Butler (2011), CLT was introduced into Asia since 1970s, but it took this approach a while to gain attention from countries in the region. With increasing demands of communication for international exchanges in the world, governments of many countries, especially ones in the Asian EFL contexts, have mandated the implementation of CLT in their countries' national language curriculum. Although a common target of many EFL countries in mandating CLT is to improve their English learners' communication in English, the review of literature shows that it is still far for them to achieve the goal as it is challenging for CLT to be successfully implemented in EFL contexts. Several studies about CLT covering EFL contexts such as China, Hongkong, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Arabia, Libya, and Iran suggest that there have been mismatches between CLT theories and practices in those EFL countries (Ahmad & Rao, 2012, 2013; Alam, 2016; Bahumaid, 2012; Butler, 2011; Hussein, 2018; Littlewood, 2007; Musthafa, 2015; Phothongsunan, 2020; Tootkaboni, 2019; Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014; Wei et al., 2018; Whitehead, 2017). Studies by the named scholars and researchers showed quite similar overlapped findings about the realities of CLT in EFL contexts, which fall into three major areas that Butler (2011) categorised:

- (1) Conceptual constraints;
- (2) Classroom-level constraints;
- (3) Societal-Institutional constraints.

Firstly, conceptual constraints refer to problems or challenges that arise when a Western language teaching approach like CLT is implemented in different cultures of learning such as Far East cultures of Asia. There are two levels of reported conceptual difficulties: countries' socio-cultural traditions and teachers' understanding and/or misconceptions about CLT. Littlewood (2007), Butler (2011), and Wei et al. (2018) just to name a few, all reported what Littlewood (2007) called "conflict with educational values and traditions" when implementing CLT in EFL Asia Pacific contexts (p. 245). In East Asian region where Confucian norms conceptualise teaching and learning, CLT can be viewed as culturally inappropriate (Butler, 2011). In Asian countries where Confucianism still has strong influence on the culture of teaching and learning, CLT principles such as learner-centred approach, teachers as facilitators, learners' negotiation of meaning, and individual significance are difficult to practice as they go against the traditional norms such as teacher-centred approach, teachers as authorities, learners' accumulation of knowledge transmitted from their teachers, and the collectivist features in the societies (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007; Wei et al., 2018). The cultural inappropriateness of CLT in EFL contexts is also shown through the use of authentic materials. While CLT promotes the use of authentic materials, authentic contents (e.g. She has never kissed a man before.) of Western cultures are just against Far East cultural norms (Bahumaid, 2012). Another conceptual constraint that hinders the effectiveness of CLT in EFL contexts is related to teachers' understanding of CLT and how they put their understanding into practice. Many teachers were reported to have misunderstood CLT principles, or they claimed they practiced CLT in their classrooms, but their teaching were hardly CLT practices as observed (Ahmad & Rao, 2013; Butler, 2011; Hussein, 2018; Phothongsunan, 2020; Tootkaboni, 2019; Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014; Wei et al., 2018). The researchers revealed that many teachers still used traditional focus-on-forms pedagogies with very limited communication taking place in their classrooms.

Secondly, at the classroom-level constraints, similar findings were repeatedly reported about factors impeding CLT practices. The reported factors include teachers' lack of English competence and confidence to conduct communicative activities in their classrooms (Ahmad & Rao, 2012, 2013; Bahumaid, 2012; Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007; Musthafa, 2015), teachers' insufficient training about CLT and its influence on their understanding and practice of CLT (Ahmad & Rao, 2013; Alam, 2016; Butler, 2011), insufficient time allocation for the

English subject and teachers' workload, lack of facilities and resources for CLT classrooms, large class sizes (Ahmad & Rao, 2012, 2013; Alam, 2016; Bahumaid, 2012; Butler, 2011; Hussein, 2018; Littlewood, 2007; Musthafa, 2015; Phothongsunan, 2020; Tootkaboni, 2019; Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014; Wei et al., 2018; Whitehead, 2017). It can be seen that beside some unavoidable factors about facilities, teaching and learning resources, and policy-related issues, "the teacher" factor appears to be a prominent issue that influence CLT practices in EFL contexts. As teachers do not have sufficient training about CLT to understand and implement CLT principles into their classrooms, their practices maintain explicit form-focus teaching.

Thirdly, there are some societal-institutional constraints that have hindered the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts. One obvious constraint is related to the incompatibility of CLT with the testing and assessment cultures as well as the English language environment for learners' practice. Butler (2011) and Littlewood (2007) surveyed and synthesised published reports about CLT implementation in many countries in the Asia Pacific and all came up with findings about those countries' testing systems obstructing CLT practices. Similar reports are also found in Ahmad and Rao (2012), Musthafa (2015) and Hussein (2018). Accordingly, important tests and examinations that will affect students' futures are still form-focused or grammar-translation based. With pressing expectations from schools, colleges, parents and students about their test scores rather than their communicative competence, teachers just reject or ignore policy makers' mandates or proposals of CLT practices by writing up reports complying with their governments' policies and go back to the "chalk-and-talk drill method" (Littlewood, 2007, p. 246). Another constraint related to the EFL environment was also reported. This socio-contextual difficulty is explained in the differences of ESL and EFL above Greg Ellis (1996) and Wei et al. (2018).

In summary, CLT has been greatly welcomed into EFL countries especially in the Asia Pacific region with governments' mandates or recommendations for it to be implemented in their national curriculum. However, the eagerness about CLT has been met with several constraints from different levels such as socio-cultural, institutional and individual teachers' difficulties. There have been calls from researchers, scholars and educational specialists to adapt rather than adopt CLT principles to make it suitable with EFL contexts. However, how to best achieve contextually embedded adaptations remain limited with general suggestions

although there have been growing number of published reports about the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts (Butler, 2011).

2.5. The implementation of CLT in Vietnam

CLT has been officially introduced into Vietnamese classroom in the 2000s although there were published reports suggesting that it may have set foot in Vietnam about a decade earlier (T. N. M. Nguyen, 2016). The introduction and/or implementation of CLT in Vietnam in the early times was not an exception compared to that of other EFL countries mentioned above (Gregory Ellis, 1994; Khoa, 2008; V. C. Le, 2001; V. C. Le & Barnard, 2009; Lewis & McCook, 2002; T. H. A. Nguyen, 2002; H. H. Pham, 2005, 2007). The mentioned researchers and scholars reported mismatches between teachers' claims of their CLT practices and their actual classroom practices as well as contextual difficulties that constrained the effect of CLT in Vietnam. As introduced in the background information in Chapter 1, Project 2020 was approved by the Government of Vietnam in 2008 (Government of Vietnam, 2008). One of the national goals of Project 2020 is to boost and improve the quality of foreign language teaching in Vietnam, especially the teaching of English. Also mentioned in Chapter 1, within the framework of Project 2020, MOET first introduced the national primary English curriculum in 2010 as innovation in primary English education was supposed to take place before other school levels (MOET, 2010). Given MOET's directions in implementing primary English education following CLT in 2010, this section will mainly focus on recent studies to explore how CLT has been implemented since then. Some recent studies about the implementation of CLT or English language education policy have been found. The studies were related to CLT at the tertiary level (Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012; T. N. M. Nguyen, 2016; N. T. T. Phan, 2018), CLT at both primary and secondary levels (V. C. Le, 2019), and primary English education policy with implications of CLT mandates and practices (L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011; T. T. T. Nguyen, 2012). Research findings from these studies support the belief that CLT practices are still constrained and challenged at all school level in Vietnam.

One study at tertiary education level is conducted by Ngoc and Iwashita (2012). This quantitative questionnaire research was aimed to compare teachers' and students' attitudes towards CLT in terms of grammar instruction, error correction, teachers' role, and the use of pair and group work. The research was conducted with the participation of 88 university freshmen and 37 university teachers from two universities in Hanoi (capital of Vietnam,

situated in the North). The study results revealed that there were differences between teachers' and students' attitudes towards CLT in the related aspects. Most teachers' answers were quite in line with CLT principles while student participants still held on to favour traditional practices. The students in the study valued grammar and accuracy in English learning. They expected that their teachers would correct their errors and mistakes regularly to achieve accuracy. While most teachers recognised their role should be as facilitators, most students would expect their teachers as role models in the target language. The only aspect both parties agreed on was the use of pair and group work when they expressed they favoured this kind of activities in English learning at the tertiary English education. While the students' favours of traditional teaching pedagogies can be understandable, it is questionable that the teachers expressing attitudes aligned with CLT principles would actually implement CLT practices in their classrooms. The limitation of this study probably lied within weaknesses of survey studies (Muijs, 2011).

Another study about the implementation of CLT at the tertiary level is by T. N. M. Nguyen (2016). Using a qualitative case study, the researcher aimed to examine the cultural appropriateness of CLT in the Vietnamese context with regards to factors affecting the implementation of CLT at a university in the HCM City (South of Vietnam). T. N. M. Nguyen (2016) employed survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, program administrators, alumni and employers as well as class observations to collect data. The research finding suggested that CLT did not actually take place as expected by the university program. In fact, attempts to implement CLT in classrooms were overridden by deeply run cultural contextual factors such as large power distance, collectivism, and feminism.

N. T. T. Phan (2018) used a qualitative case study to investigate the differences between teachers' beliefs of effective EFL instruction and their actual classroom practices under the influence of Vietnamese contextual factors. The researcher employed focus group discussions, journaling, non-participant observations and post-observation interviews with six English teachers at her university in HCM City. Although N. T. T. Phan (2018) did not explicitly mention CLT instruction in her study, what her participants described their beliefs suggested that they subscribed to CLT as an effective EFL instruction. Her research findings showed a big gap between what teachers believed as effective in teaching EFL and their actual practices.

The teacher participants described their favours of communicative pedagogies while they inclined to teacher-centred Grammar-Translation Method in their classrooms. Factors influencing the participants' practices were reported to originate from students' issues (e.g., their low proficiency), traditional educational values and norms, physical working constraints and teacher-related issues, which were also found in other studies about CLT in Asian EFL contexts.

Beyond CLT practices at the tertiary level, V. C. Le (2019) did a qualitative study to explore how teachers made sense of what they were trained and put it into their actual classroom practices. The research participants in the study were 101 teachers of primary, junior, and senior high schools from 11 provinces in Vietnam that the researcher believed them to represent Vietnam as a whole. The teachers participated in mandatory in-service training courses provided by Project 2020 with 50 hours on teaching methodologies and 120 hours on improving their English language proficiency. Using focus group interviews (with one group in each of the 11 provinces) and class observations, the researcher collected data through field trips to the participants' provinces three months after they took the training courses. Focus group interviews data revealed that teachers' uptake mostly related to basic teaching techniques that could satisfy their immediate needs for their classrooms while the significance uptake of the course input was limited. Observational data showed that the teachers tried to apply some basic techniques such as using games and the use of PowerPoints without understanding underlying rationale for using those. Teachers had a tendency to use "pointless activities that took up valuable class time in the name of fun and engagement" (V. C. Le, 2019, p. 70). The study revealed that teachers tended to come back to their familiar (traditional) textbook-based practices. They appeared to satisfy with things going well during class times without being aware that their students' performance was limited only to the covered textbook exercises.

Regarding studies about ELT practices at the primary education level, early after the MOET mandated English as a compulsory subject at the primary education level starting from Year 3 in 2010, T. M. H. Nguyen (2011) used a qualitative case study to explore the impact of primary English language education policy in Vietnam with regards to the policy goals at two primary schools in Hanoi, of which one was a public school while the other was a private school. Although the study focused on several aspects of the language education policy, it

provided some findings about teachers' practices regarding one aspect of the research (teachers' methods) in the early times of the primary English implementation. The researcher used class observations and two focus group interviews with teachers, two individual interviews with the principal of the public school and EFL advisor of the private school to collect data about they implemented EFL policy at their primary schools. In terms of the methods used in teachers' practices, the findings from teachers' interviews showed that they used terms such as "games, using visual aids, using the internet, interactive, communicative, facilitator, using songs, pair work, group work, learner-centred" to talk about their methods (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011, p. 239). However, observational data suggested contradictions in what teachers said and how they actually taught in their real classrooms. Many teachers in the study still used the traditional EFL Audio-Lingual methodology and the PPP model, which appeared to limit students' interactions and communication in class. Although the researcher aimed to compare the primary English policy implementation at two different systems of schools, it provided some initial insights into recognising primary English teachers' practices in the early times of Project 2020.

In the same vain, T. T. T. Nguyen (2012) conducted a similar study to cover primary schools in rural areas of Vietnam though with some differences in research approach and methods of data collection. The study was a part of a larger project aiming to investigate the implementation of technology in rural primary schools within the framework of Project 2020 at one province in the Vietnam South. Trang (2012) used a mixed-method approach with online questionnaire, document analysis and interviews with selected primary school leaders and English teachers. Like T. M. H. Nguyen (2011), T. T. T. Nguyen (2012) also covered many aspects in the primary English policy and confirmed findings from T. M. H. Nguyen (2011). Regarding the aspect of teachers' methods, the study reported that teachers still used traditional approaches to teach primary English with teacher-centred classrooms and the use of choral drilling and repetition practice. Both studies by T. M. H. Nguyen (2011) and T. T. T. Nguyen (2012) focused on the big picture of primary English policy while the aspect of teachers' methods was just a small piece in their puzzles. However, they both put together pieces to have a better view of primary English teachers' practices in settings from two different parts of Vietnam. They provided some understanding in the conduct of primary English in the early times of Project 2020.

Different from previous research, L. C. Nguyen et al. (2016) shed the light into primary English practices from students' perspectives through their lived experiences. The study used an ethnographic approach with class observation, interviews with students and their parents and students' drawing to express their opinions of their English learning in class as data collection methods. The research was conducted at one school in a big city in Vietnam with participants including one teacher, three students, and their parents. The research findings showed that students were unhappy about their English learning in the classroom with their bored experiences and their critical opinions of their English teacher. Unlike teachers in the research by V. C. Le (2019), the teacher in L. C. Nguyen et al. (2016) made very little effort to conduct interactive activities to engage students in her classroom such as using games. The teacher held on to using traditional pedagogies in her teaching rushing to cover all contents in the textbook as observational data revealed. L. C. Nguyen et al. (2016) did not focus exclusively on the teacher's CLT practice but child-friendly pedagogies in line with primary English curriculum. Nonetheless, the study put one more puzzle into the big picture of primary English implementation in Vietnam. It implied that CLT practice did not take place in school as it was mandated.

In a very recent study by M. D. Le et al. (2021), the researchers aimed to explore how primary English teachers exercised their agency in implementing the primary English education policy mandated by the MOET. Despite a focus on teachers' agency, the study provided some more understanding into primary English teachers' practices in Vietnam. Using a qualitative case study, the researchers employed in-depth interviews, class observations and document analysis to collect data. The research participants were two primary English teachers at an island school in a province in the Vietnamese North. The research findings showed that teachers were expected by the policy and their schools as curriculum "mere" implementers and were regularly supervised and inspected by their related stakeholder leaders. They were mandated to follow instructions transferred to them from the MOET, DOETs and their school leaders. Although teachers claimed they complied with the mandates, their compliance did not mean that they followed all instructions. Instead, they adapted their practices to fit with their situations. With regards to teachers' methods, the study reported that teachers attempted to use child-friendly activities in class such as games and songs. However, the activities they used did not seem to support communicative goals. Their overall

practices were tied to traditional teaching methods with teachers' domination and quiet classrooms.

It can be noticed that after over a decade of introducing Project 2020, the EFL teaching practices in Vietnamese classroom at all levels remained somewhat unchanged since Nguyen's (2011) research in terms of research findings. Regarding the research goals, researchers focused on various aspects of EFL practices in light of Project 2020 such as cultural appropriateness of CLT in Vietnam, the difference between teachers' beliefs and practices in CLT, the impact of implementation of English education policy on teachers' practices. With respect to research design, several of the mentioned studies employed qualitative approaches in conducting research exploring teachers' classroom practices. Participating research schools and participants were selected with limited number due to features of qualitative research data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Also, participants were selected either at one school or from scattering areas in a province or the whole country. Recognising that investigating how primary English teachers in the Mekong Delta region conducted their mandated CLT practices was still under-researched, my study was aimed to explore deeply and specifically CLT mandated practices in the Mekong Delta region with both similar and also different qualitative research design to achieve my aim, which will be detailed in the next chapter about the research methodology.

2.6. The theoretical perspective

In this research, I employed a socio-cultural perspective to view, interpret and discuss the findings. Sociocultural theories are originated from Vygotskian theory and later have been developed by many other researcher followers along the course of history (Thorne, 2005). Lantolf (2000) specified that some of the core concepts of socio-cultural theories are the human mediated mind and the activity theory. Accordingly, socio-cultural theories suggest that all human activities are socially, culturally and historically constructed (K. E. Johnson, 2006; Lantolf, 2000; Thorne, 2005; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). On the account of socio-cultural theories by Lantolf (2000), human behaviours result from the combination of socially and culturally constructed forms of mediation into human activities. In their living environments, humans use cultural and historical artifacts, tools (physical, symbolic, or psychological) or signs for mediating and regulating their relationships with others, with themselves and thus change the nature of those relationships. Socio-cultural theories also advocate that human social and mental

activities are organised through culturally and historically constructed artifacts. Thorne (2005) argued that sociocultural theories embrace the notion that the capacity for change exists in everyday practices of a society. In terms of epistemology, ethics and methodologies or techniques, Thorne (2005, pp. 403-404) expressed that:

A burning question is simply, What kind of world do we want to live in? How are our actions as researchers, activists, interpreters, scientists, educators, or the other identities we perform through our daily professional practices, changing, and we hope improving, the conditions of knowledge about language and the mind and the teaching and learning of additional languages? Though certainly not unique among theoretical perspectives, sociocultural theory approaches take these questions seriously by understanding communicative processes as inherently cognitive processes, and cognitive processes as indivisible from humanistic issues of self-efficacy, agency, and the capacity to lead a satisfying if not fulfilling life.

He also argued that all of those qualities are dependent of culture, organisations, and circuits of power. Culture, which exists as an objective force in any societies, is inscribed in artifacts, and in the making and transformation of social relationships.

According to Ahmadian and Mayo (2018), in recent trends, socio-cultural theory has been selected one of the theoretical perspectives as “the novel lens” to revisit and research Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which is considered belonging to the CLT family (Littlewood, 2007; Spada, 2007). They believed that socio-cultural theory (together with complexity theory) could help “address some of the longstanding and difficult phenomena in this area” (Ahmadian & Mayo, 2018, pp. 1-2). Marden (2008) also argued that the application of socio-cultural theory into L2 learning provides a useful framework to understand how important it is to participate in collaborative and meaningful interaction in L2 classrooms. As mentioned above that human activities are believed to be socially, culturally and historically constructed, teachers’ practices as well as students’ learning should be strongly influenced by the local socio-cultural factors. My research explored how primary English teachers in Vietnam understood and implemented a mandated Western-based CLT teaching and learning approach in their local context. Therefore, it would be appropriate to observe, evaluate and discuss teachers’ practices through the lens of sociocultural perspective. I also drew on arguments from Mutohhar, PatchareeScheb-Buener, Muangjanburi, and Rujirungrot (2016) and Panofsky (2003) for the use of socio-cultural theory as my theoretical perspective framework. Mutohhar et al. (2016) argued that “socio-cultural theory offers a framework to understand how social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts organise humans’

way of thinking” (p. 1052). In addition, Panofsky (2003) stated that socio-cultural perspective is able to integrate various analysis levels from “the macrolevels of culture to the microlevels of social interaction and individual thinking and speech” (p. 419). Vietnamese primary English teachers live and work in the socio-cultural environment of the Vietnamese context. Therefore, socio-cultural factors will shape their ways of thinking and behaviours. Using socio-cultural theory lens to view, interpret, and discuss my findings about teachers’ lived experiences and stories would be an appropriate choice.

Research about the implementation of Western-based language teaching approaches, in general, and CLT, in particular, in different contexts of learning through the lens of socio-cultural theory has emerged with increased interests recently. Many researchers (Barabadi & Razmjoo, 2016; Dang, 2010; Khuong, 2017; P. H. H. Le, 2004; Mutohhar et al., 2016; V. L. Nguyen, 2010; Puteh-Behak, Darmi, & Mohamed, 2015) have used socio-cultural theory in their research of language teaching and learning. A common theme found among the researchers is the awareness and attention that should have been considered regarding socio-cultural contexts of learning. Puteh-Behak et al. (2015) conducted participatory action research using socio-cultural theory to explore the implementation of a Western-based multiliteracy language teaching approach in the Malaysian tertiary context of learning. This Western approach promotes students to develop the 21st century skills and knowledge such as team or group work, critical thinking, synthesising, using technologies, and multimodal resources through language learning. The research was aimed to see how Malaysian socio-cultural factors influenced students’ learning with this Western-based approach. The researchers used class observations, classroom artefacts, and informal conversations with Malaysian university students who learned English as a second language. The research findings showed that those Malaysian students had difficult issues with doing teamwork, critical thinking, and active participation in classroom activities. The researchers argued that each society has different socio-cultural tendencies from others. Students’ learning may be affected negatively if socio-cultural influences towards learning are ignored. In the case of the Malaysian students, due to their familiarities with traditional ways of learning, the copy and paste culture of learning and the formal teacher-student relationship, they faced obstacles when engaging into a different model of learning from Western cultures.

Barabadi and Razmjoo (2016) employed qualitative grounded theory research to investigate how EFL Iranian school English teachers understood and implement CLT curriculum, initiated in Iranian public schools in 2013 by the Iranian Ministry of Education. The researchers used socio-cultural theory, specifically the activity theory, to view and discuss their research findings. Participants of the research involved Iranian school English teachers who taught Year 7 and Year 8, students, teachers' directors, and students' parents. The research found that there were four layers of contradictions in the CLT implementation in Iranian public schools. Firstly, there was a contradiction between teachers' attitude towards their actual practices regarding CLT. They had positive attitudes towards building students' autonomy in learning English following CLT, in reality they adopted teacher-fronted instructions to transfer English knowledge to their students. Secondly, another contradiction arose when teachers used traditional methods to teach English despite new English textbooks highlighted the development of students' communicative competence through the use of communicative activities. Teachers were observed to use traditional teaching techniques with excessive of L1 focusing on students' accuracy, to which they were accustomed. Thirdly, there was a conflict between the current activity system with another "culturally more advanced" system (pp. 55-56). Specifically, the authors stated that the new English communicative curriculum was prescribed to the teachers by the Iranian Ministry of Education, which was considered culturally more advanced compared to the instructional activity system in which the teachers worked. The fourth contradiction appeared in the conduct of in-service training programs for English teachers, which was planned by the Ministry of Education. Teachers did not see the Ministry's programs' contents as helpful for their instructional program. The researchers confirmed previous research that adopting CLT in EFL contexts have cause issues and challenges to arise. Socio-cultural factors of the context of learning should be considered to improve the quality of ELT.

Mutohhar et al. (2016) reviewed the ELT situations in Thailand following Thai Ministry of Education's introduction of CLT into the Thai context with a hope to boost students' communicative abilities. The researchers grounded their review based on socio-cultural theory to explain for Thai EFL students' situations of low motivation and proficiency. Sharing other researchers' arguments in the CLT literature, the authors argued that cultural conflicts arise when applying CLT into Thai culture of learning. Based on their research and teaching

experience, they remarked that progressive approaches such as CLT have not proven to be effective in their context. The researchers also argued that CLT is not context-oriented, and thus the importance of learning context is neglected. They explained that could be the reason for Thai EFL students' low motivation in learning. The author proposed that socio-cultural theory could be an appropriate theoretical framework for Thai ELT as it emphasises Thai students' context and culture of learning, and it could effectively help facilitate Thai language teaching and learning.

In Vietnam, several researchers and scholars have also used socio-cultural theory to view and discuss their ELT research. For instance, P. H. H. Le (2004) used socio-cultural theory to analyse first-year university students' English speaking learning. Specifically, the researcher used major areas of social interaction, mediation, scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development in socio-cultural theory to view and interpret students' English language learning. The research concentrated on comparing findings about complicated mediation processes when students' learned to speak English with and without assistance. The researcher voiced her choice of socio-cultural theory for her study that there is not much empirical research conducted from the perspective of teaching and learning EFL although there is growing interests in socio-cultural theory in language teaching and learning.

Another researcher, Dang (2010), used socio-cultural theory lenses to discuss learner autonomy in Vietnamese EFL at the higher education level. The researcher acknowledged that although he did not attempt to investigate a particular case, most of typical issues related to the facilitation of learner autonomy in the Vietnamese context were addressed in his analytical research paper. Dang mentioned factors such as limited learning resources, unequal opportunities to access the Internet, (Eastern) culture of learning (e.g., characteristics such as absorbing and memorizing), centralised educational mechanism, ineffective or failed implementation of CLT in Vietnam have hindered students' autonomy in learning. Regarding the implementation of CLT, Dang mentioned several contextual factors such as large class-size, test-oriented culture of teaching and learning, heavy workload which have contributed to make CLT not widely accepted or appropriately implemented in Vietnam.

Similarly, V. L. Nguyen (2010) also used socio-cultural theory in his analytical research to discuss the roles of computer mediated collaborative learning (CMCL) equipped in CLT classrooms. The discussion did not focus on any specific areas of Vietnamese ELT nor what

education level. Instead, it covered a general spectrum of ELT in Vietnam. According to the researcher, difficulties to implement CLT in English classrooms in Vietnam can be assisted with CMCL. Accordingly, the author acknowledged some constraints in the Vietnamese context for CLT to be effective including Confucian influence, exam-oriented education, classroom management, and authentic communication. Drawing on findings from other researchers' empirical studies, Nguyen suggested that CMCL can help address some obstacles for CLT in Vietnam as it can foster interaction, collaboration, communication among learners during the learning process. However, one weakness of this paper is that it was not evident-based for the case of CLT implementation in Vietnam. The researcher just used other researchers' findings in other contexts to justify for the use of CMCL as a solution for CLT in Vietnam.

Finally, T. V. A. Phan (2020) did a multiple qualitative case study using socio-cultural lenses to investigate the use of questioning in both EFL non- English major and English major classes at a university in Vietnam. Specifically, the research focused on exploring how teachers and students perceived and used questioning in tertiary English classrooms within the direction of CLT. The themes emerged from her research findings suggested that using questioning is a good strategy to facilitate communicative interaction, which bring about opportunities for learners to communicate in English. In addition, using questioning aides teachers in orchestrating learning, exploring learning needs, and promoting classroom relationships. Finally, questioning in those Vietnamese EFL classrooms reflects cultural features including traditional roles of the teacher and students, concerns for face or status, and the use of L1 in L2 classes.

While the above studies in Vietnam were either non-empirical research or with a focus on tertiary students' mediated minds in the process of English language learning, the closest to my research area was a study from Khuong (2017). The researcher conducted a qualitative multiple case study in a Southeast province of Vietnam to explore how English teachers there implemented the MOET-designed primary English program in terms of applying CLT. The researchers used two notions of socio-cultural theory, scaffolding and mediation, as framework to investigate teachers' perspectives and practices. Case study combined with action research with three female teachers (with three-year college degrees) from three primary schools in the province was conducted with class observations, stimulated recall sessions, and group meetings as data collection instruments. The research findings revealed

that interviews with teachers showed they lacked CLT understanding. Teachers claimed that their pre-service training and the MOET's professional development (Project 2020's re-training) did not provide them with any theoretical and practical knowledge of CLT. For the action cycles, during stimulated recalls with the teachers, the researcher presented to them CLT-oriented lesson plans. After the CLT orientation sessions, class observations showed that teachers expanded their understanding of CLT. It was shown through their practices which were reflected that they used both CLT and non-CLT pedagogies.

My research was aimed to explore how primary English teachers in the under-researched Mekong Delta region understood and implemented the mandatory primary English CLT curriculum within the framework of Project 2020. I employed a qualitative research design with multiple data collection instruments to investigate the research matters. As mentioned above, most of the reviewed studies regarding Vietnamese ELT, specifically about the CLT implementation in Vietnam through the lens of socio-cultural theory, were about students' mediated minds in English language learning and targeted university students. Except for the qualitative action research by Khuong (2017) focusing on English teachers' understanding of MOET's primary English curriculum and their implementation of CLT (after attending the researcher's presentation sessions of CLT) in the Southeast of Vietnam, little research has been found about exploring primary English teachers' understanding of and implementing CLT using socio-cultural lens as theoretical framework. Therefore, my research was hoped to provide more insights into the research of Vietnamese primary English teachers' understanding and implementation of CLT in their classrooms using socio-cultural theory as theoretical perspective.

2.7. The conceptual framework

Given all contents described in the literature review, the conceptual framework leading my research is summarised in Figure 2.3 below.

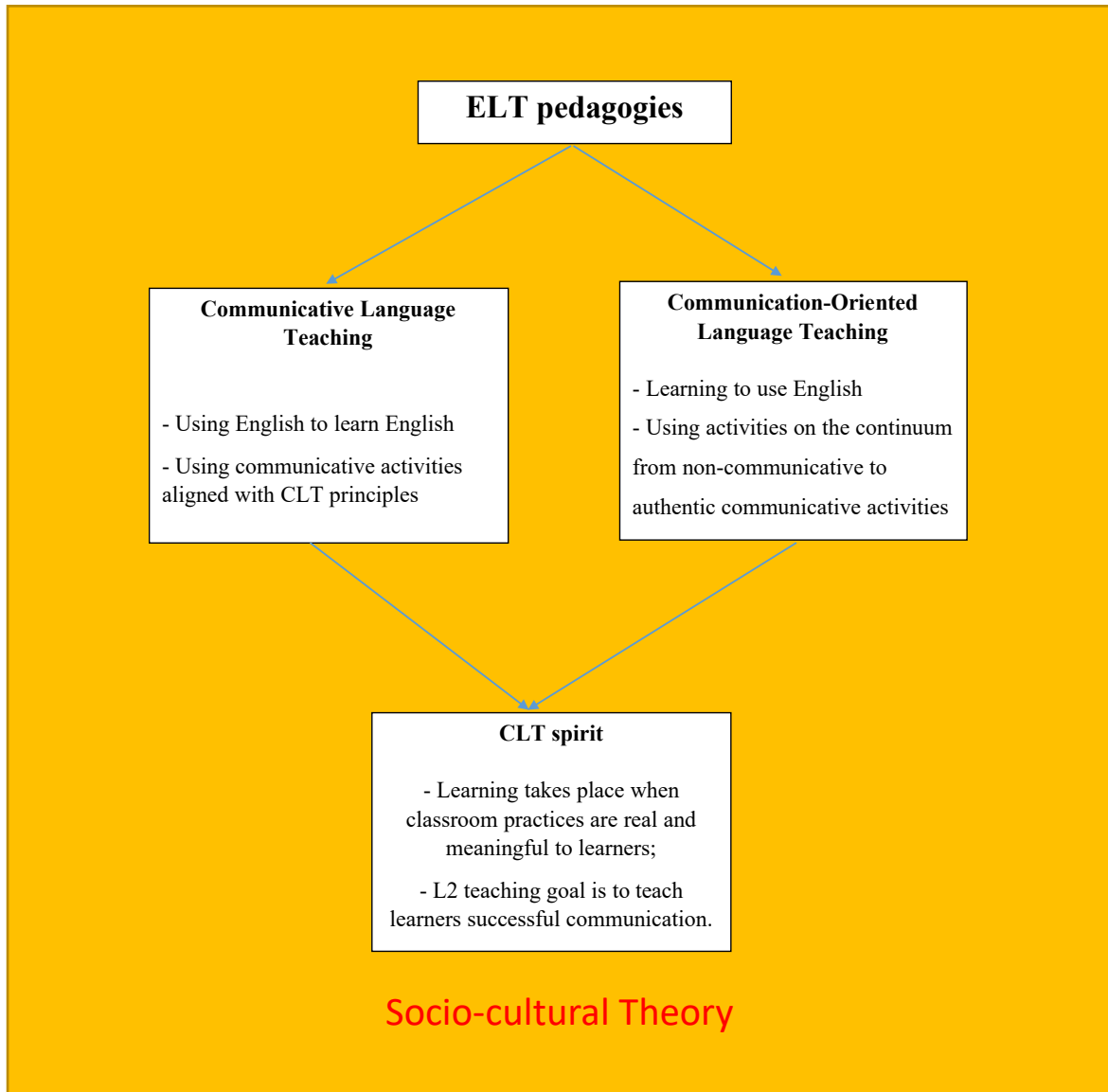


Figure 2.3. *The conceptual framework for the current research*

Figure 2.3 shows the conceptual framework for my research. In the framework above, there are four components: ELT pedagogy, Communicative Language Teaching, Communication-Oriented Language Teaching and the CLT spirit. All of those are situated within the socio-cultural theory perspective. This is to mean that Communicative Language Teaching and Communication-Oriented Language Teaching are situated within ELT pedagogies. CLT and COLT reflect the two versions of CLT: the *how we learn* (using English to learn English) and the *what we learn* perspectives (learning to use English). However, the COLT has a new feature that teachers should be free from concepts such as CLT or traditional. They should be able to choose teaching ideas and techniques ranging from non-communicative to authentic communication on the continuum to carry out their practices to achieve the

teaching and learning goals appropriately regarding their socio-cultural contexts. CLT and COLT are overlapped at the CLT spirit that L2 teaching is to teach learners successful communication and learning takes place when classroom practices are real and meaningful to learners. The literature review suggests that the COLT is one mainstream tendency of ELT practices contemporarily.

2.8. Chapter summary

The literature review shows that CLT was developed in Western countries which makes it become alien in other cultures of learning, especially EFL contexts. CLT has been both praised and criticised during its development as SLA research findings provide more understanding into the nature of L2 acquisition. However, CLT has also been transformed to fit with different contexts of ELT as well as to be more effective. Current trends of CLT practices suggests that the transformation takes place following moving from strong CLT versions towards weaker ones. No matter how much it has changed, CLT spirit remains strong, and it is supported even by its strongest critics. In the current literature, the CLT spirit is leading an emerging context-sensitive approach, which Littlewood (2011, 2013) called Communication-Oriented Language Teaching. In Vietnam, CLT has been eagerly welcomed and is mandated at various school levels. However, Vietnamese EFL contextual factors have hindered CLT practices at all school levels. I believe that educational research should reflect educational realities. As CLT remains mandated in the national ELT curriculum in Vietnam, I believe that there is still a need to study it in order to lead CLT practices in Vietnam towards being effective and context appropriated. With my interest in primary English education and CLT practices at the primary education level in the Mekong Delta region is still under-researched, I believe my research exploring how primary English teachers in the region conducted their CLT practices and finding ways to help them transfer from more traditional focus-on-forms approaches towards more communication-oriented language teaching will provide valuable insights about CLT practices in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam.

CHAPTER 3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In Chapter 2, a conceptual framework was developed from the literature review related to the Communicative Language Teaching approach. This framework serves as a guide for me to conduct my research exploring primary English teachers' CLT understanding and practices in Vietnam. My research aims are:

- To assist Vietnamese primary English teachers to improve their teaching practices towards building and developing learners' communicative abilities.
- To explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers teach following the CLT approach;
- To discover if teachers are facing any challenges and having any opportunities in teaching towards building and developing students' communicative competence;
- To investigate what help or support they need to improve their teaching practice;

My research was conducted to answer the central research questions:

How do Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT from a socio-cultural perspective?

Four research sub-questions were raised to help answer the central question:

- (1) *What ELT pedagogies do Vietnamese primary English teachers use in their teaching?*
- (2) *How do they teach following the identified ELT pedagogies?*
- (3) *What informs Vietnamese primary English teachers' current ELT pedagogies?*
- (4) *Do Vietnamese primary English teachers perceive any difficulties or opportunities in implementing the primary English communicative curriculum, and what are they if any?*

This chapter discusses the research design which is a qualitative study. In section 1, qualitative paradigm and qualitative research are introduced. Section 2 describes the methods of the research including methods of data collection, data collection procedure and data analysis. Section 3 addresses measures to ensure the quality of the research design; and section 4 discusses the ethical considerations of the research.

3.1. The qualitative paradigm and qualitative research

A paradigm or worldview is “a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action” (Mertens, 2010, p. 7). Qualitative research takes place in the qualitative paradigm in which qualitative researchers aim to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014).

This research was conducted following the Constructivist worldview. According to Constructivism, there are multiple realities in the society; social reality is subjective and includes narratives or meanings constructed or co-constructed by individuals in interactions with others within a specific social context (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015). This study used a qualitative paradigm to explore CLT understanding and practices by primary English teachers in their classrooms in Vietnam. A qualitative approach following Constructivism would allow me to explore participants’ in-depth perspectives, draw on their experiences and record their stories (Wahyuni, 2012). As socio-cultural theories suggest that all human activities are socially, culturally and historically constructed (K. E. Johnson, 2006; Lantolf, 2000; Thorne, 2005; Zuengler & Miller, 2006), a socio-cultural perspective, which I used to view, interpret and discuss the research findings, would fit well into the qualitative Constructivist approach. Furthermore, my research questions as introduced asked questions of *What* and *How* to explore Vietnamese primary English teachers’ CLT understanding and practices. That knowledge would be difficult to be obtained from a quantitative-oriented approach (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2017; Muijs, 2011).

I acknowledge that some bias may emerge in conducting qualitative research because researchers involve themselves in data collection, analysis and meaning interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This research draws on a Constructivist perspective to explore and understand Vietnamese primary English teachers’ understanding, practices and experiences in their social and cultural contexts. Therefore, epistemologically I consider the knowledge obtained from this research would be viewed under ideas, beliefs and experience that my research participants and I held. In addition, in order to counteract any potential bias, I have tried to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings by following rigour and ensuring transparency in conducting the research project, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2. Methods of the research

The research project was divided into two phases: Phase One and Phase Two. Phase One of the research involved the use of an online questionnaire. Phase Two consisted of the pre-observation interviews, in-class observations and post-observation interviews. This section describes the data collection instruments, how data was collected and analysed.

3.2.1. Methods of data collection

3.2.1.1. *Phase One - The online questionnaire*

Justification for using online questionnaire

For the Phase One of the research, an online questionnaire was used to collect targeted participants' initial understanding of the CLT approach and their teaching practices. The online questionnaire was a suitable choice for this phase of the research because a questionnaire is an effective way to collect authentic data related to people, their attitudes, opinions, perceptions, behaviours or experiences (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). In addition, the questionnaire allows for many potential participants to be contacted at different locations with minimal costs (Muijs, 2011). Also, the questionnaire is to be completed at participants' convenience since they can answer anytime, anywhere suitable to them within the researcher's time frame (Muijs, 2011). Finally, the questionnaire was used as a means to help me recruit participants for the Phase Two of my research (Mertens, 2010, p. 7; Muijs, 2011). With the development of technologies today, especially the Internet, an online questionnaire would be greatly convenient for me to approach many potential participants with minimal costs and time.

The research participants

Participants for Phase One (and also Phase Two) of the research were approached following purposive sampling method. According to Cohen et al. (2011), purposive sampling is a process in which qualitative researchers purposefully select research sites or participants that will best help them understand the research problems and the research questions.

For my research project, I wanted to explore how primary English teachers in the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam understood CLT and put it into practice from a socio-cultural perspective following a mandated primary English communicative curriculum. This region of the country lies within the South of Vietnam towards the southernmost (see figure 3.1). N.

Do, Tan, and Phung (2017) stated that although the socio-economic life in the area was greatly developing, its educational quality remained low compared to other regions in the country. The numbers of students who graduated from middle schools and senior high schools in the Mekong Delta was ranked the lowest in the whole country (Ho, 2018). Education in the Mekong Delta was still facing great challenges from physical facilities for classrooms, human resources to the change in policies to scope with the changing world (N. Do et al., 2017). I would like to explore how primary English education following the CLT approach was implemented in such difficult conditions in the region in Vietnam. Therefore, I decided to target one whole school district in the Mekong Delta where there were 27 primary public schools and 47 primary English teachers.

Figure 3.1 has been removed from this version of the Thesis

Figure 3.1. Map of Vietnam

(Source: dulichvietnam.com)

As I was interested in exploring the primary English teachers' CLT understanding and practices in the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam, a purposeful selection of research sites and participants would be a suitable choice as it would help me concentrate on particular characteristics of research participants and sites that I wanted to learn about (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, one whole school district in the Mekong Delta was targeted because of two reasons. Firstly, the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam has provinces sharing quite similar geographic, socio-economic and cultural features (V. B. Pham, 2010). Therefore, one whole district in the region could help me understand the teaching situations in the area quite well.

Secondly, targeting participants in the whole school district could help depict a fuller picture of teaching practices in the district due to the density of participants.

There were two criteria set for selecting participants for Phase One of the research. The first criterion was that they were primary English teachers. The second criterion was that they must be teaching English at public primary schools. They could be male or female teachers in the range of legal working age by the Vietnamese law on labour. In the Phase One, there were 28 primary English teachers from public primary schools in one school district in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam participating in answering the online questionnaire. The results of their responses will be introduced in the following chapter, which will address the findings of the online questionnaire.

The contents of the questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised of two major contents: (1) the project information and (2) the question items to collect participants' information.

The project information was placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. It was about all necessary information of the project and participation in the research in line with ECU Human Research Ethics.

There were 19 question items, grouped into four parts. Part 1, question 1, was to receive participants' consent acknowledging that they read, understood the project information and agreed to participate voluntarily. Part 2 consisted of 10 multiple choice questions to collect participants' background information such as gender, years of experience, qualifications, employment status. Part 3 of the questionnaire, question 12 – 17, were designed to collect qualitative information about teachers' understanding of the CLT approach and their teaching practices. Part 4 of the questionnaire provided participants with major information about the Phase 2 of the research project. The two questions in this part were to seek teachers' voluntary further participation into the project, and if they agreed to take part, they would provide their contact information so that I could reach them later.

As one of the measures to ensure collecting accurate responses on the research matters, the questionnaire in the original English version would be translated into Vietnamese. This will be discussed further in section 3.2 addressing the data collection procedure.

3.2.1.2. Phase Two

Selecting research participants for Phase Two

At the end of Phase One, responses from 28 participants were recorded in the online questionnaire. Of the 28 mentioned, 18 agreed to take part in Phase 2 of the study of which there was a diversity among them. Among the 18 volunteers, there were eight male and 10 female teachers. The diversity of the group was in terms of their teaching experience and training backgrounds. Their teaching experience represented by the years of experience ranged from starters of 1 – 2 years to middle careers of 10 – 15 years, and the very experienced from 20 years of experience and above. The volunteers' training backgrounds were also diverse and well-reflected of the available training programs in the educational system. The group consisted of graduated English teaching and English linguistics majors, of which some attended 3-year college courses, and some attended 4-year university programs. Regarding CLT training, half of the group claimed to have some training, and half claimed not having CLT training before.

For the Phase Two of the research, I initially intended to invite about 10 percent of the primary English teachers who responded to the online questionnaire in Phase One. According to Morse (2000), estimating how many participants in a qualitative study should be decided based on several factors such as the scope of the study, the nature of the research topic, the number of interviews for each participant, the quality of data, and the research design. In choosing the number of participants for my proposed research, I acknowledged an important point from Morse's suggestions: The more participants to be recruited, the more data, more work needed for the study. In some cases, a large number of participants do not guarantee that rich data will be obtained. Also, if the explanation level is shallow and superficial, the research may become worthless. I also acknowledged in Creswell (2014) one challenge with qualitative research is that a massive amount of data can be collected; and if not carefully considered, a qualitative researcher can be "drowned" in his or her data in a short time (Morse, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, my choice of the participant number was to guarantee that the research was feasible, manageable and suitable for my timelines.

I also acknowledged that as qualitative research is partly characterised with a small number of participants, there is not a specific answer to the question of how many research sites and participants a study should involve (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, instead of deciding

how big the sample should be, I decided that I should look through all 18 participants' profiles (built up from their responses in the questionnaire) and selected participants based on a balance that could best represent the population in order to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings. The research participants for Phase 2 were selected based on considering a balance of gender, teaching experience, training background in general and CLT training in particular. Eight teachers were chosen with four males and four females. Their teaching experience ranged from starters (1 – 2 years) to middle in their careers (10 – 15 years) and the very experienced (from 20 years and above). The eight participants were also selected in terms of balance in the training backgrounds. Among the eight teachers, there were four who were majored in English teaching, and four who majored in English linguistics. Four of them also claimed to have had CLT training and four claimed not having any CLT training before. The eight teachers were selected represented not only a good balance of the group but also a measure to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings since I could also collect data from more participants.

Participant interviews with audio recording

The pre-observation interviews

Phase Two of the research started with the pre-observation interviews. For this round of the research, semi-structured interviews were employed as an instrument of data collection.

Interviews are a powerful instrument for researchers as they offer flexibility as a tool for data collection allowing multi-sensory channels to be utilised such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and auditory (Cohen et al., 2011). Interviews can be controlled (structured interviews) but still allowing space for spontaneity (semi-structured interviews). Interviewers can manage not only for complete answers but also complicated and deep issues (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 409). In this research, I wanted to use interviews to explore participated teachers' understanding, experiences and practices about teaching primary English following the CLT approach. Because teachers are the key players in their classrooms who use their capacities to create learning environments, to lead students towards learning goals, interviewing them is a suitable choice. Since teachers are the focus of the CLT pedagogy in this research project, interviewing with them would allow me to probe the research matters deeply from the teachers' view. I chose semi-structured interviews because this would enable me to collect

data in line with my research aims and research questions, but also allow room for new things to emerge.

In order to document the pre-observation interviews with the research participants, audio recording would be employed. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012), audio and/or video recording of interviews can help provide verbatim accounts of interview sessions. Audio recordings are convenient and reliable, and they ensure original data are available at any time (Gay et al., 2012, p. 387). The pre-observation interviews in my research were conducted face-to-face with each participant. Therefore, audio recording would be appropriate to document the data. That way I could focus on the conversations, pay great attention to interviewees and what they said instead of being partly distracted as if I had to take notes during the interviews. I know that in the Vietnamese culture, there is a saying literally as “The winds will blow away all spoken/verbal language”. It means that people do not have to worry too much about what they already say as it is not recorded as evidence, so they just freely speak up. Therefore, I prepared for the thought that some participants might feel hesitant when what they said was audio recorded. To tackle this possibility, I decided that I needed to build up good rapport with my participants, explain clearly and carefully to them about the research and the protection of their privacy and confidentiality.

The pre-observation protocol included questions to collect information about teachers’ understanding of the communicative competence, the CLT approach, their preferences of CLT and traditional teaching approaches, their CLT training backgrounds, the teaching resources and facilities as well as their needs of help and support so that they could carry out their teaching practices. As stated above that these were semi-structured interviews, the protocol just served as a compass to keep me and the interviewees navigated within our study scopes and aims. I still preserved and prepared to capture unexpected or new things to emerge. In order to prevent any unclear things regarding the interview questions and for the participants to understand clearly what was asked, three pilot interviews were conducted with Vietnamese English teachers other than the research participants. The pre-observation interviews would be conducted in Vietnamese as it is the first language of both the researcher and the participants. The pre-observation interviews were estimated to last around 30 minutes.

The post-observation interviews

In Phase Two of the research, after the pre-observation interviews, the researcher would attend a real English class of each participant to observe their teaching practices. The observations would be video recorded. After the in-class observations, the researcher and each participant would arrange for a post-observation interview to take place. The interviews would also semi-structured and a part of each interview was carried out using video-stimulated recall (VSR) method. Each participant would have a chance to review their teaching practice by watching the video of their classes with the researcher. The post-observation interviews would be audio recorded as the pre-observation interviews.

According to Paskins, Sanders, Croft, and Hassell (2017), VSR is a method whereby researchers show research participants a video of their own behaviours to prompt and enhance their recall and interpretation after research events, which were the class observations in my research. As the post-observations were not immediately conducted right after the observations but a few days later so that they were suitable to participants' conveniences of times and places, letting them watch the videos of their own classes would be beneficial for their reflections of their practices. This method could help overcome a potential problem that participants might not fully remember what they did during their classes. By providing participants with a stimulus in the visual form, it would be helpful to elicit their perceptions of their practices in its originality (Paskins et al., 2017, p. 2). Also, in my research, I could integrate my observation findings with related data about participants' opinions of their practices and thus it would be a form of data triangulation to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings.

Regarding the contents of the post-observation interviews, the protocol was to collect teachers' reflections of how they conducted their CLT pedagogies and their reflections on issues affecting their teaching practices. There were three sections in the interview questions. The first one consisted of questions for participants prior to watching the videos of their real classes. The purpose of this section was for teachers to explain how they followed the CLT approach in their practices, how they felt satisfied or not satisfied about their lessons. The second section of the interviews involved the researcher and each participant in watching the video recording of the participant's class. The aim of the section was for the participants to point out specifically where in their teaching practices elements of the CLT pedagogies. During

this section, it was also for the researcher to ask the participants about some specific teaching strategy for their clarity. The final section of the interviews included questions for teachers to reflect on the stability of their pedagogies. Similar to the pre-observation interviews, the post-observation interviews were also carried out in Vietnamese. The post interviews were estimated to last from an hour to an hour and a half.

Non-participant observations with video recording

As introduced, Phase Two of the research involved the researcher' observations of the participants' real classes to explore how they carried out their CLT practices. Non-participant observations with video recording of the observations were employed to collect the data.

Justification for non-participant observations

Observation is a common means of data collection in qualitative research, and with some research questions, observation is the most appropriate and effective approach of data collection (Gay et al., 2012). As interviews provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees (Creswell, 2014), observations will help researchers collect more objective information that can be compared to the participants' self-reports (Gay et al., 2012, p. 382). Also, observations will provide opportunities to collect data in natural settings with deeper insights of situations and with the researchers' presence at the research sites (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010).

My major aim of the research was to explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers conducted their teaching practices, and my research questions asked the *What* and *How*. As the two rounds of interviews with participants would provide me information from the participants' subjective views, the class observations would be the best possible instrument to obtain more objective information about the participants' practices. As the emphasis of observation is to deeply understand the natural environment as lived by participants (Gay et al., 2012), observing teachers in their real-life settings would be the most suitable to explore their practices in my study. Furthermore, class observations would be helpful in increasing the trustworthiness of the research findings as observation data would be used for triangulation with data obtained from the interviews in my research. In my research, I would use non-participant observations to explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers carried out their teaching practices following a CLT curriculum. It means that

I would be in their classrooms as an observer and would not participate in the class activities during the observations (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Between participant observation and non-participant observation (Mertens, 2010), I chose non-participant observation for two reasons. The first reason was non-participant observation can be less intrusive, and I would be less likely to be involved emotionally with the participants compared to the other (Gay et al., 2012). The second reason was that non-participant observation would allow me to concentrate on observing the classes, and without affecting teachers' practices as if I participated in class activities.

Like the interviews in my study, the non-participant observations were also semi-structured. It was in order for me to have some observation criteria to rely on while it also allowed the flexibility to give room for the occurrence of new things (Cohen et al., 2011; Mertens, 2010). The observation protocol was adapted from the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme by Allen, Fröhlich, and Spada (1983), summarised in the below table.

Table 7.1.

Class observation protocol	
Part 1. Classroom activity	
- Activity type	What is the activity type, e.g. drill, role-play?
- Interaction organisation	The type of interactions, e.g. who interacts with who?
- Focus	Focus on forms, functions, discourse, sociolinguistics?
- Student modality	Students involved in separate skills or integrated skills?
- Materials	What are the types of materials used?
Part 2. Classroom language	
- Use of English	To what extent English is used?
- Information gap	To what extent is the information predictable?
- Sustained speech	Discourse extended or restricted to a word/phrase/sentence?
- Reaction to message	Does the interlocutor react to messages?
- Discourse	Do learners have opportunities to initiate discourse?
- Restriction of language form	Does the teacher expect a specific form or not?

As shown in Table 3.1, the class observation protocol consisted of two major parts: classroom activity and classroom language. The classroom activity part focuses on five categories: the type of the activity, the types of interactions happening in class, the focus of the activity, students' modality and the types of materials used in the lesson. The part about classroom language includes six contents of the observations: the use of English, the

information gap, sustained speech, reaction to messages, learners' opportunities to initiate discourse, and the restriction of language forms.

I acknowledged that it could be obtrusive with my presence in the participants classrooms observing and recording their practices (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, I needed to carry out the observations with teachers feeling the most comfortable as they could to ensure that the classes took place as natural as possible.

Justification for video recording of the observations

In the research, video recording was used to help document the in-class observations. Video recording provide qualitative researcher with a very valuable data source (Gay et al., 2012). As observation data are both oral and visual, video recordings can help me record all constant situations happening in the classrooms without missing them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Video recordings are rich sources of information, full of liveliness and dynamism. They will help me capture accurately the beyond-speech aspects such as teachers' gestures, body movements, facial expressions, etc. (Garcez, Duarte, & Eisenberg, 2011). Documenting the non-participant observations by video recording would help me to be able to review what happened in each class as many times as wanted. Therefore, it would guard me against the tendency to judge too quickly, so I could have more accurate interpretation of teachers' practices (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

In using video recording to document the observations, I acknowledged Creswell (2014) that it can possibly be obtrusive. It might make teachers feel uncomfortable as they were constantly observed and recorded. In order to reduce the possible intrusive manner of video recording, the camera was placed preferably at the back of each class and with consultation with the teachers before the observation sessions. Also, I also arranged to build up trust with each teacher so that they did not feel they were being observed to be judged.

3.2.2. Data collection procedure

This section is a description of how data was collected for the research, including Phase One and Phase Two.

3.2.2.1. Phase One – the online questionnaire

In line with ECU Human Research Ethics, an ethic application for the research was lodged to ask for the university's approval before conducting data collection in Vietnam. While

waiting for the ethic approval, the questionnaire was piloted on three Vietnamese English teachers who were not in the targeted group of participants. The purpose of the pilot was to check for the clarity of the questionnaire to make sure that an average Vietnamese English teacher would clearly understand what was asked. Although primary English teachers in Vietnam were demanded to reach English proficiency levels of B1 or B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001), a translation of the original English version of the questionnaire into Vietnamese was used. There were two reasons for why a Vietnamese version of the questionnaire was used. Firstly, I did not know about the potential participants' English competences or whether they already reached the demanded levels of English proficiency. Secondly, it was based on my own experience when preparing the questionnaire. I interpreted what I wanted to ask in English, and my English native speaker supervisors did not understand some of my questions or options to answer in multiple choice questions. As English is a foreign language in Vietnam, a Vietnamese English user may not understand the original English wording. Therefore, the translation of the questionnaire in English into Vietnamese was used in order to collect accurate data.

After the ethic clearance, the questionnaire was imported onto ECU Qualtrics portal, and it was set ready for sending to targeted participants. Since I did not have the contact information of primary English teachers in public schools in the targeted district, I approached participants through two channels. The first channel was the local Department of Education and Training (DOET) website, where there was a list of all primary schools in the district. Contact information of all public primary schools such as email addresses and phone numbers were gathered. An invitation email, in which all research project information and the link to the online questionnaire on Qualtrics were included, was sent to the email addresses of all the public primary schools in the district. The second channel that I approached research participants was the local Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) itself. I also sent the invitation email to the local BOET to introduce my research and to express my hope to get their support by introducing my research to all my targeted participants in the district. The local BOET agreed to help and responded that they also sent emails to all public primary schools in the district encouraging primary English teachers in those school to participate in answering the online questionnaire. The participants' responses to the online questionnaire

were recorded on Qualtrics. When the deadline of administering the online questionnaire came, it was closed, and 28 responses were recorded and ready for the data analysis.

3.2.2.2. Phase Two – interviews and in-class observations

As addressed in the above section 3.1.1, one of the purposes of the online questionnaire in Phase One was to recruit participants for the Phase Two of the research. 28 responses to the online questionnaire were analysed, and among them there were 18 teachers who agreed to go further into the Phase Two. In the end, eight teachers were selected based on the principle of a balance among the 18. Phase Two of the research involved the pre-observation interviews, in-class observations and post-observation interviews.

Pre-observation interviews

Approaching the research participants and participating schools was carried out with careful considerations and great respect. After the list of the eight participants was finalised, the eight teachers and eight schools were simultaneously contacted. An invitation letter with detailed project information as required by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee was emailed to each of the eight participants. Six teachers responded and confirmed that they would agree to participate voluntarily into the Phase Two. Another two teachers did not respond, and they remained silent although several other emails were sent to them repeatedly. As I could not contact them through another channel other than emails, I decided to select another two teachers in the list of 18 volunteers with consideration of the balance principle among the research participants. The final eight participants agreed on participating provided I could receive the schools' approvals for in-class observations to be conducted at their schools. In further communication with the participants, the consent form was emailed to them and I expressed that I needed to obtain written consent from them. We discussed and agreed that the written consent forms would be collected when I met with them to discuss and arrange the pre-observation interviews and in-class observations.

Concurrently with contacting the research participants, I also sent invitation emails to the participating schools to seek their support and approvals for in-class observations with video recording to be conducted at their schools. Some schools responded and agreed at once while some other schools expressed that they basically agreed to participate but I should arrive at the schools in person to discuss with them. This was not a problem for me as I come

from the Mekong Delta, so I understand the culture of doing business there. Many people would prefer to have a face-to-face talk instead of discussing business through phone calls or emails. As I asked the schools when I could come to their places so that I could further explain my research and also to obtain written consent forms from them, they replied that I should just go straight to schools on working days and there would be school leaders who could handle the business. During this time, multiple communications were done between me and each of the eight teachers to arrange times, dates and places where we could meet with each other.

As soon as arrangements were quite completed, I arrived in Vietnam to carry out Phase Two's data collection. I researched about each of the schools on the local DOET's website to learn more about them. All information about schools' addresses, their locations, the distance between where I would stay to the schools etc. was gathered to prepare for me to get there. I arranged to meet with each of the teachers based on their preferences of when and where. As a cultural characteristic of people in the area, people usually meet each other or one another at coffee shops to have a talk. Seven teachers preferred to meet with me at coffee shops of their choices. One teacher met with me at her school during a break time. During the meetings with each participant, I emphasised the purpose of my research and the guaranteed protection of participants' rights of privacy and confidentiality as well as withdrawing from participation. The teachers also handed me their written consent forms. We discussed and agreed on the times and dates for the pre-observation interviews and in-class observations. Accordingly, six teachers could arrange for the pre-observation interviews to take place before the in-class observations and take place on the same days. Two teachers could not manage it due to their school timetables were heavy for the days they planned for my observations. Therefore, they wanted to have the interviews a few days before the observations taking place.

A very important thing to help collect data effectively and successfully was to build up good rapport with the research participants. I paid great attention to building up a good relationship with them right when contacting them and during the times we met. As a former English teacher and shared quite similar backgrounds, we opened up to each other and shared our teaching practices as well as life stories. The participants appeared to be very helpful and enthusiastic in participating. They showed their support by encouraging me and agreeing to

help carry out ethic issues with their students' parents as the in-class observations involved video recording of the classes. The teachers themselves took invitation letters and consent forms from me to contact with their students' parents since I did not know the students and their parents. The teachers themselves also offered to accompany me to meet with their school leaders.

Simultaneously with meeting with each of the eight teachers, I went with each participant to their schools to seek the schools' written approvals for in-class observations to be conducted at their schools. I always reinforced the research ethical issues and explained further as they had any questions related to my research. Most of the schools showed their great support for my study. Some of the schools' leaders experienced doing educational research in their studies, thus they showed sympathy and support to me as an educational researcher. Most of them spent time talking with me about life and studying in Australia, teaching English in Vietnam, and expressed if I could come up with solutions to improve teaching and learning English at their schools, they would like for me to share those with their English teachers. There was one school where the principle did not immediately agree or disagree for my data collection to be carried out at her school. She asked questions about the research, and I learned that she might not have read any of my project information before. She acknowledged that she read my email, but she did not reply yet. At this point I handed her the hard copies of my project information, invitation letters to teachers and children's parents as well as consent forms. I clearly explained everything to her, and especially focusing on the issues of participants' and schools' privacy, confidentiality and right to withdraw from participation. I could understand in communication with her that the school was a symbol in the district centre. It was proud for its reputation over the years and always a place where parents tried to compete for their children to go there. She seemed a little worried if something might get wrong. Through talking with me, she became more secure and signed the written consent form. She told the teacher that if the teacher did not have any problems with being observed and video recorded, then she felt fine with the research. All of the schools' consent were obtained successfully.

As the in-class observations were video recorded, I also sought parents' or guardians' consent before the observations. As said above, the teacher participants themselves helped handle ethical issues with the parents. Project information related to the class observations

and video recording the classes and consent forms were sent to parents. A back-up plan was prepared that if some parents did not agree for their children to potentially appear in the videos of the classes, those children would be grouped and seated at places where the camera would not capture their images. I was able to receive consent from almost all parents, but just a few ones from one school did not sign their consent forms. The participant teacher agreed with my plan to reseat those students together at one place in class.

As in-class observations were considered a very important part of the data collection, they were planned and prepared very carefully. I expressed my concerns to the teachers, and they offered to cooperate for the observations to happen smoothly. On the days when I came to schools to seek the schools' written consent, each teacher and I arranged to spend some time together to plan for the observations. The first thing we did was walking around in the schools where the teachers showed me around, and especially they took me to the classrooms where they planned for me to observe their classes. I asked them to give me a seat during the observations and assign where I should place the camera so that they could feel the most comfortable during the observation sessions taking place. They all arranged for me to sit at the back left or right corners of the classes where they spared a whole small students' table and chair for me. One surprising thing was that they seemed not to worry about an observer sitting in their classes and videorecording their teaching practices. Most of them stated that they were used to having observers in class, and they did not mind having me in their classrooms. Regarding the camera position, most of them expressed they did not mind where it should be but placing at the back of the class would be more convenient as they would move around the class easily.

The pre-observation interviews with each of the six participants were carried out before the in-class observations on the same days. On the days of the appointments, I arrived at the schools quite early to be well-prepared for the interviews and observations. The places for pre-observation interviews varied from vacant classrooms, a quiet corner of the school canteen or a place in the schools' teacher rooms where the teachers and I felt the most suitable to sit for an interview. At the interviews, each participant and I sat opposite, face-to-face with each other. To be more secure about recording the interviews, I used two devices at the same time: one voice recorder and my mobile phone. I placed the voice recorder and mobile phone on the table between us. Our conversations started with some icebreakers. I

also always reminded the teachers at the beginning of their rights of privacy, confidentiality and withdrawing from participation. Based on the pre-observation protocol, I asked the teachers questions about their understanding of the communicative competence, the CLT approach, their training backgrounds, their teaching practices, etc. During the interviews, I paid great attention to what they said to get the underlying messages as well as their facial expressions to have a better understanding and interpretation of what they said. At the end of the interviews, I came to the observed classrooms, which the teachers showed me before, to set up the camera and got everything ready before classes started. The interviews lasted from half an hour to an hour according to how much each teacher answered the interview questions.

The pre-observation interviews with the two teachers who could not arrange for both the interviews and the observations to take place on the same days were conducted a few days prior to the observation. One interview with a teacher was done at a quiet coffee shop of the teacher's choice. The other interview was carried out at the teacher's home as her preference. The process of conducting the interviews was similar to the six interviews above. The difference was that at the end of the interview, we sat back to arrange for the observations and chatted a little more and then said goodbye to each other.

In-class observation

The in-class observations were conducted at the eight teachers' real classrooms. One ethical consideration in my research is respecting the research sites. The respect was paid to the security guards, to the school leaders, other schoolteachers and students. Upon arrival at the schools, I would introduce myself to the security guards for the first time we met and said hello for later time of coming to the schools. Then I went to say hello to the school leaders and stated that I came to do the interviews and observation that day. Everything was to make sure that I maintained a good relationship between me and the schools. In addition, I wanted to ensure that I did not cause any troubles or discomfort to the participant teachers as they agreed to take part in my study.

As mentioned above, the camera was set ready before classes started. The observations took place following the traditions of class observations there. It means the teachers came in class first. They and their students did the greetings and then the teachers

introduced me as an observer to the classes. When I came in, the classes said greetings to me. I introduced myself to them, my purpose of visiting the classes (to see how English was taught and learned as said to the children). I expressed that they should just focus on their learning and ignore my presence in the classes. At most classes, I could see that the children looked quite eager just for the reason that their classes were videotaped. I could understand the feelings as I experienced it before. We liked when reporters came to our schools, filmed and showed it on television. We always waited for the news and hoped that we were there on TV. At one school in the district centre, the children showed great excitement when I came. They showed a little surprise when they saw me as a Vietnamese because they expected that a researcher from Australia would be a Westerner. The children even asked me about Australia. They expressed that I could post the video on Facebook or Zalo (a popular social network in Vietnam). They asked me when the video would be on TV so they could wait to watch.

Similar to the pre-observation recording, I also used two devices to record the class. One camera was placed at the middle at back wall of the classrooms. In addition, I also placed the mobile phone at a position at my table to extra record the classes for backing up data. During the observations, I sat at the back of each class observing the teachers and students. Although the classes were video recorded, I paid great attention to the teachers, students and all activities in the classrooms so that it could help me analyse the videos better later in data analysis. I also took some notes about what I saw about the schools, the classes, the total number of students, decorations in class, the facilities and resources available in the classrooms, etc.

At the end of the observations, I always tried to make sure that I made the teachers and students feel good about themselves. As the traditions, the teachers would ask the students to stand up to say goodbye to me. I went to the front of the classes and told the students that they and their teachers did well that day and hoped that the students would always try to learn English better and better for their good futures. Some teachers saw me off at the school gates if they finished their teaching for the shifts. Some teachers remained in the classrooms for the following classes. Before leaving I always came to see the school leaders to say thanks to them once again for allowing to conduct the class observations at their schools. I also said thanks to the security guards for giving me initial directions as well as

guarding my motorbike as I parked it inside the schools. Responding to me, all schools' leaders showed their support to my research and wished me successful in conducting the research. Some hoped that I could help improve the English teaching and learning at their schools. At the one school in the district centre where the principle quite hesitated to sign the written consent before, she waited for me at the ground floor when I came down from upstairs. She asked whether everything was smooth and good. I understood that she expected a very good performance by the teacher and students for the school's reputation. I knew that I needed to make her feel secure by telling her that the teacher and the students all did very well on their parts. Similar process was repeated until all data of the in-class observations were collected.

Securing the collected data was carried out very strictly and carefully. After each of the pre-observation interviews and in-class observation was completed, when I got back to my place, I transferred the audio and video files to my laptop computer. To back up data, I also immediately uploaded and saved all data collected to ECU OneDrive.

Post-observation interviews

Preparations for the post-observation interviews consisted of making arrangements and completing the protocol for the interviews. After conducting the pre-observation interview and in-class observation with each teacher, I contacted them further through phone calls and text messages to arrange for the post-observation interviews. The times of the interviews were negotiated so that they would be suitable for both me and each teacher. In order to help the teacher felt the most comfortable, the places of the interviews were also decided by them. Accordingly, six teachers chose for the interviews to be carried out at coffee shops of their choices. Two other teachers preferred to do it at their homes. Based on the teachers' decisions, I researched where the chosen places were and how to get there. In communication with the teachers, I also reminded them what we would do at the interviews, which involved me and each teacher to review the class videos and I would ask them questions about the practices. Regarding the interview protocol, I carefully reviewed each class video before meeting with each participant. When reviewing the videos, I took notes and prepared some questions added to the interview protocol.

For the interviews to be done at coffee shops, I always tried to come to the places plenty of time ahead of the interviews so that I could arrange to choose a corner suitable for

my interview with each teacher. I placed my laptop computer, the voice recorder and mobile phone on the coffee table. When the teachers arrived at the places, we both had a soft drink during the interviews and sat face-to-face across the table. We always chatted with each other a little bit before starting the interviews. I told the teachers what we would do during the sessions, especially when we reviewed the video, the teachers could control the video watching as they wanted.

The interviews were carried out following the pattern of prior to watching the videos, during watching the videos and after watching the videos. For the pre-stage, the teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching practices, how they carried out the CLT pedagogies, what they thought they were successful in their classes or what they wanted to improve. During the time watching the videos, the teachers would be asked to stop the videos to show the CLT elements in their classes and answer some of my questions about some teaching strategies they used in class. For the post-stage, the teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching effectiveness as well as the stability of their pedagogies.

For the two interviews carried out the teachers' homes, I arrived at their homes about 10 minutes earlier to get ready for the interviews. As a local cultural tradition, I brought some fruit to the interviews. The teachers brought out drinks like iced coffee or iced water for the hot weather there. We ate fruit and drank during chats before the interviews. The process of conducting the interviews was similar to the ones with the other six teachers above.

At the end of the interviews, I said thanks to them for their great support from the beginning of data collection until the end of Phase 2. I also reminded them that if they wanted a copy of the research findings, they could email me, and I would email them a summary of the research findings as soon as it was available. The teachers and I said goodbye to each other and promised to keep in touch with each other later on.

3.2.3. Data analysis

In the words of Gay et al. (2012), data analysis in qualitative research is the process to summarise what is in the data whereas data interpretation involves finding meaning in the data. In Creswell (2014), data analysis is the process of interpreting the meanings of text and image data, which consists of several actions from segmenting or taking apart the data to putting it back altogether in order to understand the meanings conveyed in the data. In Cohen

et al. (2011), data analysis is understood as the process of interpreting meaning from data regarding participants' definitions of the situations, finding patterns, themes, categories and regularities. From the definitions above, I understood that I had a big collection of data from all participants. I needed to go deeply into each individual's response and practice, understand what each of them said and did and then put all together to have a rich description of the research participants' meanings. This section describes the data analysis and interpretation procedure in the research, how the data was transcribed and translated as well as explaining the methods of analysis.

Data analysis in this research was carried out following a step-by-step procedure and was divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2 according to the research design. Phase 1 was the use of an online questionnaire on Qualtrics. Phase 2 involved the use of pre-observation interviews, in-class observations and post-observation interviews.

3.2.3.1. Analysing the online questionnaire of Phase One

The online questionnaire consisted of both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. For the multiple-choice questions, Qualtrics gave an available summary of the answers to them. This summary included some descriptive statistics about the research participants in Phase One, such as genders, experience, qualifications, training backgrounds, employment status, etc. These descriptive statistics were used to build up profiles of the participants to help gain a brief understanding about who they were. It was also used to select participants for the Phase Two. For the open-ended questions, the answers were put together, and they went through a qualitative inductive analysis (Gay et al., 2012). Since Phase 1 focused more on understanding who the participants were and recruiting participants for Phase 2, the qualitative data analysis of this phase was mainly for a brief, initial look at the participants' understanding of the CLT approach and their declared CLT practices.

3.2.3.2. Analysing the interviews and observations of Phase Two

According to Gay et al. (2012) , there are no set rules or procedures or "agreed-on approaches" in analysing qualitative data, but it generally involves organising, categorising, synthesising, analysing and writing about the data (pp. 466-467). Cohen et al. (2011) also notes that there is not one single or correct method in analysing and presenting qualitative data, and researchers should base on the matter of "fitness for purpose" (p. 537). In my

research, I followed an inductive data analysis approach (Gay et al., 2012). It means that researchers start with a large data set representing many things and continuously seek to narrow them into small and important groups of key data. The meaning is constructed by identifying patterns and themes emerging during the data analysis. In this research, I followed the qualitative data analysis approach by Creswell (2014). Accordingly, Creswell suggests steps to follow in data analysis including organising and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding the data, generating themes and categories for analysis, interrelating themes or descriptions and interpreting the meaning of themes or descriptions.

Step 1. Organising and preparing data for analysis

The data analysis procedure began in parallel with the data collection procedure. It was started with organising and preparing data. A spreadsheet of data sources was developed to keep all data organised. This step involved the transcribing the audio data of the pre-observation interviews and post-observation interviews. It also included the transcribing and describing the video data of the in-class observations. All data were verbatim transferred into text. Although transcribing and describing the interview and observation data was a time-consuming process, it was beneficial for me in that it helped me to familiarise myself with the data (Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012).

At this step, member checking was used to make sure the interviews' data were accurate. It was also a measure to increase the credibility of the research findings. The available transcripts in the form of text in Vietnamese were sent to participants. They were asked to check and certify that what they said was recorded and transcribed precisely. After the interviews' transcripts were checked, they were translated into English. As I noticed that inaccurate translations could unfavourably affect the research findings, I employed back translation method (Brislin, 1970) in order to ensure the accuracy of the translations. Back translation is a popular tool used widely in international research settings to validate the quality of translated text (Tyupa, 2011). The method involved re-translating the translated text back into the source language. Then the original documents and the back translation are compared to check if there are any inconsistencies. If no inconsistencies are found, the translation is considered equivalent (Table 3.2). Due to a large amount of data I had, back translation method was used with excerpts of the interviews' translated transcripts and the translated transcription and description of the video data which would be used as evidence in

the research findings. Member checking could also be considered to have been applied with the observations' video data in my research. It was that through the post-observations interviews when participants had opportunities to watch the videos of their classes beside their reflections. During the time the participants and I reviewed the videos, I asked questions of my concerns and received the participants' explanations or confirmations of the points I noted during the observations.

Table 3.2.

An example of back translation technique

Teacher	English-translated version	Back translation	Notes
Hoang	In my opinions, communicative competence is that students can use vocabulary or sentence patterns they have learned to apply in real life. I think (that) that is their communicative competence.	Theo tôi, khả năng giao tiếp là SV biết sử dụng từ vựng hoặc các dạng câu đã học áp dụng vào thực tế. Tôi nghĩ đó chính là khả năng giao tiếp.	The wording looks a little different, but the meaning does not change
Diem	In my opinions, for students, communicative competence is their ability to talk with one another in class, in lessons. Yes, for example, when a friend asks a question, the listener can answer it, can express his ideas so that the friend can understand what he means	Theo tôi, đối với SV, khả năng giao tiếp là khả năng nói chuyện/ giao tiếp với nhau trong lớp, trong bài học. Đúng như vậy, vd như, khi 1 người bạn hỏi, người nghe có thể trả lời, có thể trình bày quan điểm để bạn bè có thể hiểu ý anh ấy là gì.	The wording looks a little different, but the meaning does not change

Step 2. Reading through all data

This step involved me reading the data repeatedly. This helped me have a general sense of the data and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning (Gay et al., 2012). While reading through the data, I had an opportunity to go more deeply into familiarising myself with the data. At this step, I also took notes while reading through the data. Gay et al. (2012) suggests that it is important for qualitative researchers to write notes in the margins or underline sections that look important. Although the notes at this step may or may not be useful later, the notes are a record of the researcher's first impressions of the data. During this step, I also paid attention to the recurring themes or common threads.

Step 3. Coding the data

After data reading and familiarising, all data coding was carried out. Coding is a heuristic discovery method to explore the meaning of individual data sections (Saldaña, 2011). In qualitative data analysis, a code is usually “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). The coding process involves segmenting text or image data into categories and labelling those categories with a term (Creswell, 2014). During the coding process, codes are generated, and they are used in “patterning, classifying and later categorising” data into emergent categories for further analysis (Saldaña, 2011, p. 95).

Having understood what I needed to do, during this coding step I went through each single transcribed and translated interview and observation transcription and description of each participant. Scanning line by line through the texts, I did more thorough reading and jotted down ideas that came to mind as I read. When this task was completed for each round of data collection, i.e. pre-observation interviews, in-class observations and post-observation interviews, I made a list of the topics I found and noted during the reading. Similar topics were grouped together. The list of topics then was taken back to the data, and each topic was assigned and named as a code next to the appropriate segment of text. Attention was also paid to check if new codes emerged. When coding the data, I took the notice by Creswell (2014) about the two of the three types of codes the author tended to think of. The first one is about codes on topics that readers would expect to find based on common sense and the literature. For example, in my research when exploring the primary English teachers’ practices following the CLT approach, I would code “teachers’ actual practices”. The second type of codes is the ones which are surprising, and I did not expect to find them at the beginning of the research. For example, in an interview with a teacher, I found a code “the killing of creativity”. Normally I would think being creative is a positive thing. Following the same path day after day could be a boring thing for a teacher and his students. Therefore, creativity should be encouraged to bring new, fresh and interesting things into a classroom, especially a language classroom. However, it turned out that for the teacher, being creative was not encouraged or praised but it was an unsafe feeling.

All of the coding was done manually by hand. All of the codes were then checked for overlaps and redundancies. A spreadsheet of all final codes was developed. It included the

codes, their descriptions and their sources. Table 2 and 3 below are examples of how data was coded. The first text was an excerpt from the pre-observation interview data. In the excerpt, the teacher was asked about what help or support she needed to assist her in her teaching practice. The excerpt in table 3 was from an in-class observation.

Table 3.3.

An example of manual data coding of an interview

<p>The DOETs generally, of course they also wanted us to improve ourselves. But you know us, as a teacher here, you have to take care of all your schoolwork and then housework. It was a lot of pressure. For example, ... I just feel like I could cry but cry without tears ...</p>	<p>Pressure to balance work and life</p>
<p>In general, there should be sympathy for English teachers. For example, the DOETs can organise training sessions for us to improve our professional expertise. But if they put too much “care” on us by forcing us to go taking tests ... Honestly, we have been all exhausted.</p>	<p>Need of sympathy from DOET Too much demand on teachers</p>

Table 3.4.

An example of manual coding of an observation

<p>The teacher: Ok, before the lesson today, we will have ... I will divide into 6 groups. OK, let’s count from 1 to 6 please! <i>(pointing at the first student on the first row prompting she starts to count herself as 1. The teacher points at students as they count 1,2,3,4,5,6 and then 1,2,3 ... The students then go sit in their groups as group 1,2,3,4,5,6.</i></p>	<p>L2 teacher-student communication</p>
<p>The teacher: You will have 20 seconds to remember the words <i>(her hand waving near the board meaning all of the words she shows on the board)</i> Yes. I will delete one word. After you open your eyes, you will say “stop the bus”. Yes, you know “stop the bus”? Yes, you will stop the bus to guess your answer. If the correct answer, you will get one flower. Are you clear? The students: Yes (in chorus) The teacher: Ok, now remember the words! 20 – 19 – 18 1. Close your eyes please! <i>(The students look at the board while the teacher is counting down from 20 - 1).</i> The students head down on the tables. The teacher: Huỳnh Ý! (using gesture to mean that student needs to head down on the table like others. The teacher touches one picture of science on the board and it disappears)</p>	<p>Use of memory-based game in reviewing vocabulary</p>

The teacher: Open your eyes please!
The students turn their heads up and raise their hands.
The teacher: Stop the bus!
The students hit their hands on the tables three times.
The teacher: Please! (pointing at a student)
The student: Science!
The teacher: Science? Right or wrong? (using her thumb up and down with the question)
The students: Right (in chorus)
The teacher: Good job! (turning down to the group to hand them a flower) Ok, close your eyes please! (walking to the board and using gesture to mean students should close their eyes)

Step 4. Generating categories and themes for analysis

In the words of Saldaña (2011), category constructing is an attempt to group “the most seemingly alike things into the most seemingly appropriate groups” (p. 91). Categorising is to organise and order a study’s large amount of data to form larger and meaning-rich units of analysis compared to codes. From the data categorisation, it can help researchers in grasping the particular features of each unit of analysis and the possible interrelationships with one another Saldaña (2011). In Gay et al. (2012), a category is “a classification of ideas or concepts” and thus categorisation is to group the research data into themes (p. 468). Categories are formed when data concepts are examined and compared to one another and connections are made. Categories are essentials in qualitative data analysis as they provide the basis for structuring the analysis and interpretation. Without being classified and grouped, qualitative data cannot be reasonably analysed (Gay et al., 2012). In my understanding, a code is the most basic and meaningful segment of data. A category is one level of abstraction above the initial codes. Finally, a theme is a group of categories, analysed in line with the research questions.

During the coding process, I generated codes with paying great attention to describing the research context as well as the involved people. As Gay et al. (2012) suggest, qualitative researchers need to develop thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the setting, the participants and the studied phenomenon to convey a rich complexity of the research. The research context is an important and common theme in qualitative research as it influences participants’ understandings and actions. Since meaning is influenced by context, qualitative

data analysis and interpretation will be hindered if a thorough description of the research context, actions and participants' interactions is not included (Gay et al., 2012, p. 468). Similarly to paying attention to the research context, I also attempted to describe the research participants' views in an accurate manner. How the participants defined their situations and explained their practices was coded and interpreted the most accurately possible.

This step of the data analysis also involved looking for emergent themes. From the table of all of the codes that I had, I organised and grouped similar codes into categories. The codes and categories went through re-arrangement and re-categorisation to form sub-categories. According to Saldaña (2009), when "major categories are compared with each other and consolidated in various ways, researchers begin to transcend the 'reality' of their data and progress towards the thematic" (p. 11). The process of data analysis, particularly the pathway from codes to themes, progressed from "the real to the abstract, from the particular to the general" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 111). In my research, the process of forming themes from codes was conceptualised in the following figure.

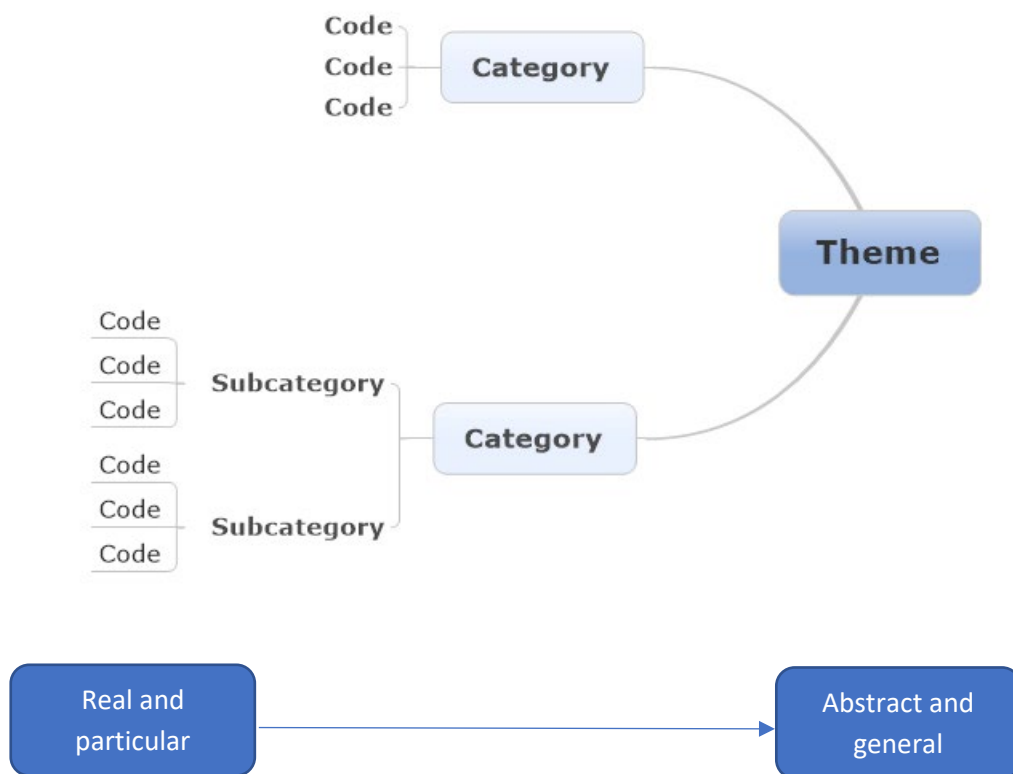


Figure 3.1. The process from codes to themes

Step 5. Interrelating themes or descriptions

This step involved a consideration of how all the themes and descriptions would be represented in the research findings. As suggested by Creswell (2014), I used a narrative passage to report the findings of the analysis. I pictured that all of the themes would form a panorama of the main story, and each single theme would convey a short story that made contributions to the big picture. The big and main story was what my research aimed to report in line with my research questions. From all the themes found in the previous step, I carefully examined each theme again in connection with other themes to form a thematic map for the big picture of my research.

Step 6. Interpreting the meaning of themes or descriptions

The final step in the data analysis involved making interpretation of the analysis findings. This task was about to answer the question of what was learned from the data (Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012). Data interpretation is personal, and there are no “hard and fast” rules for qualitative researchers to go about the task of interpreting the data meaning (Gay et al., 2012, p. 476). Creswell (2014) and Gay et al. (2012) suggest that researchers could use the personal interpretation expressed in the understanding of the culture, the history and experiences that they brought to the study. They could also compare the analysis findings with the literature or theories of the research matters.

For my research, the connections, common aspects and links among the data, especially the identified themes or categories and patterns allowed me to gain an overall understanding and insights into the participants’ understanding of the CLT approach, their teaching practices as well as challenges facing them and what they needed to improve their practices. My interpretation was based on my personal experiences in the research area with the literature surrounding the CLT theory, CLT implementation in the world and CLT in the Vietnamese context.

3.3. Rigour

This section discusses how rigour was ensured in this research. Terms such as *validity* and *reliability* are specially used in quantitative studies (Muijs, 2011). Meanwhile, qualitative research literature introduces equivalent terms such as trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell, 2014). Ensuring trustworthiness is a crucial matter in qualitative

research, and researchers can address the trustworthiness of their research and findings in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). A number of measures to ensure qualitative research trustworthiness are suggested by Creswell (2014) and Gay et al. (2012). To enhance the trustworthiness of my research, I employed several strategies that were feasible and appropriate for my research. The strategies used were summarised in table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5.
Strategies for ensuring rigour

Matters	Strategies	Steps in the research
Credibility	- Prolonged engagement	- Data collection
	- Member checking	- Data analysis
	- Back translation method	- Data analysis
Transferability	- Thick description	- Data analysis and representation
Dependability	- Audit trail	- Composition
	- Interview and observation protocols	- Data collection
Confirmability	- Triangulation of data	- Data analysis
	- Choosing participants	- Data collection

Credibility can be understood as the confidence in the truth of the findings, or the research findings have the quality of being trusted or believed in (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The issue of credibility was taken into consideration with the use of three strategies of prolonged engagement, member checking and back translation method in my research. Firstly, the prolonged engagement with the research participants was employed. It was done during the data collection stage of the research. After participants were chosen, I contacted them and kept in touch with each of them since then until the data collection was completed. For the important Phase Two of the research, I allowed enough time to be with them to build up trust and established a good relationship with each participant. I felt their sincerity in the ways they opened up to me about their lives and their work. The participants and I shared similar backgrounds and we treated each other as colleagues with mutual understanding and sympathy, not as a strange researcher talking with her research participants. Everything to be

done was to ensure that the participants did not have to worry about what they said in the interviews and what they did during the observations. Secondly, member checking was used in the data analysis to make sure for the accuracy of the collected data (Creswell, 2014). As mentioned in the data analysis section, participants had the opportunities to see the transcripts of their interviews to check and certify that it was exactly what they said and meant. Also, they had the opportunities to review the videos of their class observations and answered my questions about their teaching practices. Thirdly, the back-translation method was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and description translations. The back-translation method and how it was carried out were discussed in the data analysis section above.

Transferability in qualitative research can be understood as that researchers make sure that everything in their research is context-bound, and that they are not trying to draw conclusions to be generalised to larger groups of population (Gay et al., 2012). In my research, I dealt with the transferability issue in the data analysis and representation by providing a detailed description of the research context and setting so that others could see the context and setting for themselves.

Dependability is described as the stability of the research data (Gay et al., 2012), or there is a possibility that the research findings can be consistent and could be repeated (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In my research, the issue of dependability was addressed by using an audit trail and protocols for the interviews and class observations. For the whole study, I took notes of all related things that happened during the conduct of the study to make sure that everything was transparent. For the pre-observation interviews, in-class observations and post-observation interviews, I used protocols to guide me through these steps of data collection.

According to Gay et al. (2012), confirmability refers to the neutrality and objectivity of the collected data. In other words, it can be understood as the truthfulness and accuracy of the research findings with corroborated evidence. To establish the confirmability of the research I used triangulation of data sources and in choosing the research participants. For the data collection, I used multiple data collection methods from the online questionnaire, pre-observation interviews, non-participant observations and post-observation interviews. These multiple data sources provided me an opportunity to do the data triangulation to obtain

a chain of convergence evidence and corroboration for the research findings. The triangulation was also applied in choosing the research participants. As described in section 3.1. of the methods of data collection, a wide range of the research participants were chosen based on the balance criteria. As the research population was diverse, they were selected based on a balance of their genders, training backgrounds and teaching experience. The research participant selection was to ensure that they were well-represented the primary English teachers in the school district. To sum up, I took the issue of trustworthiness in qualitative research into consideration, and it was fully addressed based on the above criteria.

3.4. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations play an important role in all kinds of research, and researchers must take into considerations of the participants' well-being as well as other ethical issues (Cohen et al., 2011; Gay et al., 2012). In my research, ethical considerations were addressed in terms of ECU Human Research Ethics guide, how the research project was presented to intended participants, potential impact of taking part in the research and how the research was reported.

Firstly, my research project was granted ethics approval in line with research conduct of ECU Human Research Ethics Committee. Data collection was conducted only after ethical clearance was obtained. All steps of the research project were carried out as approved by the school.

Secondly, the research was introduced to intended participants teachers and schools with great respect and on a voluntary basis. In Phase One of using the online questionnaire, invitation emails with all the research project information were sent to all primary schools in the district to inform them of my research. Once again, the project information and participant consent were placed at the beginning of the questionnaire and the participants gave their consent before answering the questionnaire. For this phase of the research, I only collected non-identifiable data. No participants' identity was collected except only those who agreed to participate in Phase Two. They then would leave their contact information at the end of the questionnaire so that I could contact them later. In Phase Two, participating schools and teachers were approached with great respect. I contacted the schools to seek for their permissions to carry out data collection at their schools. Similarly, the primary English

teachers were contacted to seek their agreements to voluntarily participate in the research project.

Thirdly, the ethical issue of potential impact of taking part in the research was addressed in terms of informed consent, participants' rights of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawing from participation. The involved in my research included the eight primary schools in the districts, the eight primary English teachers and the students in those teachers' English classes. I made sure they were all well-informed of my research and what participating in the research might affect them. For the students, since they were primary school children, their parents or guardians were informed of the information. As they were well aware of everything and knew that they could withdraw from the participation without any consequences, informed consent in written forms from them were obtained. Regarding participants' rights of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, I used codes and pseudonyms for the schools and teachers who participated in the research. In addition, collected data could only be accessed by me and my supervisors and only used for the purpose of the research. Participants' identity was not revealed or shared with anybody.

Finally, the ethical issues also involved addressing how the research was reported. As described above, I paid great attention to achieving the truthfulness of the research findings by employing several strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. All the data was honestly and fully reported without changing or altering it. This was done in terms of increasing the trustworthiness of the research findings, and also for respect with those who might read and use the findings in the future.

3.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the research design for my research, which was a qualitative study to explore Vietnamese primary English teachers' CLT understanding and teaching practices. I have described the methodology employed to answer my research questions. The following chapter will report the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4. THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

As described in the previous chapter about the research design, the research project was divided into two phases: Phase One and Phase Two. Phase One involved the use of an online questionnaire on ECU Qualtrics. Phase One aimed primarily at two major goals: (1) to get to know the primary English teachers, their initial understanding of the CLT approach and their teaching practices, and (2) to recruit participants for Phase Two of the research. Phase Two involved three rounds of data collection: the pre-observation interviews, the in-class observations, and the post-observation interviews. Phase Two aimed mainly at exploring more deeply about teachers' understanding of CLT and their actual classroom practices. This chapter will present the whole research findings, and thus contains four major parts respectively. Part 1 is the findings of the online questionnaire. Part 2 is the findings of the pre-observation interviews with individual teachers. Part 3 presents the findings of the in-class observations, and Part 4 presents the findings of the post-observation interviews.

4.1. FINDINGS OF THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE – INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The findings of the online questionnaire are grouped into three main sections: (1) general understanding about the primary English teachers, (2) the participants' understanding of CLT and their teaching practices, and (3) teachers' challenges and their needs of help and support to improve their practices. As previously introduced, the online questionnaire collected un-identifiable data from participants. Therefore, I did not know the participants' identity except those teachers who agreed to take part further in Phase 2 and left enough information for me to contact them. In this chapter, I will use T1, T2, T3, etc. to refer to the 28 teachers who answered the online questionnaire.

4.1.1. General understanding about the primary English teachers

This section introduces the primary English teachers who participated in Phase 1 of the research. It consists of some simple descriptive statistics about the teachers, their training backgrounds, and their professional conditions.

4.1.1.1. Descriptive statistics about the participants

The online questionnaire on Qualtrics recorded that there were 28 responses from 28 primary English teachers in the targeted school district. The participation showed a diversity among the teachers, and their background information is summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Table 8.1.

Summary of participants' background information

Contents	Descriptive statistics		
Genders	Male: 11	Female: 17	
Qualifications	MA: 2	BA: 24	Junior BA: 2
Specialisations	Teacher education: 6	22	English linguistics:
Employment status	Tenure: 18	Term contracts: 9	Not answer: 1
Years of experience (yrs)	Below 5 yrs: 5; From 5 – 10 yrs: 7; 10 – 20 years: 5; Over 20 yrs: 10		
School locations	District centre: 16	Suburbs: 12	
English language competency	C1: 3	B2: 24	N/A: 1 (on the scale of the CEFR)
CLT training	Yes: 14	No: 14	

Table 4.1. shows some background information of the Phase 1 participants. Of the 28 teachers, there were 11 males and 17 females. Regarding their highest qualifications, two of the teachers had Masters' degrees, and 23 others got BA degrees (4-year university degrees). There were two teachers with junior BA degrees (3-year college degrees) and one with high school diploma. In terms of the teachers' degree specialisations, 22 of them were trained to be teachers while five majored in English linguistics. Related to the participants' employment status, 18 of them were tenured, and nine were on either fixed or un-fixed term contracts. The diversity of the participants was especially shown in the teachers' teaching experience, represented by the years of experience in the table. The participants' teaching experience lied in a wide spectrum from starters to the very experienced teachers. There were five teachers who had less than five years of experience and seven of them were in the range of five to 10 years. The number of teachers in the middle years of their careers who had between 10 to 20

years of experience were five. Finally, 10 participants were in the group of the highly experienced teachers with over 20 years of experience. Regarding the locations where they were teaching, 16 teachers' schools were in the district centre, and 12 other teachers were teaching at suburban schools. About the participants' professional competencies, three of them reached C1 level and 24 achieved B2 level in English on the CEFR scale. 14 of them claimed to have had CLT training, and 14 said they did not have CLT training. Teachers' training backgrounds will be described in more details in the immediate following section of 4.1.2.2.

4.1.1.2. Teachers' training backgrounds

This section reports the various kinds of training that the research participants had. It consists of the pre-service training before they started teaching English, and in-service training including training by Project 2020 and other professional training.

Pre-service training

There were two kinds of training programs that participants had prior to their teaching careers. Many of them attended four-year university courses to receive BA degrees, and some others took three-year college programs to earn junior BA degrees. Like the training programs, the pre-service teachers specialised in two training areas: (1) teacher education and (2) English linguistics. 24 teachers responded that they were trained to become teachers at the secondary education level while three claimed to be trained to teach at the primary education. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there were no available training programs to train primary English teachers in Vietnam. Since these were participants' responses to the online questionnaire, there was no way that I could ask them to clarify why some participants said to have been trained to teach at the primary education level. However, based on my best knowledge and understanding of the context, these teachers might have been trained to teach at primary schools in general, not as primary English teachers. In the past, there were times when Vietnam was seriously short of English teachers and those teachers of other subjects who knew English were also mobilised to teach English in addition to their major subjects.

Project 2020 training

The research participants claimed to have participated in training sessions by Project 2020. As introduced in Chapter 1, Project 2020, approved by the Government of Vietnam in

2008, made English a mandatory learning subject at the primary education level in Vietnam. In order to implement primary English, Project 2020 carried the in-service training to primary English teachers nationwide. The training package contained two major training areas: (1) English competency training and (2) teaching primary English. More details about the training by Project 2020 can be found in Section 2.2 of Chapter 1.

Other professional training

During their teaching practices as English teachers, the research participants also attended several other professional development training sessions. Some of the training sessions mentioned by the teachers included: “Teaching English as a foreign language, a 48-hour special training course at International Education Institute in Ho Chi Minh City in 2015” (Teacher 4, question 7), “ELTeach – English for Teaching, a professional development training of teaching methods” (Teacher 5, 26), “Training on the Audio-lingual method to teach children with everyday English” (Teacher 15), “TESOL certificate – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages” (Teacher 19).

In summary for this section, the teachers in this research participated in various kinds of training, from their in-service training to Project 2020’s professional training and several other professional development training sessions.

4.1.1.3. Teachers’ descriptions of their workload

Initial findings about the teachers’ workload is that it was heavy. Words such as: “Enormous” (Teacher 19), “A lot” (Teacher 18) were what teachers described their own work at school. As provided by the participants, primary English teachers’ workload was classified into regular teaching hours and other tasks assigned by their schools, which is summarised in figure 4.1 below.

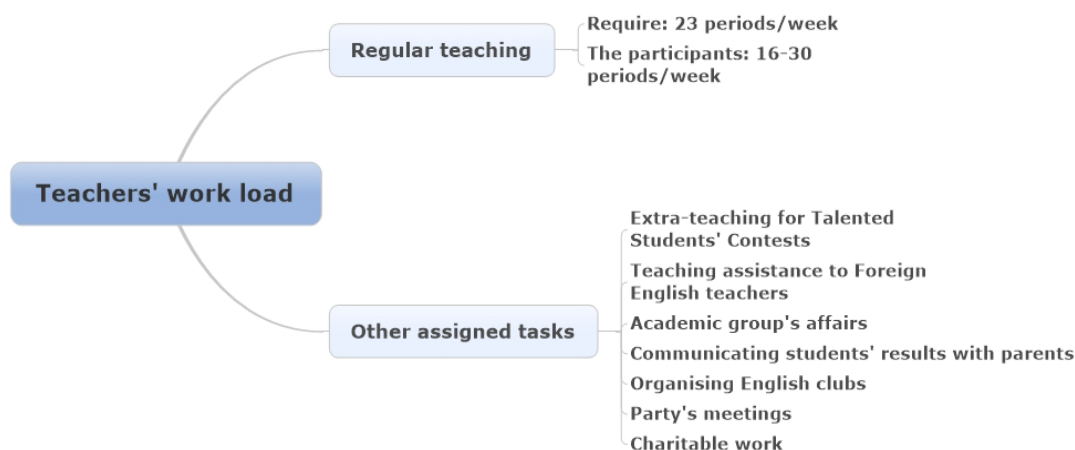


Figure 4.1. Teachers' workload

Regarding the regular teaching, teachers reported that by the standard of primary English teachers' workload, the required load was 23 class periods per week, of which one period lasted 35 minutes. The workload spectrum that the participants reported was from 16 to 30 periods per week.

Beside the regular teaching, the teachers also had to do several other tasks assigned by their schools based on rules and regulations. As synthesised from the participants' responses, other tasks included doing extra-teaching to prepare students for Talented Students' Contests, being teaching assistants to foreign English teachers at their schools. In addition, teachers also had to communicate students' learning results with their parents electronically twice per semester. Organising English clubs, participating in the academic group's affairs and doing charitable labour were some of the other teachers' tasks.

4.1.2. Primary English teachers' understanding of CLT and their pedagogies

One of the focuses of my research was to explore how primary English teachers in Vietnam understood CLT from a socio-cultural perspective, and how they carried out their teaching practices. Therefore, in Phase 1 of the research, beside recruiting participants for Phase 2, I also aimed to have an initial understanding of participants' knowledge of CLT and how they taught following it. This section presents the findings related to the matter grouped into two contents: how teachers understood CLT and how they implemented their pedagogies in their classrooms.

4.1.2.1. Teachers' understanding about CLT

There were four major understandings of CLT synthesised from the teachers' responses, which were summarised in Figure 4.2 below.

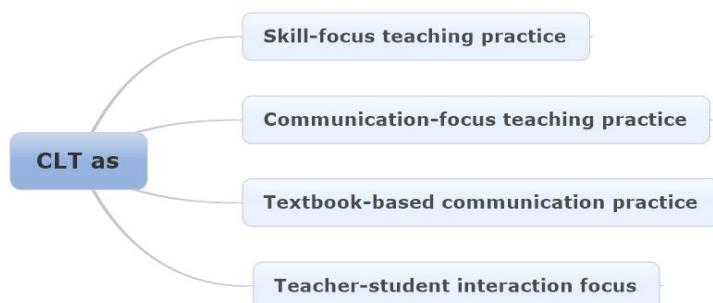


Figure 4.2. Teachers' understanding of CLT

As shown in Figure 4.2, the teachers' understanding of the CLT approach consists of four aspects: (1) skill-focus teaching practice, (2) communication-focus teaching practice, (3) textbook-based communication practice and (4) teacher-student interaction focus.

Firstly, in terms of the CLT approach as a skill-focus teaching practice, two contents were embedded in this understanding. Accordingly, teaching English following CLT meant focusing on speaking skills and prioritising listening and speaking skills over other skills of reading and writing. Within this understanding, teachers thought they need to focus on "developing students' speaking skills" (Teacher 14). Meanwhile, several others expanded the skill-focus practice to the teaching of the four English language skills but prioritising students' speaking and listening skills as they said that "It is important to focus on the listening and speaking skills" (Teacher 1, 6, 7, 12, 15, 22, 28). For these teachers, teaching languages following the CLT approach was simply to teach the (four) language skills with priority for speaking or listening and speaking skills.

Secondly, regarding the CLT approach as a communication-focus teaching practice, there were five aspects mentioned in teachers' responses:

- Communication as a means and ultimate goal of the teaching and learning process;
- No grammar teaching;
- Teaching students to communicate with class partners in English;

- Building and developing students' communicative abilities;
- Applying communicative activities in teaching.

Within this aspect of the teachers' understanding, communication is viewed as the focus of the CLT approach. There was a teacher who thought that in the CLT practice, communication should be set as the most important goal of language teaching. That goal was achieved by using communication itself as a means to carry out the teaching and learning process as the teacher said: "CLT is a method of teaching foreign languages. It focuses on communication which is a means and also the ultimate goal of the teaching and learning languages" (Teacher 23). For the goal of communication, another opinion is that in the CLT approach, "We don't teach grammar ..." (Teacher 9). Instead, teachers would focus on teaching students to communicate in English with their partners in class (Teacher 6, 27). Several other teachers extended this scope of the CLT approach to building and developing students' communicative abilities (Teacher 4, 11, 19, 26). In order to fulfil the goal of the CLT pedagogy, applying communicative activities in teaching practices is an understanding from Teacher 21.

Thirdly, with respect to the CLT approach as textbook-based communication teaching practice, two main understandings were found in the teachers' responses: (1) teaching students to speak English based on sentence patterns embedded in each textbook lesson and (2) the communication teaching based on each textbook lesson's sentence patterns. Regarding the first understanding, CLT teaching practice means that teachers should focus on teaching students to practice speaking English, of which the topics and contents of the speaking practice were bound around the sentence patterns of each lesson in textbooks as Teacher 9 responded. Similar to this idea, Teacher 2 generalised the whole CLT teaching practice was simply to base the teaching and communication on the textbook contents. From what Teacher 9 mentioned above who said that "We don't teach grammar. We just teach students to communicate following the communicative situations". There was a point that needed to be clarified if the communicative situations mentioned here were the contents stated in the textbook lesson sentence patterns.

Finally, regarding the CLT approach as a teacher-student interaction-focus teaching practice, three aspects were found in the teachers' understandings: the teacher's role in the practice, the means of the communication and teacher-student talking time. Related to the first aspect, teachers were viewed as facilitators in the teaching and learning process. In this

understanding, teachers are helpers who encourage and give support to students when they need (Teacher 4). The teacher-student interaction in class carried out through the means of using English is the second aspect in the teachers' understanding. Accordingly, during class time "The teacher and all students communicate in English in every class period" (Teacher 18). The final aspect of the teachers' understanding in this respect is the priority of talking time in the process of class interaction. In this understanding, students' talking time is given the priority and should take most of the class time as "Students' talking time is more important than teacher's talking time" (Teacher 16).

The points mentioned above are how the research participants showed their understandings of the CLT approach. The following section will report on how their understanding of the approach influenced their teaching practices.

4.1.2.2. Teachers' descriptions of their teaching practices

There were three major inter-related findings in teachers' responses about how they carried out their teaching practices. They included textbook-based teaching practice, use of classroom activities and their teaching practice pattern, which are summarised in Figure 4.3 below.

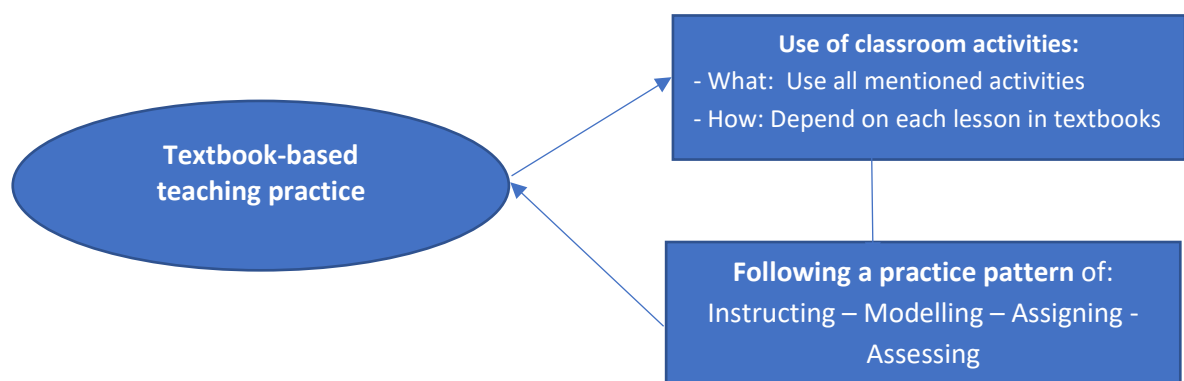


Figure 4.3. Teachers' teaching practices

Figure 4.3 shows the findings about the participants' teaching practices. The most prominent finding about how the teachers taught was that they followed a textbook-based teaching practice. In this finding, textbooks were found to be a compass and a foundation for their practices. This finding would be revealed in relation to the finding about how the teachers used classroom activities.

Regarding the use of classroom activities, there were two aspects including what activities and how they used them. With respect to what activities they used in their classes, their responses show that more or less, they used all of the activities mentioned in the questionnaire. Accordingly, question 13 in the questionnaire listed classroom activities ranging from the least to the most communicative, i.e. from repetition practice to role play and project work. With respect to how they used the activities, many teachers responded that it depended on the lessons in the textbooks. Eleven teachers said that they would choose suitable activities based on the types and contents of (textbook) lessons they taught, such as vocabulary, sentence patterns (or grammar, as Teacher 4 said), listening, speaking, etc. Also, within this respect, when being asked if their use of the classroom activities were in line with the CLT approach, the teachers' answers ranged from the right to the left of the appropriateness spectrum. Some teachers said in accordance with the CLT approach, they used the activities very appropriately (2 teachers), quite appropriately (2 teachers), appropriately (12 teachers), not appropriately (2 teachers). Some teachers also gave additional information regarding this. Teacher 19 claimed that they used the classroom activities appropriately but "I still could not develop or improve students' abilities". Teacher 11 stated that "The activities helped students practice speaking skills and communicate well". Creating a relaxing learning environment to help students learn the best was what Teacher 13 commented about how effective they used those activities. Teacher 13 added that they assigned students to do the activities in pairs or groups. By doing it that way, the teacher wanted to create a competitive and exciting learning environment in class. The teacher also believed that stronger students could help weaker ones in the pairs or groups with this method.

Finally, one major finding about the participants' teaching practices was that they followed a similar pattern in their practices. As they described, the pattern includes instructing, modelling, assigning and assessing. This means that teachers would give instructions or directions about the activities first. The teachers then modelled the activities themselves or modelled with stronger students in class for other students to watch to follow later. After the modelling, students would be asked to do the activities and finally teachers would assess and gave comments about the students' performances. Teacher 27 simply stated "I give them instructions and then ask students to carry out the activities. Two teachers

detailed the pathway of their lessons from giving instructions, modelling the activities, assigning students to work and assessing their performances. Teacher 9 said, “Teacher will give instructions to students about an activity, model it, then assign students to work, monitor and assess students’ activities”. Teacher 8 detailed a similar pathway and added that “When modelling activities, I may do the modelling alone or model with stronger students for others to observe”. Teacher 4 explained her practice by saying that “Students need to do the activities in a way to be receptive to the language, then practise and memorise the language before they can use the language for their communicative purposes”.

To sum up for this section, the participants revealed that they followed textbook-based teaching practices. It was shown in the way they chose classroom activities depending on the textbook lessons, and the activities’ contents were bound within the lessons’ contents. The participants also followed a similar pattern in their teaching practices. In describing their practices, the teachers also mentioned challenges that they faced and what they needed in order to teach more effectively. Those contents will be reported in the following section.

4.1.3. Teachers’ descriptions of challenges facing their practices & needs of help and support

This section reports what was challenging to the participants, and what kinds of help and support they needed to improve their teaching practices.

4.1.3.1. Teachers’ challenges

This section focuses on the participants’ descriptions of their challenges in their teaching practices, summarised in figure 4.4 below. As shown in the figure, the challenges are classified into five areas: (1) students’ conditions, (2) teachers’ conditions, (3) teaching facilities and resources, (4) primary English curriculum implementation and (5) other challenges. These will be described in detail.

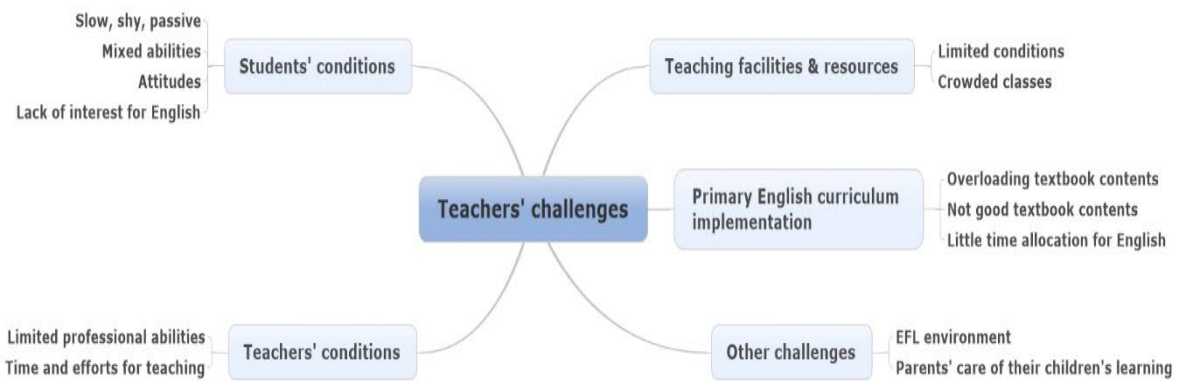


Figure 4.4. Teachers' challenges in their teaching practices

Students' conditions

The first major challenge for the teachers was about their students' conditions. Teachers revealed that there were several negative details related to the students. First, students in the countryside needed more time to process their English learning. They were also passive, shy or not confident in learning English. Teacher 28 claimed that it took a lot of time for their students to do classroom activities. Teacher 22 said that her students were not confident in learning. Similarly, teacher 18 & 24 listed their challenges as having "shy and passive students". These students were "very afraid when being called on to do classroom activities" (Teacher 24). Second, another challenge for the teachers was students' mixed abilities. Four teachers said that students in their classes were with different ability levels. This caused difficulties for them in conducting learning activities. Teacher 21 said that "the conduct of some classroom activities was not so successful because of students' mixed abilities in class". Third, students' negative attitudes in class was reported by Teacher 15. Accordingly, they said many of their students took extra private English classes outside. Therefore, several of them had over-confident attitudes in English classes at school by showing that they did not pay much attention to the in-class lessons. As a result, they caused discomfort and difficulties for the teacher trying to make sure that everyone in their class was all clear about what was taught. Teacher 25 reported similar attitudes but with a different flavour. Several students in class "are not interested in learning, especially learning a foreign language".

Teachers' conditions

The second major area of teachers' challenges was from the teachers themselves. In this aspect, there were two difficulties that the teachers faced including: (1) teachers' professional abilities, and (2) their efforts and time spent for teaching. Regarding teachers' professional abilities, some teachers said that their abilities were limited in attempting to achieve successful teaching practices. Teacher 11 claimed that, "I do not have good class management skills, and thus it is difficult for me to conduct some classroom activities or even my general practice". Teacher 23 reported, "I have difficulties in covering songs and chants". As described above, the participants in this phase of the research followed textbook-based teaching practices, and songs and chants were present there in the textbooks, so they would cover those in their classes. Having problems with the pronunciation of English was another obstacle when Teacher 19 admitted "my (English) pronunciation is not good", and thus they did not feel confident in using English orally.

In terms of the time and effort, some teachers informed that it took too much of their time and effort spent for their teaching jobs. As Teacher 4 described their workload, beside regular teaching time and other assigned tasks, they had to plan lessons every day together with making their own teaching aids and tools. This took up a lot of their supposed "time at home". Teacher 20 and 23 remarked that they must exert themselves in conducting classroom activities. In order to stimulate students' interests in learning, "I have to change activities frequently to avoid boredom" (Teacher 20). Teacher 4 and 23 also tried hard in choosing or recycling classroom activities with quite similar reasons. As Teacher 4 explained, a certain activity was only suitable for some students. Also, some students only liked a certain activity. That was why she had difficulties in conducting classroom activities and had to try harder in recycling activities to fit her students. Similarly, Teacher 23 claimed that because of mixed-ability students in class, one activity could not fit all students. Therefore, she had to change activities all the time to cope with it.

Teaching facilities and resources

The third major area of teachers' challenges was the teaching facilities and resources. Five teachers informed that facilities and resources for teaching at their schools were quite limited. Some schools did not have enough facilities and resources, or they were out-of-date and not useable. Three teachers just simply said that they had limited physical material

conditions for teaching while Teacher 5 stated that, “There are no means to assist my teaching except that I have my laptop and speakers”. On top of the difficulties about facilities and resources for teaching, crowded classes made the situations worse. As “the classrooms are small and there are between 40 and 49 students in class, it’s very difficult to organise games or activities in which students need to move around” (Teacher 4). As a result, Teacher 4 said that the interaction between the teacher and students was very limited. Similarly, four other teachers shared the same problem about crowded classes. They all reported that small classrooms with “too many” students prevent them and their students from moving around in class, and thus activities that required students to move around were usually avoided (Teacher 4).

Primary English curriculum implementation

The implementation of the primary English curriculum is the fourth major area of teachers’ challenges. There are three details in this area of challenges. The first and the second ones are inter-related with each other, which are the overwhelming contents in the textbooks that the teachers had to cover and the time allocation for the English subject. Teacher 26 stated that her school implemented two-class period English programs a week. It means that each class of students, i.e. Year 3 – Year 4 – Year 5 students, would have two periods of English a week on their class timetables. Although the time for English was not sufficient, the teaching contents in textbooks were overwhelming for teachers to cover them as Teacher 26 said, “The lessons’ contents are just too much with two class periods we have. I can’t teach students to meet the course requirements for them”. Teacher 13 also added that “35 minutes for a class period of English is just short”. The remaining detail in the English curriculum implementation is related to textbooks’ contents. Accordingly, the contents of textbooks by MOET were not well-designed. As introduced in the Introduction chapter and what was found in the participants’ CLT teaching practices, teachers have to use approved textbooks by the MOET. Teacher 1 voiced her opinions that “We teach based on textbooks, but the Vietnamese (English) textbooks’ designs are not good”.

Other challenges

Finally, this part of the section will report other challenges facing the primary English teachers, stated in this section as the fifth major area of teachers’ challenges. There were two

obstacles included in this area which are (1) the environment for English and (2) parents' care for their children's learning.

Regarding the first obstacle, English language environment was a big challenge, not only for the teachers in this research but also for most English teachers and students in Vietnam in general. In Vietnam, English is a foreign language. Most teachers and students in Vietnam speak Vietnamese as a mother tongue. Outside their English classrooms, there is no or little need for them to communicate in English, nor there are any opportunities for them to practice English in the surrounding environment. Both Teacher 7 and 27 mentioned this in their responses. Teacher 27 also added that in the rural areas of the countryside, the situation is even worse because students there were disadvantageous compared to students in the central areas.

The second concern in this area of teachers' challenges was the care needed from students' parents. Teachers reported that some parents just lacked the needed care for their children's learning. As Teacher 3 described, "Most of my students are from farmers' families in the suburban or rural areas. Many parents usually do not pay attention to their children's schooling. They put it all on our shoulders". Teacher 15 added up the information that children in the rural areas might go to school without having enough textbooks and notebooks, and that is "a normal (common) thing".

In summary, the primary English teachers in this research were facing many challenges in their teaching practices. Their difficulties and obstacles include ones from their students, from themselves, from their schools' conditions, and also from general conditions of teaching and learning English in Vietnam contemporarily. The teachers also voiced their needs of help and support so that they could improve their teaching practices. The contents will be addressed in the following section.

4.1.3.2. Teachers' needs of help and support

This section describes the kinds of help and support that the primary English teachers needed in order to assist them in their jobs. The needs of help and support from the teachers' responses were classified into four areas: (1) professional training, (2) teaching facilities and resources, (3) teacher agency and (4) mutual support. These are summarised in Figure 4.5 and will be described in detail.

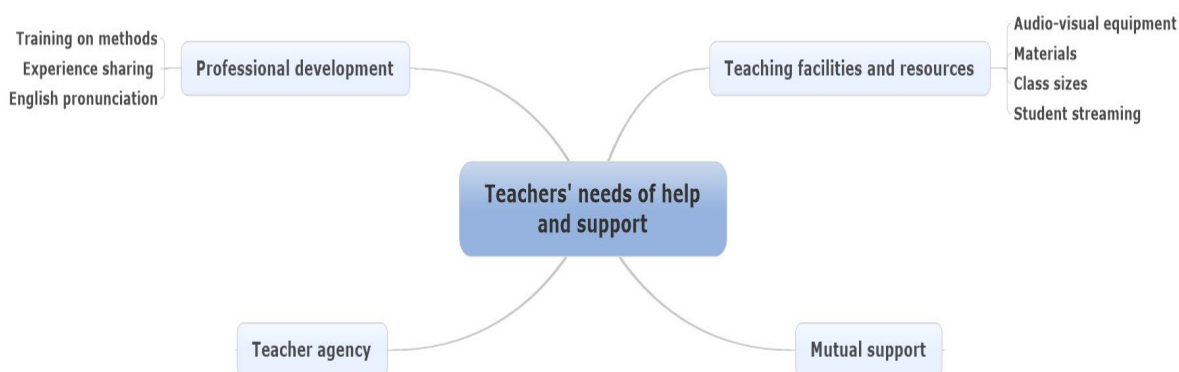


Figure 4.5. Teachers' needs of help and support

Professional development

The first area of help and support that the teachers needed was in professional development. There were three aspects mentioned in this area including training about teaching methods, experience sharing and training on English pronunciation. Regarding the teaching methods training, six teachers suggested this kind of help and support. Some teachers just gave very short answers while some others provided some additional information about this need. Teacher 28 said she needed to be trained more with teaching methods that were “new and effective”. Meanwhile, Teacher 5 wished to be able to learn some new games to attract students in learning English. Similarly, Teacher 23 stated she wanted to learn “new activities to motivate students in English classes”.

Another aspect of professional development need was the need to learn from peer teachers. Accordingly, teachers stated they needed to have experience sharing sessions where they could learn from their fellow English teachers. Specifically, Teacher 11 hoped that: “Beside teaching methods, there should be sessions where experienced teachers in the field can share or answer questions of my concerns so that I can learn and improve myself”.

The final professional development need was related to practicing English pronunciation. As mentioned above, English pronunciation is one of the teachers’ challenges. Some teachers did not feel confident in speaking English because they thought their English pronunciation was not good enough. Teacher 19 expected that she could attend a “standard English pronunciation” class.

Teaching resources and facilities

The second area of teachers' needs of help and support was related to the teaching resources and facilities. Nine teachers mentioned their hopes in tackling the challenge of limited teaching resources and facilities. Their proposals were grouped into four contents: needs of audio-visual equipment, materials, student streaming and class sizes. Regarding the audio-visual equipment needs, Teacher 10 said, "I really need audio-visual equipment". Similarly, Teacher 3 added that she needed audio-visual equipment to have more choices for her lessons. In terms of materials, Teacher 18 just simply answered "Materials" and did not give any additional information. Meanwhile, Teacher 4 provided a detailed description of her needs. She said, "I need some better materials, video clips with practical communicative situations that are children-friendly, and short stories to help my students with listening skills". Also related to the needs of materials, Teacher 27 stated that she thought the listening recordings should have native speakers' of English accents. Related to the content of class sizes, Teacher 9 proposed that schools should assign a reasonable number of students into each English class because of the special characteristics of the subject in responding to the challenge of small classrooms with excessive number of students. Regarding the same issue, Teacher 14 suggested supplying necessary equipment and sufficient space for English classes. The final content in this area of needs was the proposal to stream students. In this respect, several teachers reported their difficulties in having students with mixed abilities in class as mentioned above in the teachers' challenges. Teacher 6 thought that schools should classify students into appropriate classes so that it would be easier for teachers in their practices.

Teacher agency

Teacher agency was the third area of teachers' needs of help and support. In this respect, there was one teacher who mentioned this issue. The teacher simply stated that "Teachers need to be free in teaching following the CLT approach" (Teacher 1). She did not give any more clarifications about this issue.

Mutual support

The final area of teachers' needs of help and support was about their needs of mutual support. In this area, Teacher 2 just generally said "I need mutual understanding and sympathy". The questionnaire data did not reveal what teachers meant by mutual support.

However, this would help me guide me in conducting interviews with them in Phase 2 to ask for clarifications. On the same issue, Teacher 27 wished that her students' parents cared more about their children's learning. Parents should support teachers by reminding their children to prepare and practice English at home.

To sum up for this section, the primary English teachers in this study faced several challenges in their teaching practices. Based on their realities, they expressed their needs of help and support in the areas of professional development, teaching resources and facilities, their agency in teaching, and mutual support so that they could conduct their practices better.

4.1.4. Summary

In this part, I have presented the findings of Phase One of the research, which involves the use of an online questionnaire. There were several details about the findings that need to have clarifications or specifications in order to have a more complete understanding of the issues. As the main purposes of Phase One were to recruit participants for Phase Two and also to have an initial understanding of the research participants, Phase Two of the research was designed to probe deeply into the research matters. In the following sections, I will report the findings of Phase Two of the research.

4.2. FINDINGS OF THE PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS – TEACHERS' TRAINING BACKGROUNDS AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CLT

Introduction

The pre-observation interviews belonged to Phase Two of the research. Phase Two was with the participation of eight primary English teachers starting with the pre-observation interviews with individual teachers, then in-class observations and finally post-observation interviews with the participants. This section is aimed to present the findings from the pre-observation interviews with the eight primary English teachers in the research, which related to the first round of data collection of the Phase Two. This section is composed with four major parts. The teachers' stories of their training backgrounds to be English teachers will be presented in the first part. The second major part will be findings about the teachers' understanding of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT). The third part presents teachers' favours of CLT compared to traditional teaching pedagogies, and their claims of how they conducted CLT practices will be reported in the fourth part. In order to

protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms will be used for the eight teacher participants in this Phase Two of the research.

4.2.1. Teachers' training backgrounds

This section is a synthesis of the research participants' sharing about their training backgrounds. From the teachers' responses, their training backgrounds are summarised in Figure 4.6 below.

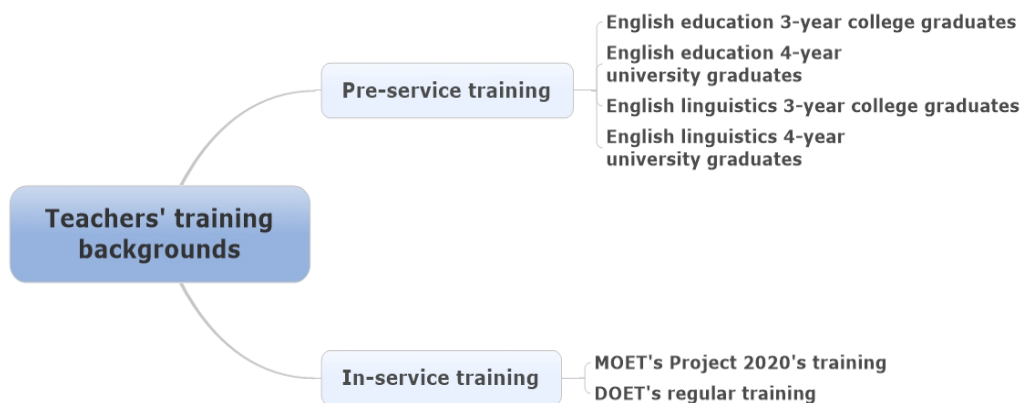


Figure 4.6. Teachers' training backgrounds

As shown in Figure 4.6, there are two forms of training that the teachers in this research had attended: pre-service training and in-service training, which will be described in detail below.

4.2.1.1. Pre-service training

Regarding the pre-service training, there were four types of professional training that the primary English teachers in the study had. They were: (1) English education college training, (2) English education university training, (3) English linguistics college training, and (4) English linguistics university training. As introduced in the Introduction Chapter, in Vietnam, the term “college” is referred to tertiary training institutions that provided three-year training courses. Graduates from these courses would receive Junior Bachelor of Art degrees (BA). Similarly, the term “university” is for tertiary training institutions that offered four-year training courses. Graduates from these courses would be awarded full BA degrees.

The first type of pre-service teachers' training backgrounds was the English education college training. This kind of training lasted three years and it aimed to train English teachers

for junior high schools (Year 6 – Year 9). There were three participants - Hoang, Hong and Anh, who attended this kind of training. After becoming English teachers, per their personal needs and preferences, these teachers took an in-service training course (BA Upgrade Course) which lasted about 1,5 – 2 years to receive full BA degrees.

The second type of pre-service teachers' training backgrounds was the English education university training. This kind of training lasted 4 years, and it aimed to train English teachers for senior high schools (Year 10 - 12). Diem was the only one participant who pursued this type of training.

The third type of the pre-service training that teachers had was the English linguistics college training. This kind of training also lasted three years. It aimed to train students with English language skills and knowledge of the English language. Graduates might get jobs in different appropriate areas such as secretary, interpreter, translator, etc. Thanh, Minh, and Phuong were the three teachers who followed this training prior to becoming English teachers. In order to become English teachers, these participants took short courses in English teaching and received certificates before applying for English teaching jobs.

The fourth type of the teachers' pre-service training backgrounds was the English linguistics university training. This kind of training is similar to the third type above. The difference is that it lasted four years. Quy was the one who followed this training before becoming a teacher of English. Like the ones who followed the third type of pre-service training, Quy also had to take a course in English teaching and received a teaching certificate to apply for a teaching job.

In conclusion for this section, the participants in this Phase 2 of the research followed various forms of professional training before becoming English teachers. During the time of their teaching practices, they also participated in in-service professional training, which will be reported in the following section.

4.2.1.2. In-service professional training

As shown in figure 5.1 above, there were two kinds of in-service training that the participants mentioned. They were MOET's Project 2020 training and the regular professional training by the local provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET).

As introduced in Chapter 1, the Introduction, since English was introduced at the primary English education level, MOET through Project 2020, organised primary English teaching training on a massive scale nationwide. This training was carried out on a national scale because Vietnam did not have any official primary English teacher training courses when English was made a mandatory learning area at the primary education level. This training could be considered a re-training for primary English teachers in order to make up for the gap in the teacher training system. More information about the training of teaching primary English by Project 2020 can be found in Chapter 1. This section reports what the participants in the research talked about their training stories, which is summarised in Figure 4.7 below.



Figure 4.7. In-service training by Project 2020

As seen from Figure 4.7 above, there are seven areas related to the teachers' opinions about the in-service training by Project 2020. These areas include: (1) organisers of the training, (2) training locations, (3) recruitment of trainees, (4) training duration, (5) training contents, (6) teachers' positive opinions about the training, and (7) teachers' negative opinions about the training. In order to prepare for a clear understanding of what the participants answered, it should be noticed that the teachers in the study attended different training sessions implemented within the Project 2020's framework, and at different locations, by different host institutions and different trainers.

Firstly and secondly, with regard to the areas of the training organisers and training locations, there were three partners involved in organising the Project 2020 in-service training for primary English teachers: Project 2020, the local provincial DOET, and the host training institutions. Six teachers (Diem, Hoang, Hong, Quy, Anh, and Phuong) shared that they participated in the Project's training. From what they knew, Project 2020 gave orders and directions about their training to the local DOET. The DOET then gave orders and directions to district BOETs and (primary) schools within their administrations about sending or gathering primary English teachers to attend Project 2020's in-service training. Regarding the locations of training, as informed by the teachers involved, two big names as host training institutions were mentioned in the teachers' sharing about participating in the training. The first name was the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, a very big teacher training university in the Vietnam South, located in the centre of the most vibrant city of the country. The second name was Can Tho University, considered as the biggest teacher training university in the Mekong Delta region. These institutions served as two of the training hosts for Project 2020. They carried out the training modules designed by the Project. Of the six teachers, two of them were sent to Ho Chi Minh City to attend their training sessions. Four were gathered at local venues and trainers from Project 2020's host institutions came to carry out the training.

The third area in the teachers' sharing about the in-service training by the Project was the trainee recruitment. As mentioned in the training organisers above, Project 2020 gave orders and directions to the provincial DOET. The DOET sent their training policies to schools and gave their directions about recruiting primary English teachers to take part in the training. From the teachers' responses, those who were selected to attend were considered key English teachers at their schools or in their district. As Hoang said, "at that time, they (leaders) were preparing key human resource ("cán bộ nguồn") for my school. They said that those who attended the course were key teachers. Yes, they used the word 'key'. Key staff of the school". As the teachers who were recruited for the training were key teachers, it means that not all primary English teachers at the time were able to participate in the Project's training. Anh said about her training participation in Ho Chi Minh City:

When my school was selected to be a typical school in the province, I had that chance to attend that training course. The number of teachers from xx province attending the training

was only 3... If I had been a teacher at a different school, I would not have had the opportunity to attend the training. It was just because I taught at this school and it was chosen as a typical school then I could go”.

From Hoang’s and Anh’s responses, it can be figured out that only some key teachers at some important schools were selected to send to the Project’s main training sessions. From my personal experience as I attended Project 2020’s Training of Trainers for 18 host institutions in the country, I learned that Project 2020’s intention was that from the training of key teachers, they would share or transfer the knowledge and skills to other teachers in their schools or school districts.

The fourth area of the teachers’ opinions about the Project’s training was the durations of the training sessions that they attended. The training sessions the teachers went to were varied in lengths. Anh claimed that her training session lasted one week. Hoang did not remember exactly how long his training lasted but recalled it was between one and two months. Meanwhile, Hong attended the Project’s training at a local venue where his trainers from Can Tho University arrived there to train them. Hong informed that the training was implemented at weekends when he did not have classes and lengthened in the summer holiday. He added, “during the summer holiday, we gathered for that training from Fridays to Sundays”.

The contents of the Project’s in-service training were the fifth area in the teachers’ responses. There were four aspects mentioned by the teachers about the contents of the training: the primary English teaching methods, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching, the CLT inclusion in the training sessions, and teacher’s forming procedural teaching practice as perceived from the training. Firstly, the major theme of the training was about primary English teaching methods. Hoang simply informed that, “it was about teaching primary English”; or “they taught us how to carry out a normal teaching practice” (Phuong). Three other teachers gave more and similar details about the contents of the English teaching methods. According to their descriptions, the teaching methods mentioned were how to teach different sections in an English lesson. Quy stated, “the main contents of those training workshops were how to teach vocabulary, how to teach grammar or sentence patterns, or how to organise games in the classroom”. Similarly, Anh supplemented that “there were many things from general instructions on teaching each

(language) skill, or some games about learning English”. Hong reinforced this aspect with his response that “they reviewed how to teach the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Then they also told us some more ... some new methods”. Secondly, the Project’s in-service training contents also included using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The ICT component in the training contents as described by Phuong was that “I have to use devices and technologies in teaching”. Meanwhile, both Hoang and Anh mentioned the use of some software. They said, “they taught me how to use the software” (Hoang), and “they taught us about planning lessons on the software” (Anh). Hong gave a more comprehensive description of this aspect by saying that, “they showed us several software that we can use in our teaching, such as letting our students test their vocabulary. There are also good games to use, or we can test students’ listening skills. We can type texts and then choose accents for students to listen (with those software)”. Thirdly, the contents of the Project’s training were with or without the inclusion of the CLT approach as reported by the teachers. Regarding this aspect, teachers gave contradictory recollections about whether CLT was included in the training. Some teachers claimed that among several contents in the training sessions they attended, CLT was also included. Hong claimed the CLT inclusion was at the level of “that one focused on teaching following the CLT approach, teaching students to communicate”. However, in his long description of the training he attended, Hoang just had one short statement about the CLT component that “CLT was also mentioned in the course”. The CLT inclusion in the training can be completed with the opinion from Thanh as he said, “it was just mentioned like a skimming, without focusing much on the CLT approach”. Contrary to the mentioned claims from Hoang, Hong, and Thanh, three other teachers believed that they were not trained about following the CLT approach in teaching. Minh informed that he had participated in many training sessions carried out within the Project’s training goals, but “there have been many training sessions for teachers. They are just about general teaching methods. As for the ability to teach students to be able to communicate, it is very limited”. Minh also explained in detail that “the methods about ... like about teaching vocabulary or using games to motivate students to participate ... like saying sentence patterns or answering single words or phrases. They are not related much to the communication that two people can face each other so that they can share information with each other in the direction of communication”. Quy voiced her opinions about her training experience, “So far, there haven’t been any training sessions about teaching following the CLT approach. They only

trained about methods of teaching vocabulary, methods of teaching this and that". Also, Quy strengthened what Minh stated by adding:

During the workshops, the trainers sometimes talked about communication, such as the communication between teachers and students, between students and students in the classroom. They also taught me some ways to communicate well with students, but there was no specific session on the CLT approach". (Quy)

Related to this aspect, Diem just briefly said that, "there was no session on the CLT". The final aspect regarding the Project's in-service training contents was about the way teachers perceived the training as if they needed to follow a procedural teaching practice in their English classes. Not all of the eight teachers interviewed mentioned this aspect, but just one teacher who indirectly included this in the description of her teaching practice. Accordingly, from what she learned from the training, the teacher's belief was that "according to training sessions about teaching methods I have learned, teaching English such as teaching listening skills requires that we need to follow enough steps" (Diem).

Sixthly, teachers' positive opinions about the Project's in-service training was what teachers shared in their answers about their training backgrounds. There were two aspects with reference to this area: (1) the teachers' satisfaction about the helpfulness of the training and (2) the chances for them to learn from other co-trainees. First, there were five teachers who gave positive feedback about their satisfaction because of the usefulness of the Project's training. The usefulness ranged from merely helping them review what they had learned in pre-service training to new things that they had never known prior to the Project's training. Hong noticed that not everything at the training was new to him, and that several things he had learned before in his pre-service time. However, he admitted that "after a while in teaching, there were challenges facing me, and the training helped me to review everything". Sharing a different experience, Hoang told his story that he previously taught at a junior high school, and then was transferred to teach English at a primary school. He did not know exactly what teaching primary English should be. Thanks to the training, he said, "I then could imagine how the environment (teaching primary English) looked like" (Hoang). Similarly, Anh did not have any professional knowledge about teaching primary

English. Then she was selected to participate in the training, and she found it helpful. She noted:

In general, I appreciated this training. That was probably because when I was at pre-service training, I did not have the opportunities to learn that much. Then I went to teach for many years. Therefore, that was the first one that I attended, and I felt I could learn many good things to apply in my teaching". (Anh)

In the same vein, Quy found what she was trained was very applicable in her practice, and that "I just wanted to apply it to my classes immediately". Phuong recognised that the training "helped me greatly in my current practice". Those were some positive opinions about the usefulness of the training, as Hong concluded that "I have gained quite a lot from the training". The second aspect in the area of positive opinions about the Project's training was the chances for teachers who took part in the training to learn from one another. This means that at the training sessions, trainees learned a great deal from their peers' sharing. Hoang recalled that "by attending the course and listening to my colleagues' sharing, it just caused me to say ... wow! (to open my mind)". He also added that there were things he heard from peers at the training and he did not figure out then. However, later in his practice, he gradually saw things and related them with what he heard. He came to realise that "then I knew it. Knowing about it means that it was thanks to what I heard from other trainees. Similarly, Phuong agreed that when she heard and observed other teachers, she learned a lot from them.

Finally, the teachers also talked about some negative feelings and opinions they had about the Project's in-service training. What the participants responded was grouped into four aspects: (1) general evaluation of the training, (2) opinions about the training contents, (3) the organisation of the training, and (4) some teachers' personal feelings about participating in the training. First, an unfavoured general evaluation of the training was recorded. That came from Hoang who participated in one of the Project's major regional training sessions. He recalled the pros and cons of the training and indicated that "generally, I think it was not (as good) as I expected". Hoang's evaluation was reinforced with the second aspect of opinions about the training contents. With respect to the training contents, several teachers expressed that they appreciated the helpfulness of the training towards their teaching practices as discussed above. However, the training contents still lacked some of

what primary English teachers needed. The lack was that there was not “a specific one (session) on the CLT” (Quy). Diem, Thanh, and Minh also shared this similar opinion with Quy. Even with some CLT inclusion mentioned above, Hoang expressed that he felt it was just vague and “I just understood CLT was like this, like that”. The negative opinions about the training contents were not only about the lacking, but it was also about the overwhelming contents for trainees. Hoang voiced his opinions that “... too many things ... Learning so many things that I became exhausted, and then I could not remember anything”. Because too many contents were stuffed into a short period of time, Hoang thought that “it was too suffocating”. He also used words such as “sketchy”, “too over-loaded” to talk about how shallow and how many of the training contents were covered. Third, one participant reported she received contradictory directions about how teachers should go about in their teaching practices. Quy said she felt confused when “in one seminar, this trainer instructed us to do something this way, while in another seminar, another instructed us to do the same thing in another different way”. She gave an example that teachers at some training session were advised not to teach children grammar but just sentence patterns. However, at another session “a trainer told us to draw out the grammar section and teach it separately” (Quy). Fourth, negative opinions about the training was also about the organisation of the training that caused inconvenience for participating trainees. The inconvenience was related to the timing and length of the training. Hong detailed how it was inconvenient for him to take part in the training at local venues. As he shared above, he attended the training during weekends during the school year and gathered longer time during summer holidays. He explained that in the summer, “we had only a month and a half while we had to spend one month for the training, then we could not do other things that we planned to do during the summer holiday”. In addition, the time and length of the training also caused his school timetables messy. He added:

Primary school teachers had to teach on Fridays while we were called to attend the training on Fridays too. It means we had to cancel Fridays' classes. For example, I had four classes on Fridays, then it means I had to cancel 4 classes for one single Friday alone. During the following months I had to make up for it. (Hong)

Fifth, negative points about participating in the training were also about teachers' personal feelings about the training. The personal feelings mentioned here were the feeling of resistance and the feeling of shame. Hoang reported the resistance to participate in the training that he witnessed himself. Although the training was for "key teachers" at schools in the district, but "I was not a key teacher. No-one wanted to go so I had to. In fact, I was forced to go, just like that" (Hoang). During the interview with him, Hoang repeatedly said things such as, "yes, I was forced to go", or "they ordered me to go there, then I just went there. Nobody wanted to go then I had to. That was it. Nobody wanted to go." Beside the feeling of resistance that he knew around himself, Hoang also mentioned the feeling of shame when participating in the training. The shame came from him as a teacher from the countryside attending the Project's regional training among other more knowledgeable colleagues from around the region. He described his experience being with other trainees:

There were times when they spoke, they used words or they said things, I just could not figure out what ... There were times when they used the teddy bear; they sang and passed it. I even did not know what they were talking about".

Hoang concluded, "it was a shame that I was supposed to attend the training for key teachers, but I didn't know anything".

In summary, this section has just covered what the teachers in this Phase 2 of the research shared about their in-service training experience with Project 2020. They talked in length about the training from the organisational details to the contents as well as their positive and negative feedback about the training. The teachers' experience about their in-service training also included the regular training by their local DOET, which will be described in the following section.

DOET's regular training

From what the participants talked about their training backgrounds, they also participated in regular in-service training implemented by the local DOET, which is summarised in Figure 4.8 below.

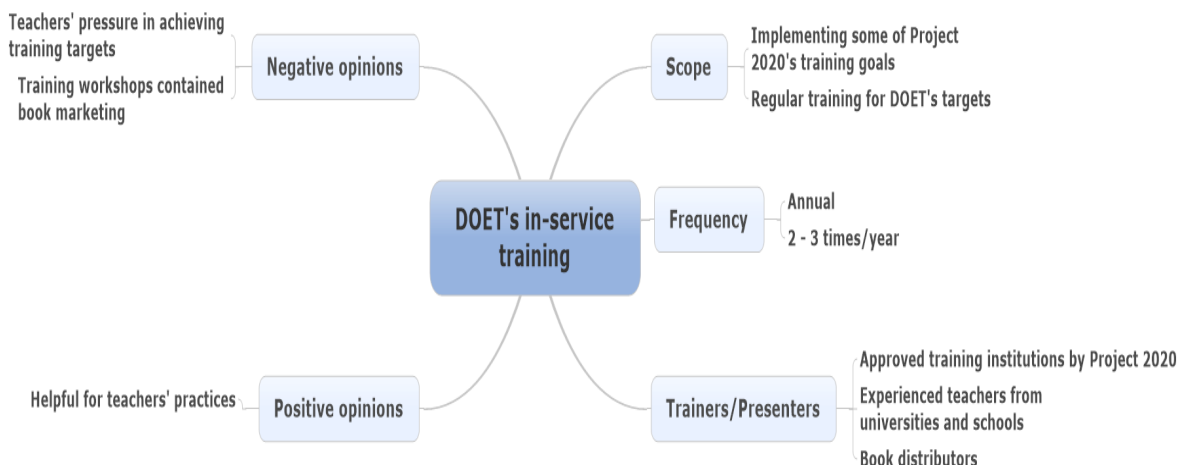


Figure 4.8. DOET's in-service training

As seen in figure 4.8 above, what the participants talked about DOET's in-service training contains five areas: (1) training scope, (2) frequency of the training, (3) training trainers or presenters, (4) Positive opinions about the training, and (5) negative opinions about the training. This section reports those areas in detail.

Firstly, the DOET's in-service training was comprised of two strands: DOET's implementation of some of the Project's training goals, and DOET's regular training for their targets. Concerning the implementation of some of the Project's training goals, the DOET also carried out training sessions on English teaching methods and teachers' English proficiency. As being introduced in the Introduction Chapter about Project 2020's re-training, Project 2020 aimed to train primary English teachers with primary English teaching methods and English language training to improve English teachers' English proficiency levels. Also, as described above about the Project's in-service training, Project 2020 carried out some major regional training sessions hosted by approved training institutions [universities and colleges]. Besides, Project 2020 also co-ordinated with local DOETs to implement training at local venues. From the interviews with the eight participants, it was learned that all of them had chances to take part in training by the DOET, which was informed by Hong that the training was "in the framework of the Project". With regard to the DOET's regular training, it was learned from Hoang, Anh, and Phuong that the DOET implemented their training regularly within their

targets, especially when they needed to inform English teachers of their educational and training policies in an academic year.

Secondly, concerning the frequency of the DOET's in-service training, it was learned that they held training courses or workshops very often. All eight participants expressed during interviews with them that they had many chances to participate in the DOET's training every year. As informed by Phuong that, "Every year, the provincial and district DOET let us participate in training courses and workshops". More specifically, Quy detailed that every year, the DOET organised training courses and workshops about "two to three times".

Thirdly, regarding the trainers or presenters of the DOET's in-service training, there were three groups of trainers or presenters mentioned. The first group of trainers and presenters were from approved training institutions by Project 2020, which were related to the training that the DOET co-ordinated with Project 2020 to implement the Project's training goals. As Hong said about the training he attended at the DOET's local venues that his trainers were from Can Tho University. Similarly, Quy informed that she attended DOET's training administered locally with trainers from Ho Chi Minh City. The second group of trainers and presenters were experienced teachers from universities or schools in the area invited by the DOET to carry out regular training workshops to serve DOET's educational and training goals. The third group of trainers or presenters were from or invited by (text) book distributors. As learned from Hoang and Anh, the DOET organised training workshops about initiatives in English teaching practices, especially to introduce new English textbooks that schools were to use or were encouraged to use.

Fourthly, in terms of the positive opinions that teachers had towards the DOET's in-service training, one major finding was that teachers thought the in-service training by the DOET was helpful for their teaching practices. Quy evaluated the helpfulness of the training that "In general, it was quite enough" for what she needed to carry out her English teaching. Having the same opinion, Phuong claimed that the DOET in-service training was useful for her in helping her to "carry out normal teaching practice".

Finally, regarding some negative opinions about the DOET's in-service training, there were two ideas from the participants. The first was the pressure teachers had when attempting to achieve the training targets. This was especially related to the English proficiency training that primary English teachers took. As introduced in the Introduction

Chapter, in order to be able to carry out Project 2020's primary English teaching goals effectively, Project 2020 required primary English teachers to achieve level B2 on the CEFR framework (see more in the Introduction Chapter). As a measure to accomplish the mission, primary English teachers would attend English proficiency training courses to train improve their English language skills. After the training, they were asked to take English proficiency tests, and the teachers' pressure originated from those English tests when they could not reach the required levels for them. Phuong shared her experience of the situation then when she was trained and then took the English proficiency tests again and again. She said, "oh, my goodness, we were really suffering a lot then. It was a lot of pressure. I just felt like I could cry, but cry without tears. Every time taking the test, I lacked 0.25 points and failed" (Phuong). The second negative point about the DOET in-service training was that some training sessions were not just about professional training. Instead, they also included English (text)book marketing from big book distributors. Several times during their interviews, Hoang and Anh mentioned training sessions with the presence of book distributors. Anh described her training experience when book distributors took much time for advertising their books. She said:

I see that there have been training sessions for teachers so far. However, in a training session for example, the part about English books' introduction is generally ... So, in general, this and that already take up most of the training time while the main focus is ...

In summary of this section, the participants in this Phase Two of the research had various chances to participate in in-service training, including training from the MOET's Project 2020 and the regular DOET's in-service training. The teachers expressed the helpfulness of these training forms towards their teaching practices. They also evaluated some weak points of these trainings. Through the interviews with them, the participants stated their expectations about professional training, which will be covered in the following section.

4.2.1.3. Teachers' expectations about professional training

In the pre-observation interviews with the participants, they expressed some expectations about professional training for them. Their expressions are summarised in Figure 4.9 below.

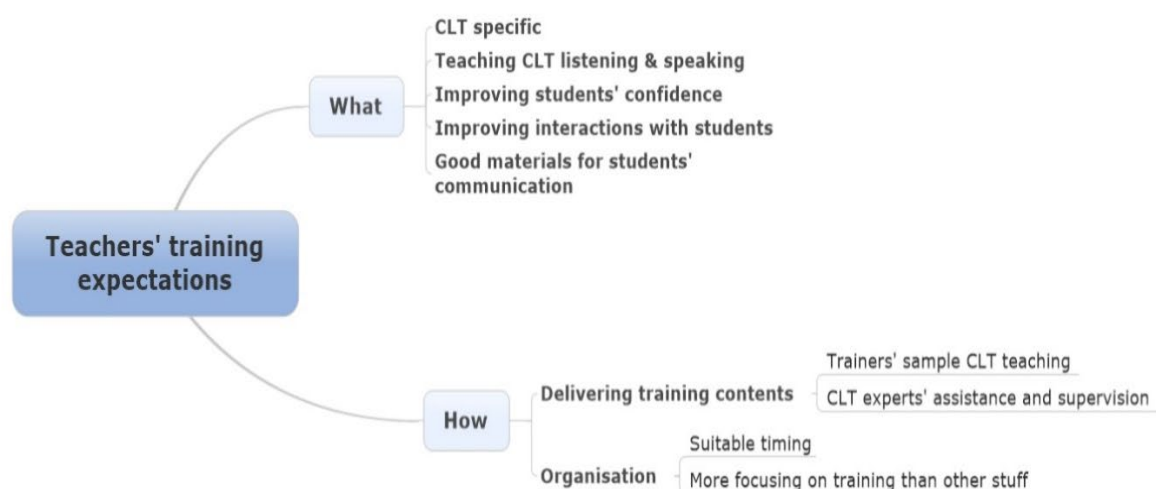


Figure 4.9. Teachers' expectations about professional training

From Figure 4.9, it can be seen that what teachers expected about their professional training was grouped into two main areas: the what (contents) and the how (how training should be organised). Each of the two areas will be described in detail in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, in terms of the first area of teachers' professional expectations, what training should be about, there were five contents mentioned in the teachers' answers: (1) CLT training, (2) teaching CLT listening and speaking skills, (3) improving students' confidence, (4) improving interactions with students, and (5) good materials for students' communication. The first content was about CLT training. An expectation from a participant was that there should be professional training sessions specifically about the CLT approach for primary English teachers like her. Quy informed that she had attended many training sessions about general teaching methods, such as "how to teach vocabulary, how to teach grammar or sentence patterns". However, she believed that "there was no specific one on CLT". The specificity of the CLT training was defined as that "they will tell me in detail how I need to do to teach using the CLT" (Quy). The second content of what professional training should be about was the expectation of training about how to teach the English listening and speaking skills following the direction of the CLT approach. Like Quy, Minh also attended many training workshops which he described that "they are just about methods". The word *methods* in his statement could be understood clearer when he added that "it should be more specific". He

expected to participate in a training session where he could “learn some method that mainly guides us to teach speaking and listening. That method should not focus too much on grammar structures, which will slow down students' ability to speak” (Minh). The third content in teachers’ training expectations was their hope to learn something that helped them to improve students’ confidence in the primary English classroom. Quy indicated the many in-service training sessions she attended that “I have been trained quite a lot”. However, she still had difficulties in her teaching practice. She described one of her difficulties as that “when I come back to the classroom, I find that my students are very shy. They don’t have confidence”. Based on that obstacle, she hoped that “I want something more so that I can ... As a teacher, I hope to have some effective method to help my students feel confident” (Quy). The fourth content about teachers’ training expectations was about hoping to improve teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Diem described her problem that she was “not able to create conditions for being close to the students, so teaching in the direction of the CLT is quite limited for me”, and that “I have limited abilities in communication with students”. In order to overcome her teaching practice difficulties, Diem wanted training workshops where “trainers should train me about the way how I can have more opportunities to interact more with students, and the way to create conditions that are closer and more comfortable with students”. The final content in the teachers’ expectations about professional training was related to teaching and learning materials. This expectation came from Minh who detailed his hope to learn from training sessions about “the good mainstream materials that are close to students”. He described that materials should be “about communication” and explained that “because if you want (your students) to communicate well, you need to have many student-friendly topics. Topics that are simple for students, not complicated for them. That is what I call open-source materials” (Minh).

Secondly, concerning the area of how training should be organised, there were two contents mentioned in the interviews with the participants: (1) how training contents should be delivered and (2) how professional training should be organised. With respect to the first content about the delivery of the training, teachers made two suggestions. The first suggestion was that trainers should do sample teaching following the CLT approach. This expectation was from the interview with Minh. However, Hoang may have described a common problem between them. He said at the Project’s regional training he attended,

among many things included in the training, “CLT was one of them”. However, he vaguely knew what it meant for him to carry out his practice, but “I could not picture the whole thing but vaguely ... it was like this like that” (Hoang). Another second suggestion was related to post-training assistance to teachers. With respect to that, Minh stated that “if (they) want us to teach well, teachers must understand it (CLT) more deeply”. According to him, that could be achieved by “having a person called mentor or supervisor who will guide us within a period of about two or three months. That person must be an expert (on CLT) so that he or she can guide me and help me understand the teaching approach” (Minh).

With reference to how professional training workshops should be organised, the participants mentioned two contents: (1) the timing of training and (2) major focus on training. First, regarding the training timing, teachers expected that professional training organisers should pay attention to the issues of when and how long of training sessions. As described in the previous sections about negative opinions about the in-service training, Hong’s problems were that the training messed up his school timetables when he was called to attend training on school days. He added that “I just felt it was too long when they gathered us for the training during the summer holiday. I just felt I had no time for other things. I almost had no summer holiday”. Another teacher facing the problem of the timing of the training was Hoang. His expressions were that too many training contents were crammed in an unreasonable amount of time made him feel the training was “suffocating”. The second content of the how professional training workshops should be organised in the teachers’ expectations was that training should really focus on training. This was related to Anh’s claim that many training sessions she attended were stuffed with book introductions from book distributors. According to her, things that were not really the focus of the training like “this and that already take up most of the training time”. The focus of the professional training should also serve right into teachers’ needs so that they could implement their practices effectively. Anh explained that “if they hold a training session this year with the focus of helping students to be able to speak English using some common sentences, then what sentences should be taught, or how real communicative situations are should be discussed”.

In conclusions, I have described the participants’ training backgrounds in section 2. Per the description, the teachers’ training included pre-service training and in-service training by Project 2020 as well as regular in-service training by the local DOET. The teachers also

expressed their opinions about the positive and negative points they noted about their training experiences. They also expressed their expectations about professional training so that they could learn things they needed to apply into their practices. The pre-observation interviews with the participants also aimed to explore their understanding CLT and their CLT pedagogies. These contents will be reported in the next section.

4.2.2. Teachers' understanding CLT, their attitudes & claims of their CLT practices

This section synthesised the participants' responses about how they understood CLT, their favours of the CLT and their claims about their CLT teaching practices.

4.2.2.1. Teachers' understanding of CLT

This sub-section is aimed to report the teachers' understanding of CLT. The information contained in the interviews with them regarding this topic was analysed and grouped into two dimensions: (1) their understanding of the communicative competence and (2) their understanding of CLT pedagogies, which are summarised in Figure 4.10 below. These will be reported in detail in this sub-section.

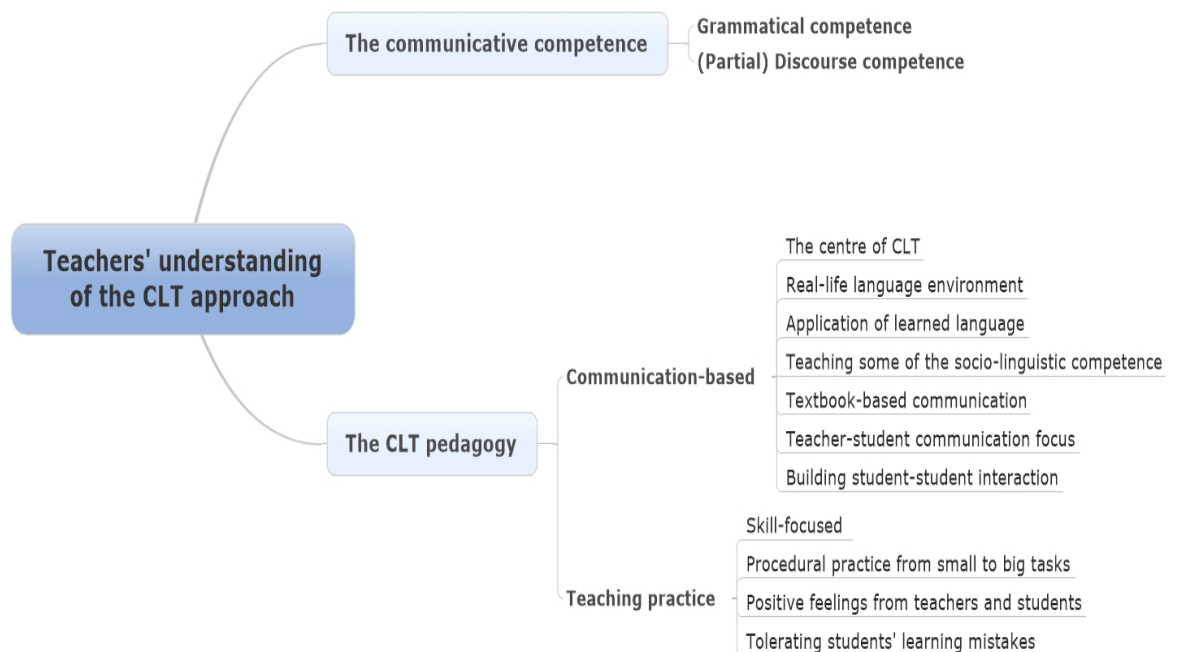


Figure 4.10. Teachers' understanding of CLT

4.2.2.2. *The communicative competence*

When the teachers were asked how they defined the communicative competence, their responses contained two kinds of competence: the grammatical competence and part of the discourse competence.

Firstly, according to some teachers, the communicative competence was the grammatical competence. They simply defined that it was students' abilities to use vocabulary and sentence patterns that they were taught (in class) to communicate. This way of definition was from two teachers. In Hoang's opinions, the communicative competence was that "students can use vocabulary or sentence patterns they have learned to apply in real life". Similarly, Phuong thought that the communicative competence was students' abilities of "communicating through a topic of a lesson". She detailed that from a lesson, she would "draw which sentence patterns to teach students. For example, in today's lesson, the focus is on helping students to ask questions based on a sentence pattern ... Each lesson helps students to practice sentence pattern/s so that they can apply in the reality" (Phuong). According to this teacher, if students could ask and answer questions based on some certain sentence pattern of a lessons, that was their communicative competence.

Secondly, the communicative competence was also defined as part of the discourse competence. Accordingly, the communicative competence was defined as students' general abilities to apply what they have learned to exchange information to communicate. This definition was shared by the other six teachers. Diem gave the definition of the term as "the ability to talk with one another in class during lessons. When a friend asks a question, the listener can answer it, can express his ideas so that the interlocutor can understand what he means". Hong gave a similar definition with some extension that the communicative competence was students' abilities to "make conversations, ask and answer questions in English with their learned language". Other teachers generally defined the communicative competence as the ability to understand and exchange information with others. This way of defining the term was shared by the other four teachers.

In short, the participants of this Phase 2 of the research defined the communicative competence as the grammatical competence and some of the discourse competence.

How their understanding of the communicative competence affected their beliefs of CLT pedagogies will be covered in the following section.

4.2.2.3. CLT pedagogies in teachers' understanding

As shown in figure 5.5, CLT pedagogies in the participants' understanding were grouped into two categories: (1) CLT pedagogies as a communication-based language pedagogy and (2) teachers' beliefs of how CLT practices should be.

In the first category, CLT pedagogies in the participants' understanding was a communication-based language pedagogy. There were seven contents included in this category. CLT pedagogies are:

- (1) with communication as the centre of the pedagogies;
- (2) with creating real-life language environment in the classroom;
- (3) with students' application of learned language;
- (4) with teaching some of the socio-linguistic competence;
- (5) with textbook-based communication;
- (6) with a focus on the teacher-student communication;
- (7) with building student-student interaction.

Firstly, with regard to the first content in the category, the teachers placed communication at the centre of CLT pedagogies. All teachers stressed the important position of communication when talking about their understanding of CLT pedagogies. For example, Quy expressed her understanding that "teaching following the CLT means we focus on communication". With a similar viewpoint of the communication focus, Diem detailed her opinions that in the direction of CLT pedagogies, students "can communicate ... they can talk with their friends naturally (in English)". While Diem's description of the communication focus was somewhat limited within the classroom, Thanh expanded the communication scope to outside the classroom. He pointed out that teaching in the direction of CLT meant "when our students step outside the classroom, they can be able to communicate (in English)". He also included the communication was not only among teachers and students or students and students inside classrooms, but the communication focus should also aim at students' abilities to communicate with "native/ English speakers" as interlocutors (Thanh).

Secondly, in terms of the second content in the category, the participants believed that the communication focus of CLT pedagogies should be implemented through creating a real-life language environment in the classroom. This belief was common between Hoang and Phuong. Hoang expressed his understanding of CLT that “I think when I teach, I create the language environment which is like the reality outside so that students can use what they have learned to communicate”. Similarly, Phuong stated her opinions that “I think communication ... It should be like in real life so that students feel natural or comfortable to talk”.

Thirdly, in the participants’ opinions in the third content of the category, the CLT communication-based pedagogy should be reflected through students’ abilities to apply what they have learned in class to communicate. There were three teachers who shared this similar thinking. Diem was one who thought that teaching following CLT meant that teachers should teach the way that students could “apply (what they learned) in everyday conversations”. Similarly, Hoang, who was previously mentioned in the second content, believed that as a CLT teacher, he should create a real-life language environment for his students to apply what they learned in class to communicate. With more details, Quy believed that in the CLT approach, communication was the process and also the product of the teaching practice. She explained that “teaching following CLT is that we teach students through our communication with them”. The communication was carried out between teachers and students through the channels of the listening and speaking skills. Eventually, students “can use it (the communication between teachers and students during teaching and listening) to make it their own abilities to listen and speak” (Quy).

Fourthly, the communication focus of the CLT pedagogy category was also reflected in the teaching of part of the socio-linguistic competence. This way of understanding originated from Anh. Although during the interviews, none of the eight teachers mentioned the socio-linguistic competence when they were asked to define the communicative competence, Anh reflected some of this kind of competence in her description of CLT pedagogies. According to her, she believed that one of the tasks in teaching a language following CLT included teaching “how that language is used in communicative situations depending on particular situations”.

Fifthly, reflected in the fifth content of the category of the CLT communication-based pedagogy, the communication shown through the participants’ descriptions of their

understanding was the textbook-based communication. Having mentioned above that in the participants' opinions, communication was the centre of CLT pedagogies, this kind of communication was set in the frames of their English textbooks. This means that the material or information for the communication was mostly from within textbooks. As Anh detailed her belief about CLT teaching practice, she described how the communication focus was carried out, and that process reflected a textbook lesson. She said, "students can understand a short dialogue about everyday communication topics. Then they will listen and speak. Regarding speaking, they mainly learn some simple sentences (sentence patterns)" (Anh). Another participant who shared the idea with Anh was Diem. As she mentioned the communication focus, she revealed that the information for the communication was from sentence patterns from textbooks. She stated that "for sentence patterns, in addition to that students can use them to do exercises (in the books), they can also use them to communicate" (Diem).

Sixthly and seventhly, the final two contents of the communication focus of the CLT pedagogy in the teachers' understanding were the priority of the teacher-student communication and building the student-student interaction. Quy prioritised the communication between the teacher and students in CLT pedagogies. She expressed that "teaching following CLT is that we teach students through our communication with them". While Quy placed the teacher-student communication at an important position in CLT pedagogies, Minh stressed the importance of building up student-student interaction in the classroom. According to him, teaching following CLT was that "when we go into the classroom, we can guide or lead our students towards the ability that helps them interact better with one another".

Having been reported so far in the first part of this section was the first category of the teachers' understanding of CLT pedagogies, which was the communication-based pedagogy with seven contents. The second category of CLT pedagogies was the teaching practice that teachers believed it should be. As seen from figure 5.5, there were four contents of teachers' opinions regarding this category. These contents include:

- CLT teaching practices:
- should be skill-focused;
 - should be procedural practice from small to big tasks;
 - creates positive feelings for teachers and students;
 - should tolerate students' learning mistakes;

The first content in CLT teaching practice category in the participants' understanding was that it should be a skill-focused teaching practice. A CLT skill-focused teaching practice was understood as "something contrary to conventional practices. CLT is the teaching that does not focus on knowledge, knowledge in the classroom or focusing on vocabulary or focusing on grammar" (Thanh). More specifically, there were five teachers who detailed the CLT skill-focused teaching practice as one that focused on teaching the four English language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hong answered the question about his understanding of CLT that "it (CLT) means we will mainly teach (language) skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, in which listening and speaking skills are the most important". Another way of understanding matching Hong's was from Anh. She also thought that in CLT practices, she should focus more on teaching the English listening and speaking skills and focus less on the reading and writing skills. She said:

"At school, I mainly teach students listening and speaking because at the primary education, these two skills of English are focused more ... We also teach them reading and writing skills but time for them is less, for these two skills do not take important positions". (Anh)

Other three teachers did not mention the teaching of the whole four language skills, but instead just focusing on the teaching of the speaking skills or a combination of the listening and speaking skills. Minh was the one whose understanding that he should focus on teaching students English speaking skills. He stated his understanding that "when we go into the classroom, we can lead our students towards the ability to speak better ... It (CLT) helps students to have good speaking skills" (Minh). Another teacher who had the same opinion as Minh was Diem. She also agreed that "in my opinions, teaching English following CLT means that we mainly teach in a way that helps students to develop their speaking skills" (Diem).

The second content in the category was that in the participants' understanding, a CLT teaching practice should be a procedural practice in which teachers carry out their classroom procedures from small to big tasks. There were two teachers who thought that they should carry out their CLT practices as a procedural one. Phuong described her understanding of the practice:

We need to follow a procedure such as starting from (previous lesson) revision, then playing game/s and then coming to (learning) sentences. The procedure

should go gradually or step by step. Then in the end, we will check if they can speak; and if they can then it is already good.

With a similar direction of understanding, Anh implied the teaching procedure she should follow was the order of textbook activities. Accordingly, she described that:

Students can understand a short dialogue about everyday communication topics (a dialogue usually placed at the beginning of a lesson in her textbooks). Then they will listen and speak (listening to the dialogue through the recording, and students' practice saying the dialogue). Regarding speaking, they mainly learn some simple sentences (sentence patterns drawn out from the dialogue)". (Anh)

The third content in the teachers' understanding of the CLT practice was that teachers and students would have positive feelings during lessons navigated within CLT practices. Minh expressed that by carrying out the purpose of teaching students to speak English well, a CLT practice should bring teachers feelings of being "more successful in their English teaching when their students can communicate well in English and in life". Similarly, Hoang also expressed that CLT practices helped him witness students' success in learning English, and that made him feel happy as an English teacher. He said, "they (some students) learn very well and speak very fluently. It is something that makes me feel happy" (Hoang). If Hoang and Minh focused on how teachers felt in the CLT practice, Phuong concentrated her opinions on how students should feel in a CLT classroom. When she contrasted her contemporary practice with a traditional one, she used words such as "natural" or "comfortable" to describe how students would feel in a CLT classroom compared to feeling "shy or timid" in a traditional classroom (Phuong).

The fourth and also the final content in the category of CLT practices was how teachers should treat students' learning mistakes. There was only one teacher who mentioned this matter in her description. Phuong, who was just mentioned above about students' feelings in a CLT classroom, stated her opinions that in order to help students have those positive comfortable feelings in class, teachers should not correct students' mistakes all the time. She explained that "when they speak, they may make mistakes. We only correct the mistakes if those are big or serious. If the mistakes are small, then we should just let it go. It should not be that teachers correct all the student's mistakes" (Phuong).

In summary, I have reported how the participants understood the CLT approach in this sub-section. Their understanding was reported in terms of the two categories of the communicative competence and CLT pedagogies. As the teachers mentioned traditional practices to compare with CLT practices in their interviews, the following section will cover the participants' attitudes and favours of the traditional versus CLT approaches.

4.2.3. Teachers' views towards CLT and traditional teaching approaches

During the pre-observation interviews, the participants expressed their understanding of CLT. They also showed their views of CLT versus traditional approaches. Through their viewpoints, all participants favoured CLT compared to traditional methods. Their views were classified into two categories: views of CLT and views of traditional teaching methods, which are summarised in Figure 4.11 below.

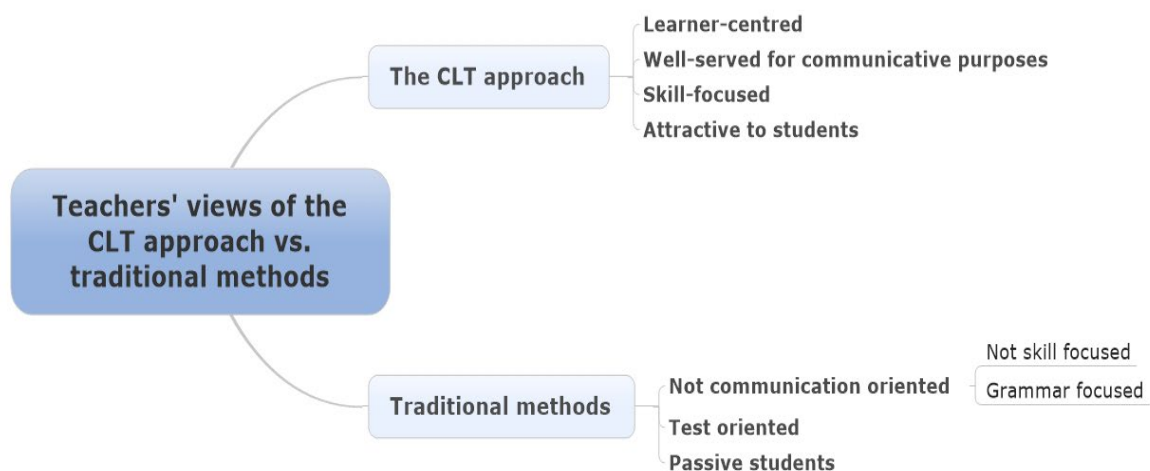


Figure 4.11. Teachers' views of CLT and traditional methods

4.2.3.1. Teachers' views about CLT

All eight participants expressed that teaching English following CLT was better than that of traditional methods. As seen from Figure 4.11, the teachers gave four reasons why CLT was better. The reasons were that:

- (1) CLT was learner-centred;
- (2) CLT was well-served for communicative purposes;
- (3) CLT was skill focused;
- (4) CLT was attractive to students.

Firstly, in the teachers' opinions, CLT was better than traditional methods because it was learner-centred. There were two teachers who mentioned this concept in their understanding. Minh stated that "I feel I like the new method (CLT) and it is better". Similarly, Anh expressed her opinions that "I think it is much better". Explaining his statement, Minh added that in CLT practices:

... students will be more centred. I can also transfer knowledge better when students can communicate freely and always in the direction of speaking English, communicating through speaking and listening. It is not that teachers just teach, and students just listen, which students are not centred but teachers are.

Using her own experience to explain her views, Anh informed that in her CLT practice, classroom activities organised were "student-centred" and thus "students can develop and show their abilities". That was why according to her, CLT was "much different from and much better than traditional teaching methods" (Anh).

Secondly, the teachers thought that CLT was better than traditional methods because it was well-served for communicative purposes. There were four teachers who talked about this reason in favour of CLT. To illustrate the better side of CLT in the scope of serving communicative purposes, Hoang compared him in the past with his students at the time of the interview with him. He detailed his learning background as a school and college student before. That was when he experienced learning English during the prime time of traditional methods. He described how difficult or even not possible for him to get his messages across through English oral communication. He said, "in the past, I learned English, but I couldn't speak the language". Compared to the traditional methods in serving learners' communicative purposes, Hoang thought "I see that CLT is better with this direction". He gave proof of that by mentioning his students. He stated "my students participated in an English Speaking Contest the other day. I saw that when foreign English teachers asked them, they responded very well. It is only by CLT that we have such students" (Hoang). Another teacher who mentioned the matter of communicative purposes was Quy. Using the targets of the primary English curriculum to mention the needs of teaching students to be able to communicate in English, Quy stressed the important position of CLT. She explained "we are targeting students for what they can do when they finish learning English. The targets include that they can

communicate. So, I think that teaching English in the direction of CLT is much better than it was before. If we want to achieve the goals of primary English, then we need to follow CLT” (Quy). Meanwhile, the last teacher - Hong, used real-life communicative needs to illustrate his favour of CLT. According to him, students should learn English not only because it was a school subject, but also for “they can go out to watch movies, read books or newspapers, or speak with foreigners”. Going further into the students’ future communicative needs, he added:

Most jobs now require applicants to be fluent in foreign languages such as English and computer science. Therefore, it is necessary to learn English a lot, to communicate a lot to meet the needs of employers. Then I see that learning in the CLT direction is good for it. (Hong)

Also, Thanh had a similar idea about the long-term effects of learning English communicatively. He stated “now English is needed in every area, and if you want to go to work, you need to be able to communicate in English well. If we follow CLT, students can be able to communicate”.

Thirdly, in the teachers’ understanding, CLT was better than traditional methods because CLT was skill focused, and thus helped develop students’ language skills better. CLT skill-based pedagogies were reported in the above section that teachers mentioned the teaching of the four language skills with a focus on listening and speaking skills. There were four teachers who talked about the aspect of the language skill focus and students’ improved language skills. Minh simply linked CLT with students’ abilities to speak English. Accordingly, because in his opinions CLT should focus on the teaching of speaking skills, then “this approach can help students develop their speaking abilities better” (Minh). Like Minh, Hoang expressed his direction about guiding students to speak English in his beliefs about CLT. In his opinions, by following CLT, “it is the best way to let students show that the learned language is a living language and it is useful. Like I said earlier, it is the usefulness that makes students feel ‘ah, I learn English and I can speak English’” (Minh). Meanwhile, Anh mentioned that she focused mainly on the teaching of listening and speaking skills following CLT. As a result, students “can be more confident in exchanging information with foreigners. They can also communicate with friends and teachers” (Anh). Similarly, Diem expressed that “in my opinions, if we can teach following CLT (focusing on language skills), students will be better (communicators)”.

Finally, the participants thought that CLT was better than traditional methods because it was attractive to students. The attractiveness of CLT, according to Phuong, came from its communication focus. She explained that everything done in the classroom was to “support for the main thing – communication, so that students feel confident to talk. Therefore, I see that the current way of teaching attracts students more”. Also, the CLT attractiveness to students came from its learner-centredness according to Anh. She repeatedly mentioned students’ confidence in participating in communication with foreigners, teachers, and friends. She concluded that students “are more confident because the activities I organise in class are student-centred. Students can develop and show their abilities” (Anh).

4.2.3.2. Traditional teaching methods

All participants showed that they did not favour traditional teaching methods in their opinions. From figure 5.6, it can be seen that there are three main reasons for the teachers’ thoughts. The reasons were that the traditional methods were:

- (1) not communication oriented;
- (2) test oriented;
- (3) with passive students.

Firstly, the participants did not favour traditional methods because they were not communication oriented. This aspect was reflected through two details of no skill focus and a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary of traditional methods. As a result, students learning English with traditional methods could not be able to communicate. Five teachers used their own English learning experience in the past to demonstrate what they said. First, regarding the matter of no skill focus in traditional methods, two teachers drew what they knew from their past learnings. Hong experienced learning English when “I didn't know much about the skills of listening, speaking, reading or writing”. Similarly, Hoang described his learning experience with traditional methods without language skill training. He was surprised later that he could not understand others speaking English. He explained that “it was because I didn’t listen much in English before, just listened to my English teachers” (Hoang). Second, concerning the grammar and vocabulary strong focus in traditional methods, four teachers corroborated their claims with their own situations. Diem compared CLT and traditional methods and concluded that “we should not strongly focus on grammar like when I learned

in the past". With the same experience, Phuong described that "in the past, we mainly learned grammar. When you came to class, you only did the tense conjugation". Meanwhile, Quy detailed her English classroom routines when she was a student. Her descriptions included that "teachers just wrote English words and then their meanings in Vietnamese on the board. Then we were asked to repeat by reading aloud up and down, then up and down" (Quy). Hong also confirmed the grammar and vocabulary focus of the traditional methods. He said, "I mainly went to class to learn grammar and vocabulary". As the main focus of traditional methods was grammar and vocabulary, the participants revealed their failure in English communication despite learning it at school. Hoang and Phuong shared their English learning outcomes with the traditional methods. Hoang stated, "in the past I learned English, but I couldn't speak the language. I learned a lot but couldn't speak anything". Phuong confirmed again that "back then when I graduated, I wasn't able to say anything (in English). I couldn't say anything".

Secondly, in teachers' opinions, they did not favour traditional methods because those methods were only test oriented. One teacher mentioned this aspect of the focus of teaching and learning English with traditional methods. The teacher described his years at school learning English just to take and pass tests. He said, "students like me in the past just learned (English) so that we could take and pass exams. I mainly went to class to learn grammar and vocabulary to take tests and exams" (Hong).

Finally, making students passive was one of the teachers' opinions about traditional methods. There was also one teacher who talked about this aspect. Experiencing traditional methods in the past as a student and then as a teacher of English, Anh concluded that "I observed that students in the past were very passive".

In summary, this section has reported the participants' sharing about their views of CLT compared with traditional methods. Accordingly, the teachers showed their favours of CLT for its positive effects on both students and teachers. They also shared their experiences with the traditional methods and stated some negative points of these methods. As the teachers' positions were that they stood on the side with CLT, they were asked if they used CLT pedagogies in their classrooms and how they carried out their practices. The following section will report teachers' responses to these matters.

4.2.4. Teachers' CLT practices in their descriptions

This section reports how teachers described their CLT teaching practices based on their claims in the pre-observation interviews. Teachers' responses about their practices was summarised into eight aspects. They are:

- (1) Avoiding using old methods;
- (2) Creating good learning environment;
- (3) Procedural practice;
- (4) Promoting students' speaking skills;
- (5) Teachers' use of L2;;
- (6) Using ICT and other teaching aids and resources;
- (7) Promoting student-student interaction;
- (8) Limited CLT practice.

These aspects will be described in detail in the following parts.

Firstly, avoiding using old methods was the first aspect mentioned in the teachers' CLT practices. "Old methods" was the original words that a participant used to refer to traditional methods in English language teaching. According to this teacher, he believed he applied CLT his practice "very often" (Hong). He informed that he would not use means of the old methods in his classes. Specifically, the old methods in his description were the reading aloud technique, or teachers writing on the board and students copying down. Instead, he used something new to engage his students into learning activities. He stated:

"I think that I am using new methods in my teaching practice. There is nothing like reading aloud or write on the board for students to copy down. There is nothing like that. I always try to do everything I can to motivate students, to make them feel excited to learn". (Hong)

The second aspect in the participants' claims of their CLT practices was creating a good environment for learning. Regarding this aspect, the teachers stated that they did three things to contribute to the good learning environment:

- (1) real-life orientation;

(2) playing to learn strategy;

(3) creating competition to attract students to learn.

First, there were three teachers who mentioned the real-life orientation in their practices. For Hoang, real-life orientation meant that he linked classroom lessons with students' personal meanings or information. He gave an example of how he did with the real-life orientation:

For example, for their break time, I will ask "What do you do during your break time?" Then they may say "We have a chat; we eat or play shuttlecock kicking". Sometimes some of them ask me: "Teacher, we want to play shuttlecock kicking. How do we say that in English?" Then I provide them with vocabulary in English. I will talk to them about shuttlecock kicking. (Hoang)

However, Hoang admitted that situations like that do not take place often in class. He added, "but there are only some good students who ask me. They ask and I will tell them. There are many students that just sit there and repeat whatever I say". Like Hoang, Anh also carried out the real-life orientation in her practice by teaching textbook lesson contents first. At the end of textbook sessions, she would ask her students to replace the textbook contents with their own information. She described how she did:

When I am about to teach teaching a sentence pattern which the purpose of the sentence pattern is to teach students about lessons in a school day. There is provided information in the English textbooks for students to answers. Those are just suggestions from the textbooks. Students will practice familiarizing themselves with the sentence pattern first. At the end of the lesson, they must be able to talk about lessons they have on their weekdays' schedules. Later, if someone asks them about lessons they have on some day, they should know how to respond. (Anh)

Another teacher who came up with real-life orientation in his practice was Minh, which meant he created an actual context to link with the concepts being taught. He detailed his example:

For example, when I taught Grade 3 previously the sentence 'May I go out?', I did not necessarily have to teach it with students sitting in the classroom. I told my students to go outside the classroom to let them practice outside. What it

meant by going out, coming in, standing up and sitting down. I think it will be easier for them to apply in real life than letting them learn in the classroom.

Second, to create a good learning environment, the participants claimed to use the playing to learn strategy. This means that they engaged students to learn through playing games. There were two teachers who mentioned using this strategy. Minh organised games with the intention to help student memorise what they learned better. He gave an example of how it was done:

After completing a lesson, I can organise a game ... At first, games are about vocabulary, but later, I insert some sentence patterns into the games so that students can play with one another or role play ... I can put long sentence patterns in the games so that students can remember while playing. Then after that, students will remember those patterns naturally. They just remember without having to try to learn. While playing the games, they can remember sentence patterns, then later they can talk with each other better.

While Minh focused on games to help with students' better memory, Hong concentrated on students' positive feelings in learning through playing games. According to him, he organised games to motivate students and provoke excitement in the classroom. He said:

I create conditions for students to play more than learning ... I always try to do everything I can to motivate students, to make them feel excited to learn. It is because students in the country like mine like playing more than serious learning. They like learning English a lot because I let them play games, watch videos, or listen to music, sing and then read along in my class. They only like to learn through those. (Hong)

Third in the aspect of creating good learning environment was the practice to attract students to learn. Accordingly, one teacher talked about her practice in which she created competition among students individually or in teams for them to learn. Phuong thought that when she let students compete with one another through playing games, it would stimulate students to learn with excitement and thus she would teach better. She said, "I must teach a class period in a way to attract students. If students feel that they are interested, then I feel like it more and more and thus teach better".

Thirdly, a procedural practice was reflected through the participants' description of their teaching practices. There were three teachers who described their practices in which teachers carry out lessons' contents through a step-by-step practice from small to big tasks. Anh's and Phuong's procedural practices were mentioned above in section 3.1.2 when they described their understanding of CLT. Another teacher added to the list was Quy. Her description of how she carried out a lesson showed that she followed a certain procedure. She stated:

When teaching a dialogue, first I let students listen to the dialogue. Then I let them listen and guess the meaning of the dialogue based on the vocabulary they have learned (pre-teaching of vocabulary prior to the dialogue). After that, I will ask them to practice by role-playing together that dialogue. Besides, I will ask students questions about the dialogue to check their levels of understanding it. The next step is that I will ask students or elicit to draw out the sentence pattern (from the dialogue) that they will learn that day. After that, I organise activities for students to practice that sentence pattern in the direction of communication.

Fourthly, promoting students' speaking skills was the fourth aspect in the teachers' teaching practice agendas. There were two teachers who explicitly mentioned their priorities for students to speak English in their practices. Quy thought that the speaking section of a lesson (in the primary English textbooks, that part is called *Let's Talk* where students would practice speaking English based on the lesson's sentence pattern/s) was where she could apply CLT the most. She expressed "I apply CLT during the time I let students practice their speaking. Usually I will have students practice speaking in pairs" (Quy). Prioritising students' speaking was also on Hoang's agenda. He shared that it was not easy to get students to speak because as he stated, "many students cannot learn (cannot speak English)", and that he tried to help them the most he could. His measure was that "I try to help them by eliciting. It means that during the teaching process, I try to elicit or prompt so that they can speak some more" (Hoang).

Fifthly, another part of the participants' CLT practices in their descriptions was the use of the target language - English (L2) - by the teachers. Accordingly, the teachers thought that they should use English in the classroom as much as possible. The reason was because English

teachers were the most possible source of the target language that students were exposed to. Anh was the one who specifically discussed this matter. She explained her practice that:

If I teach following the CLT approach, the language I use in the classroom is English. That is so that students have the opportunity to listen and to speak or to understand in English if any, and then they can gradually get used to the classroom language.

Sixthly, CLT practices in the teachers' claims also included the use of teaching supporting means. These included the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as teaching aids or other resources into practices. There was one teacher who mentioned this aspect of CLT practices. He was also the one who was mentioned previously that he tried to avoid using "old methods" in his practice. Hong's measures were to apply ICT into his classrooms. The application included the use of some software to assist with students' English listening. He detailed:

I do not ask students to open their English textbooks and read after me. I may type a lesson (dialogue) on a software and save it with a different accent. Then I turn it on for students to listen and read along.

In addition to applying ICT, Hong also reported to use other teaching aids and resources such as pictures, video clips in his lessons. His avoidance of old methods was that "the way I do it is by using pictures, video images". In his belief, using those means was innovative and part of CLT pedagogies. He stated, "they like English a lot because I let them play games, watch videos or listen to music, sing and then read along in my class" (Hong).

Seventhly, the participants projected their CLT practices through the aspect of promoting student-student interaction in the classroom. It was done by implementing students' peer evaluation in doing learning tasks. This kind of evaluation was recommended by the MOET's directions (This will be mentioned more in following chapters). Some teachers believed that peer evaluation encouraged student-student interaction because students must pay attention to their friends' performances so that they could give suitable comments. Quy reported to use this measure to boost the student-student interaction in her classes. She detailed a speaking activity where students practiced some sentence patterns in pairs. She said:

They practice asking for the given information like that. Then after practicing, I will call some pairs or groups of friends to do it again in front of the class so that their other friends will listen and give comments on their performance about whether they do it right or not.

Finally, the eighth aspect in the teachers' descriptions of their CLT practices was the limitation of their practice. There was one teacher who discussed this aspect. According to Diem, CLT pedagogies could only be applied in a limited way in her situation due to the time allocation. She reported that:

I think I am applying it (the CLT pedagogy) but just with simple things. For example, when I come into class, I interact with students at the beginning of the class, such as greetings with simple questions like asking "How are you?", questions about the children themselves. There are just a few simple questions, not many because the time in class is not much and I have to cover a lot of lesson contents.

To sum up for this section, the teachers in this research reported that they applied CLT pedagogies into their teaching practices. They described how they implemented the CLT approach in their classrooms during the pre-observation interviews with each of them. Their descriptions were reported in detail above.

4.2.5. Summary

In this chapter, I have reported the findings of the pre-observation interviews with the participants. This first round of Phase 2 set the light on knowing better about the research participants regarding their training backgrounds and their understanding of CLT as well as how they claimed to apply CLT pedagogies into their practices. How the participants actually implemented CLT practices in their classrooms will be revealed in the following chapter regarding the report of the in-class observation findings.

4.3. FINDINGS OF THE IN-CLASS OBSERVATIONS – TEACHERS' ACTUAL PRACTICES

Introduction

In the previous section, findings about the participants' training backgrounds, understanding of the CLT approach and claims of their CLT teaching practices in the pre-observation interviews have been reported. This chapter is designed to present the findings

of the in-class observations conducted during teachers' real class times. The reality of how teachers actually carried out their practices will be presented. There are two major parts in this chapter. The first part is about the classroom activities, which provides findings about what activities teachers used and how they conducted them. The second part will be findings about the classroom language in the teachers' classes, which contains information about the use of L1 and L2, the information gap as well as speech, discourse, and language form.

4.3.1. Classroom activities

The first major part in this chapter is the findings about classroom activities in the participants' actual practices. The findings are grouped into six categories, summarised in the following figure.

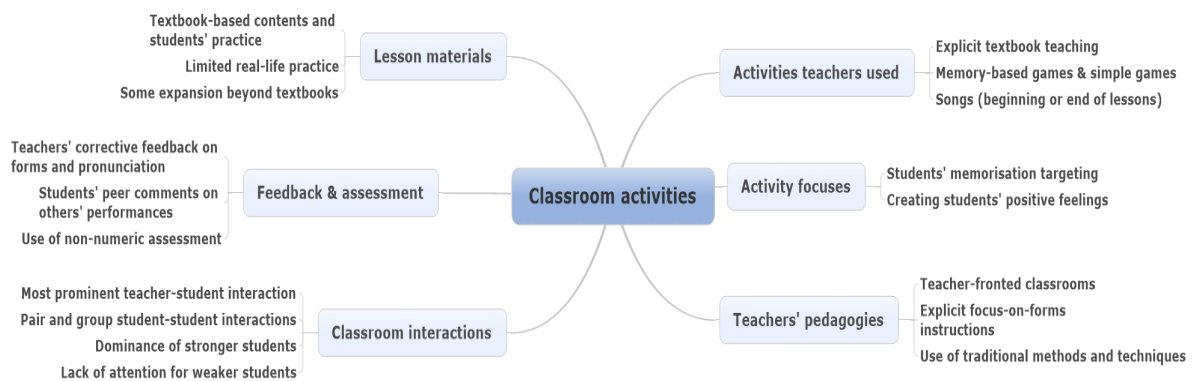


Figure 4.12. The classroom activities in the teachers' actual practices

As seen from Figure 4.12, the six categories of the classroom activities include:

- (1) Activities teachers used;
- (2) Activity focuses;
- (3) Teachers' pedagogies;
- (4) Classroom interactions;
- (5) Feedback and assessment;
- (6) Lesson materials.

The above six categories will be reported in detail in the following sub-sections.

4.3.1.1. Activities teachers used

The first category in the classroom activities is the activities the teachers used in their lessons. From the summary in Figure 4.12, there are three aspects in this category including:

- (1) Explicit textbook teaching;
- (2) Use of memory-based games and simple games;
- (3) Use of songs.

Firstly, explicit textbook teaching was a prominent aspect in the first category of activities teachers used. This means that most of the teachers' classroom activities were based on the textbooks' lesson structures and activities. Among eight teachers, there were seven who explicitly followed the textbooks' activities and orders (one other teacher who did not completely follow his textbook will be mentioned later in section 4.3.1.6 about the lesson materials). From the real-time observations, the seven teachers literally used and taught the activities in the textbooks following the textbooks' orders. Some of those activities were displayed in Figure 4.13 below. The activities as observed were: *Look, Listen and Repeat*, *Point and Say*, *Read and Write*, *Let's Talk*, *Listen and Tick*. The teachers gradually went through the textbooks' lesson activities one by one in the same order as they appeared on the textbooks. In each class observed, students had their textbooks open in front of them. Some teachers showed the parts they taught on the boards or screens through the use of projectors or televisions. Some others used the electronic versions of the textbooks and showed them on the screen of interactive boards. The teachers either used long rulers to point at the lessons on the board/screen, or used pens designed for interactive boards to control what they wanted to do on the boards. When the teachers taught or explained some lesson content, students would look at the content shown on the board and listen carefully to what their teachers taught them to learn. At other times when students were asked to do exercises or practice, they would either look at the contents shown on the boards, or most of the time they would look at the parts in their textbooks.

Figure 4.13 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.13. A collation of screenshots about teachers' explicit textbook teaching

Secondly, use of memory-based games and simple games was another prominent aspect in the category of activities teachers used. This means that teachers in the research used games to strengthen or target students' memorisation of the lesson parts they were delivering. They also used simple games to let students practice what was being taught. From the observations, all eight teachers used these games in their classes. The games teachers used consisted of *What's missing*, *What and Where*, *Guessing game*, *Slap the board*, *Hot seat*, *Jumbled words*, *Chain game*. One memory-based game that most teachers used was *What's missing* (also called *What and Where* in one class). In the classes of Anh, Minh, Quy and Phuong for example, this game was used to check students' memorisation of the newly taught vocabulary or to review vocabulary from previous lessons. In this game, at the beginning, the

teachers would display all of the words on the screen. Then students were asked to try to remember the words with the teachers' time setting. The teachers would gradually take one word off the screens, and asked students which word was missing from the screens. Teachers would call on some volunteering students or teams to answer. Students with correct answers would earn stars or points marked on the board, or stickers or paper flowers for their teams. The game went on until the teachers and students went through all of the words displayed. A collation of screenshots of this game from two classes was shown in Figure 4.14 below.

Figure 4.14 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.14. A collation of memory-based game named What's missing

Although other games such as *Guessing*, *Slap the board*, *Hot seat*, *Jumbled words*, *Chain game* had different names or played differently, they all were targeted at students' memorisation of the lessons being taught.

Thirdly, the final aspect in the category of activities teachers used is the use of songs in the teachers' classes. There are three details in this aspect: (1) what songs were used, (2) the purpose of use and (3) how those songs were used. First, regarding what songs were used, of the six teachers who used songs in their classes, three teachers used songs from outside

the textbooks while the other three used ones included in their textbooks. The songs included in the textbooks related to the textbook lessons' contents. Other songs from outside the textbooks were somewhat related to the lessons. Second, in terms of the purpose of use, five of the teachers used songs to start or finish their lessons. One other teacher used it merely because it was in the textbook. In the classes of Anh, Minh and Quy, they used songs at the beginning of the class to lead in their lessons. Meanwhile, Phuong's and Diem's purposes, when using a song at the beginning of the lesson and at the end of the lesson respectively, were just to create some kind of positive effects on the classrooms and students. Unlike the others, Hong used a song just because it was there in the lesson. He just covered it to get over with it. Third, in terms of how the teachers used songs, it could be seen that the teachers used them in a very simple way. In Anh's class for example, after the greetings at the beginning, she just asked the class, "Do you want to sing a song?". The students said "Yes!" and she just played the song on her laptop computer once. As she taught school subjects and school timetables that day, she chose a video of a song about days of the week. As the song was played, she and many students clapped their hands and sang along. At the end of the song, she asked the students what it was about and then led in the lesson. One notice about the teachers' use of songs was that it was just something to fill in the lessons to make their lessons 'full'. Songs did not seem to have much value other than helping with leading in the lessons or finish them. In the classes of Quy, Minh and Hong, neither the students nor the teachers had any reactions to the songs. They did not clap hands or sing along, or some showed that they were not interested. In Hong's class, the song was included at the end of the lesson in the textbook. He just simply played the song on his laptop computer, and then sat there at the teacher's desk staring at the computer. The students did not sing nor even looked at the song in the textbook. They talked with one another or did their own things while the song was being played. At the end of the song, Hong turned it off and told the students that "you go home and do more practice of the song, OK?" The song finished there, and the lesson also finished there.

4.3.1.2. Activity focuses

The second category in the classroom activities is the activity focuses. As seen from Figure 6.1, there are two aspects of focuses in this category:

- (1) Students' memorisation targeting;

(2) Creating students' positive feelings.

Firstly, a major focus of teachers' classroom activities was the targeting at students' memorisation abilities. Most classroom activities were carried out to target students' better memorisation of the taught lessons. Section 1.1 above presented the activities teachers used, in which three aspects were mentioned: explicit teaching of the textbooks, memory-based games towards improving students' memorisation, and using songs. It was also mentioned above that songs which the teachers used did not have much value rather than just to start or finish a lesson, or just because songs were there in the textbooks. The other two aspects of explicit textbook teaching and use of memory-based games throughout the eight teachers' classes and throughout each of the teachers' lesson then became the major activity groups that teachers used. The major focus on students' memorisation abilities could be seen through these two aspects of the classroom activities. First, the targeting of students' memorisation could be seen through the explicit textbook teaching. As mentioned above, there were seven teachers who explicitly followed the textbooks' activities and orders. From the observations, the seven teachers went through similar textbooks' activities such as *Look, Listen and Repeat, Point and Say, Let's Talk, Listen and Tick*. As all of them taught Year 5 students and used the MOET's textbooks, they had quite similar lessons' major patterns: introducing and/or reviewing vocabulary of the lessons, getting students to repeat the vocabulary as whole classes or individually, drawing out the sentence pattern/s of the day from a (listening) dialogue in the textbooks, using a lot of repetition drills to have students practice read or practice the sentence patterns in pairs. As the process moved from vocabulary to sentence pattern practice, several games mentioned above were used such as *What's missing, What and Where, Guessing game, Slap the board, Hot seat, Jumbled words, Chain game*. The main purpose of all classroom activities was to improve students' ability to remember the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns. If some students did not remember words or some part of the sentence patterns, the teachers would prompt by feeding them with some words to help them remember.

Secondly, another focus of teachers' classroom activities was the creating of students' positive feelings. Teachers' efforts of bringing some positive feelings to their students were shown through the use of songs and games in their classrooms. First, as mentioned above in the section 4.3.1.1, using songs was one of the teachers' classroom activities. Although using

songs was not a major activity nor having any big value in the teachers' lessons, to some extent it did bring about some kind of positive feelings for students in a few classrooms. There were three characteristics of using songs among the six teachers: using songs to introduce the lessons, using a song because it was in the textbook, and using songs for a relaxation purpose. In the classes of Anh and Quy, songs were used to lead in the lessons. If in Quy's class, the teachers and students did not respond much to the song, Anh and her students did have some level of responding to the song in the video. They sang along and clapped their hands. At least, it brought some short moments of fresh feelings in a very crowded classroom in the heat of an afternoon. On the other hand, there was not much of an effect about using a song as it was covered just because it was there in the textbook as in Hong's class mentioned above. The highlight of using songs to create students' positive feelings were seen in the two classes of Phuong and Diem. Phuong played the song at the beginning of the class. She did not have an agenda for using songs. However, she and the students sang along, and like in Anh's class, the people present in the classroom at the time had some relaxed feeling as music was played. In Diem's class, the positive feelings were the most apparent. The goodbye song was played at the end of the lesson, and the students greeted the song with some enthusiasm. They sang along and even did some body movement with the song. In summary, in a few teachers' classes, songs brought some positive feelings for the students although those moments did not last long or with great effects. The use of songs generally did not help much in assisting students' language learning nor align with CLT pedagogies. Second, using games was another teachers' efforts to create positive learning environments. Although games were used towards targeting students' good memorisation as described above, they brought students relaxed times while they were doing classroom tasks. In most of the eight classes, it could be seen that many students liked playing games. They cheered on one another, clapped hands and had some moments of excitement when competing with one another in the classrooms. In short, through the use of some games and songs, teachers were seen trying to attract students and helped them feel more comfortable to participate in the teachers' planned activities. However, the use of those songs and games did not seem to assist much students' learning nor nurture real communication as CLT pedagogies promote.

4.3.1.3. Teachers' pedagogies

The third category in classroom activities is teachers' pedagogies. As seen from Figure 4.12, teachers' pedagogies contain three characteristics:

- (1) Teacher-fronted classrooms;
- (2) Explicit focus-on-forms instructions;
- (3) Use of traditional methods and techniques.

Firstly, teacher-fronted classrooms was the first characteristic in the teachers' pedagogies. This means that the teachers were the leaders who controlled everything in their classrooms. The students would follow their teachers' orders to do all lessons' tasks or classroom activities. This teaching style was present in all of the observations of the eight teachers in this phase of the research. It was also noted that they all taught Year 5 students in the observations with the same MOET's textbooks (except one teacher at one school used another MOET's approved textbook). They all followed a quite similar teaching style - teacher-fronted. Most of the time during the observations, the teachers' classes were *teacher-fronted* in the literal meaning of the term. The teachers' positions were there in the front centres of the classes. The students sat in rows with four to five students shared a table, all facing the teachers sitting or standing in the teachers' areas delivering the lessons' contents or directing their students doing some activity. A collation of screenshots featuring the teachers' and students' positions in the eight classes was presented in figure 4.15 below. In order to protect the participants' identities, the teachers' images in these screenshots were already faded.

Figure 4.15 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.15. A collation of some features of teacher-fronted classrooms

Besides teacher-fronted classrooms, all eight teachers shared quite common teaching patterns with the following details:

- Classes were started with greetings between the teachers and their students
- The teachers then introduced the new lessons
- The teachers would direct and control their classes through an activity with songs and/or games. The purpose of such activity was to have a vocabulary list at the end of it. It could be the teaching of new words or a revision of vocabulary in the previous parts that was needed for the observed new lessons (how songs and games were used were described in the above parts)
- The teachers then introduced dialogues in the textbooks in which the vocabulary was present
- The teachers directed their students to read the dialogue aloud by repeating after them in repetition drills. Then, the teachers asked pairs of students one by one to read aloud the dialogue (this was as a whole-class activity, not pair work) with teachers' feedback on students' pronunciation or other related things right in the middle of the activity.

- The teachers then asked questions to elicit or draw out a sentence pattern embedded in the dialogue. When it was done, they began to focus on teaching the sentence pattern.
- More repetition drills and substitution drills were carried out to strengthen students' memorisation and use of the sentence pattern.
- Some small linkages between the sentence pattern with students' real situations were made when teachers asked them questions such as: What lessons do you have today? How many lessons do you have today? ...
- Along the way, the teachers organised for their students to play some games as described above.

In short, all of the observations with the eight teachers recorded that all of the classes were teacher-led. The teachers organised and controlled everything in the classrooms and students followed their teachers' orders to complete their lessons' tasks.

Secondly, the second characteristic of teachers' pedagogies was the explicit focus-on-forms instructions. This means that the teachers explicitly taught grammatical rules in their classes. There were seven teachers who included explicit grammar teaching in their practices with different levels. The highlight of the explicit grammar teaching took place especially when the teachers tried to deliver lessons' sentence patterns to their students. Usually after the teachers drew out sentence patterns from dialogues, they began to explain the patterns and that was when they explicitly taught about grammatical rules surrounding the sentence patterns. Hong's lesson was an example to demonstrate the explicit focus-on-forms instruction. Hong's observed lesson was at the stage of practice in a long unit. The students already learned some vocabulary and sentence patterns in previous lessons. The focus of the observed lesson was about getting students to practice the main sentence patterns of the unit. At the beginning of the class, Hong organised a game to review learned vocabulary, which was names of school subjects. Then he showed the two taught sentence patterns on the screen (see figure 4.16 below). His job then was to teach students to distinguish the two patterns. It was here that he explicitly taught grammatical rules to the students. An extract of the class observation in Hong's class showing part of his explicit grammar teaching was included below.

Figure 4.16 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.16. A screenshot of explicit focus-on-forms instruction in Hong's class

- The teacher: (then points the ruler at the sentence patterns he is showing on the TV screen) ... Hé [Okay?] ... câu hỏi bắt đầu bằng How many thì các em nên trả lời bằng số lượng trước [For the questions beginning with “How many”, you should answer them with a number] (pointing the ruler at the question in the pattern) ... sau đó nói tên của môn học ra ... [then say the name of the subjects]
-
- Câu số 2 bắt đầu với từ để hỏi là What, bởi vậy mấy em không thêm trả lời số lượng trước, mấy em chỉ trả lời tên môn học thôi. Được chưa? [Question 2 begins with the question word “What”, so you don’t add a number at first. You just need to say the names of the subjects. Alright?]
- ...
- Rồi, qua 2 ví dụ đó đó, thấy sự khác biệt giữa 2 câu hỏi chưa? [Okay. Through those two examples, have you seen the difference between 2 types of questions?]
- A few students: Dạ thầy ... [Yes, we have]
- The teacher: Câu hỏi bắt đầu bằng How many phải trả lời có cái gì? [For the one beginning with “How many”, what’s included in your answer?]
- The students: Có số lượng (in chorus) [the number]
- The teacher: (nodding his head) ... Có số lượng trước rồi mới liệt kê môn học ra ... Câu hỏi bắt đầu bằng What mình có liệt kê số lượng hông? [Say the number first, then list the subjects... For the questions beginning with “What”, shall we say the number?] (stepping a few steps towards the screen)
- The students: Không (in chorus) [No]
- The teacher: ... Rồi [All right] (stepping back to the desk, clicking the mouse to show new things on the slide, then walking back towards the screen) ... A – Friday – maths and Vietnamese (reading aloud what he is showing on the screen) ... Now I ask, 1 student answer

(pointing a finger at himself, then raising his hand) ... How many lessons do you have on Friday? (looking towards the screen) ... Who can? (raising his hand and looking at the students)

(Hong, class observation)

In summary of this characteristic, most teachers in the class observations included in their teaching practices explicit focus-on-forms instructions in which they taught grammar rules explicitly. Among the seven teachers, they did explicit grammar teaching at different times or stages of their lessons with different levels of explicitness.

Thirdly, use of traditional teaching methods and techniques was the third characteristic of teachers' pedagogies. In all of the eight teachers' observed classes, it was apparent that traditional methods and techniques were present throughout their lessons. Regarding the traditional methods, teachers' practices reflected their uses of the Presentation-Practice-Production model (PPP), the Audio-Lingual Method and the Grammar-Translation Method. Among the three named, the PPP was the most commonly used. It was shown in all of the eight teachers' classes. The teachers all followed the same format in delivering their lessons to the students: introducing the contents to be taught, getting students to practice the contents presented, and getting students to apply using the taught contents. Although the model was PPP, more time was spent on the first two P's of Presentation and Practice. The Production stage was usually with just a little time when students were asked some questions about their own situations by the teachers. One prominent example of following the PPP by the eight teachers was the teaching of a sentence pattern. After teaching or reviewing vocabulary and getting students to read or listen to a dialogue, the teachers would draw out a sentence pattern from the dialogue. They then would explain how the pattern to be used. The next step would be having students repeat the sentence pattern after the teachers. They then had exercises for students to practice, usually with given information in the textbooks or information shown on the screens. At this Practice stage, the teachers usually put students in pairs to ask and answers questions using the sentence pattern based on the given information. At the end of a task, teachers would ask some pairs one by one to stand up and demonstrate their practice for the whole class to listen. The Production stage was not clearly shown or was absent in some classes. For example, most teachers taught the lesson *How many lessons do you have today?* At the end of the Practice stage, they asked some students that question about their school timetable of the day. That

was the Production in their practices. The Production was clearer in the classes of Hoang and Phuong when students had some more time to talk about their real lives. Hoang asked students about what students would do at weekend while Phuong asked students questions about their collections.

Beside the PPP model, the teachers also followed the Audio-Lingual Method a great deal in their practices. This method was present in all of the eight teachers' observed classes. The participants' teaching practices featured three main characteristics: students' memorisation targeting, drills and repetition. First, targeting students' memorisation was already reported in great details in the above sub-sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 about activities teachers used and activity focuses. It is only briefly re-mentioned here as one of the features of the teachers' uses of the Audio-Lingual Method in their classes. Second and third, two other characteristics of the teachers' Audio-Lingual Method use were the excessive use of drilling techniques and repetition. When the teachers introduced a new language item such as a word, a phrase or a sentence pattern, a great deal of drilling took place right after that. The students listened to recorded tapes and/or the teachers first. Then the teachers modelled again in pronouncing words or phrases and saying the patterns. The students repeated what they heard or saw from their teachers. The teachers all used two drilling techniques: choral drills and substitution drills. Most of the drills followed the pattern:

- The teachers modelled first
- The students repeated after the teachers (or sometimes peers)
- A lot of repetition took place from the whole class to big teams, then pairs and/or individuals
- The teachers replaced some cue words and substitution drills took place also in the order of whole class, then big teams, then pairs and/or individuals

Throughout the classes, a lot of teachers' modelling, drilling and repetition took place. An extract of modelling, drilling and repetition was presented below. This was from the observation of Anh's class. Before this extract, Anh already organised a game to review the learned vocabulary. She then let students listen to a dialogue in the textbook. From the dialogue, she asked questions to draw out the sentence pattern of the lesson *How many lessons do you have today?* After a lot of repetition practice with her saying the pattern and the students repeating after her, she led the students in a substitution drill.

The teacher: Yes, very good! (clap her hands and the class follow). Now everyone, say: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?* (The question is shown on the screen with the underline on Monday)

The students: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?* (in chorus)

The teacher: Again!

The students: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?*

The teacher: Very good! Now everyone, say: *I have five.* (The answer is shown on the screen below the question)

The students: *I have five* (in chorus): *maths, IT, Vietnamese, science and English.*

The teacher: Very good! Now team A ask, team B answer! (point her 2 hands on each side of the class to assign the students in teams A and B)

Team A students: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?* (in chorus)

Team B students: *I have five: maths, IT, Vietnamese, science and English.* (in chorus)

The teacher: Very good! Take turn! (use her hands to signal that the students now swap their role from A to B and B to A)

Team B students: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?* (in chorus)

Team A students: *I have five: maths, IT, Vietnamese, science and English.* (in chorus)

The teacher: Very good! Khang, please, ask! Minh Anh, answer! (point at a student on this side and another one on the other side of the class)

Khang: *How many lessons do you have on Monday?*

Minh Anh: *I have five: maths, IT, Vietnamese, science and English.*

The teacher: Very good! (claps her hands and the class follow. She then points at 2 other students on each side of the class)

(and the drill following this pattern went on and on until all of the cue words were replaced)

(An, class observation)

Another traditional method seen in the participants' classes is the Grammar-Translation Method. The teachers who used this method featured two key elements: (1) having a list of English vocabulary and its meaning in Vietnamese, and (2) translating English (L2) into Vietnamese (L1) or vice versa. The vocabulary lists in both L1 and L2 were seen in two classes while the translations between L2-L1 and L1-L2 were seen in almost all eight classes. Screenshots of the vocabulary lists seen in the two classes of Minh and Thanh were collated in Figure 4.17 below.

Figure 4.17 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.17. A collation of vocabulary list in two observed classes

Firstly, it was noticed that the traditional Grammar-Translation Method was used by the teachers with some more modern flavour. The first renewed point was how new words gathered into the vocabulary list. In the two observed classes of Minh and Thanh, they did not put all words together into the lists at once. Instead, they had some questions to ask their students how to express some certain meaning in Vietnamese into English. An extract of how vocabulary was gathered in Thanh's class was included below.

- The teacher: Môn âm nhạc chúng ta có bao nhiêu lần một tuần? [How often do we have music lessons in a week?] (looking at the student)
- The students: One!
- ...
- The teacher: Vậy có 1 lần 1 tuần mình nói sao đây? [... So how do you say "once a week" in English?] (walking back and forth in the middle front) Ok, now listen to me, *once a week* (put his hand at his ear to signal that the students just listen)
Once ...
- Some students: Once ... (thinking they have to repeat)
- The teacher: Ok, just listen! (waving his hands miming a stop and then put his hand at his ear) *Once a week. Once a week.* Ok. (clicks the wireless mouse in his hand and the phrase *once a week* appears on the screen on the surface of the available slide) Now class, repeat after me! *Once a week* (waving his hand down as either a body gesture not meaning anything or meaning the intonation should go down)
- The students: *Once a week* (in chorus)
- (Thanh, class observations)

Similarly, Thanh collected all phrases until he had a full list as shown in Figure 6.6 above. The second renewed point related to the Grammar-Translation Method was how the teachers conducted the translation. It was not like a translation task where students were asked to translate from English to Vietnamese or from Vietnamese into English. In most of the eight teachers' classes, they would usually ask students questions related to dialogues in the textbooks to prepare some listening activity or as a post-listening activity. An extract of how translation between L2-L1 in Quy's class was included below as an illustration of translation tasks. In this activity, Quy was going through the dialogue in the textbook to make sure students understood the contents of the dialogue. She used the electronic version of the textbook and showed the part of the lesson on the interactive board.

- The teacher: Yes. They are making a video call. Ok, now you will listen. What are they talking about? Ok, now listen! (touch the board to play the recording)
- The recording: *Hi Long! How was your trip home?*
- The teacher: Bạn Mai hỏi cái gì? [What does Mai ask?] You please! (point at a student)
- The student: *Xin chào Long. Chuyến về nhà của bạn như thế nào?* [Hi Long. How was your trip home?] (standing up)
- The teacher: Oh, good job! (her thumb up). Continue (touch the board to play the recording)
- The recording: *Hi Mai! It was good. Thanks!*
- The teacher: *Chuyến đi của bạn Long như thế nào?* [How was Long's trip?]
- Some students raise their hands.
- The teacher: Tốt hay là không tốt? [Is it good or not good?] (showing her thumb up and down)
- The students: Tốt! (in chorus)
- The teacher: Ok, thank you! (Touch the board to play the recording)
- The recording: *Do you have school today, Mai?*
- The teacher: Long hỏi Mai cái gì? [What does Long ask Mai?] You, please! (point at a student)
- The student: Dạ thưa cô là Hôm nay bạn có đi học không? [Yes, Ma'am. It's "Do you have school today?"]
- ...
- (Quy, class observations)

In summary for the third characteristic of teachers' pedagogies, all eight participants followed traditional teaching methods and techniques in their practices. They used methods such as the Audio-Lingual, the Grammar-Translation and the PPP model. These mentioned methods were present throughout their classes and were the main patterns of the whole teachers' teaching practices.

To conclude the teachers' pedagogies, the eight observed classes showed teaching practices were still traditional with teacher-centred classrooms and teachers controlling all classroom activities. Explicit focus-on-forms teaching was seen. Teachers followed the PPP model and used a great deal of the Audio-Lingual and Grammar-Translation methods. Teachers' pedagogies were not as CLT practices should be in the contemporary CLT mainstream.

4.3.1.4. Classroom interactions

The fourth category in classroom activities is the classroom interactions. The summary in Figure 6.1 shows four aspects of interactions:

- (1) Teacher-student interactions as the most prominent;
- (2) Pair and group student-student interactions;
- (3) Dominance of stronger students;
- (4) Lack of attention for weaker students.

Firstly, the first aspect in classroom interactions was the most prominent teacher-student interaction. It means that teacher-student interactions dominated all other kinds of interactions in all of the eight observed classrooms. This kind of interactions was either between the teachers and their whole classes, between the teachers and a pair or group of students, or between the teachers and individual students in class. Teacher-student interaction took place during most of the class times and during most of the activities. In this kind of interaction, the teachers introduced the lesson contents, organised and directed classroom activities, gave instructions and orders and students responded to those, or asked questions and students answered the questions. One noticeable thing regarding the teacher-student interactions was that both parties followed traditional and cultural norms in their interactions. The tradition was that students were supposed to give their teachers great respect. The respect was shown through some behaviours, such as: Students cannot sit when responding to their teachers; students use certain ways of talking to express their absolute respects; students need to raise their hands and wait to be called on if they want to say something or answer some question. A screenshot (in Diem's class) to illustrate a student's respected behaviour to her teacher in teacher-student interactions was included in Figure 4.18. In the figure, when the student was called on to answer the teacher's question, she

stood up, folded her arms in the front to show her respect to the teacher while answering the question.

Figure 4.18 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Figure 4.18. A student showing respect to her teacher in teacher-student interaction

Secondly, the second aspect of classroom interactions is the pair and group student-student interactions. Pair and group interactions took place when teachers asked students to work in pairs and/or groups. Pairs and groups were formed simply with two or three or four students sitting next to each other or one another working together as there were very limited spaces for students to move around in the observed classrooms. During pair or group interactions, students were asked to practice the taught sentence patterns by asking and answering questions from their peers. Pair work appeared in all eight classes while group work took place in four classes. There were three noticeable things about pair and group interactions in the observed classrooms. First, pair work and group work were mostly for students to mechanically practice the taught sentence patterns in pairs or groups. There was not much of such things as supporting each other, working out learning tasks together or team spirit in these kinds of classroom interactions. In the classes of Hoang, Hong, Phuong, Quy and Minh, pair and group work did not show much of member bonding. Instead, Phuong divided her class into two big teams A and B with students sitting on the left or right side of the class to form a whole team. The teachers ordered which team to ask, which team to answer. She also called on individual students in each team to answer her questions and gave accumulated points for each team to create competition between teams. Hong and Quy did quite the same things, just with smaller groups of four to six students sitting in a group. Meanwhile, Minh put four students in a group to practice the taught sentence pattern, but it was basically like 2

pairs sitting close to each other to form a group with two students asking and answering each other. There was no connection between the two pairs in the so-called group work. With a quite different flavour, Hoang asked four students to come to the front of the class to practice a speaking task in which each student held their textbook, asked and answer in pairs then did a cross practice between the two pairs. Second, in pair or group student-student interactions, there were very often student-student out of sight interactions. It appeared that all most of the teachers did not pay much attention to face-to-face or eye contact in this type of interactions. When teachers asked a pair of students to stand up (not move, just remain right at where they were) to do some task, e.g. practicing a sentence pattern with one asking and the other answering. The two students did not face each other. Teachers even asked one student at the front and another at the back of the class to pair. The two just looked at their textbooks or looked at the screen to practice. They absolutely did not see each other's faces during the interaction. Third, in organising pair work, use of busy-work pair work was observed. It was in Phuong's class that this type of pair work was seen. After the students completed all tasks in the textbook, Phuong asked students to work in pairs by asking and answering the patterns learned in the reading lesson. She then sat at the teacher's desk without going around to monitor the activity or check the activity outcome. Neither did the teacher give students sufficient time to do the task, she then moved to another activity to review the lesson of the day. Therefore, it made viewers feel that this activity was just something to mention to make the lesson more complete.

Thirdly and fourthly, the last two related aspects in classroom interactions were the matters of stronger students' domination in the classes and attention for weaker students. In most of the observed classes, it was commonly seen that a few stronger students often dominated the classes. Usually when teachers asked a question and many students showed that they could not do some task, teachers usually called on a few students who demonstrated stronger abilities. Those students showed that they were very active, and usually raised their hands to volunteer in most activities, so teachers very often called on them. As a result of the domination of stronger students, there was often a lack of attention for weaker students in some classes. More or less this situation appeared in all classes. In a few classes such as the ones of Phuong and An, as observed, students abilities were quite similar. Therefore, most students got equal chances to be called on by the teachers. In contrast, in classes where

students had mixed abilities, the opportunities to be called on were placed on stronger students. This could be clearly seen in Hoang's and Hong's classes. When the teachers raised questions or introduced tasks that seemed to be difficult for other students, stronger students would be invited to get the tasks done.

4.3.1.5. Feedback and assessment

The fifth category in classroom activities is the feedback and assessment of students. As shown in Figure 4.12, there were three features in this category:

- (1) Teachers' corrective feedback on forms and pronunciation;
- (2) Student peers' comments on each other's performance;
- (3) Use of non-numeric assessment.

The first feature in the feedback and assessment category was the teachers' corrective feedback on pronunciation and forms. This feature was related to students' mistakes in learning. When a whole class, a group of students or an individual student made a mistake related to pronunciation and language forms, the teachers usually stopped to correct the mistake. This kind of corrective feedback appeared in all of the eight observed classes and happened very often. While corrective feedback was common among the eight classes, correcting students' pronunciation appeared more often than correcting students' language forms. An illustration of correcting students' pronunciation mistakes was included below. This extract was from Quy's class observation. The extract was when Quy reviewed the taught vocabulary.

The teacher: (moves to the board to show another picture of an English textbook, named Tiếng Anh) What's subject?
The students raise their hands.
The teacher points at a student: You please!
The student: *English* (mispronounced the word)
The teacher: Again!
The student: *English* (still mispronounced the word)
The teacher: Louder!
The student: *English* (still mispronounced)
The teacher: *English* (signalled the student to repeat after her, and the student repeats after her twice)
The teacher: Yes, good job! One flower for you! (moves to the board to show the word English on the board). Now class, again!
The students (in chorus): *English*
The teacher: Again!

The students (in chorus): *English* (the repetition took place like that for 3 times totally)
(Quy, class observations)

Correcting students' mistakes on language forms also took place in all classes, but it appeared more often in the classes of Anh, Hoang, Minh and Phuong. The teachers usually corrected students' mistakes on forms such as plural and singular forms of nouns and verbs, possessive adjectives. An extract of how a teacher corrected students' mistakes on language forms was presented below. The extract was from the observation of Phuong's class. The lesson of the day was a reading lesson. After having students do related tasks in the textbook, Phuong checked their understanding by asking questions.

The teacher: (pointing at the section about Anh's collection) Where does Anh wear ...
Where does Anh wear pins? (moving her hands up and down as she talks) ...
Where? (walking slowly towards the aisle, then points at a student) You.
Please!

The student: *I wear my pins on my jacket.* (This is the exact extract from the reading)

The teacher walks back to the screen, point slowly at the reading section about Anh aiming to correct the student's mistake.

The teacher: *She or he wears her or his pins on her/his jacket* (looking back at the students, smiling). Yes? *If boy, her. If girl ... sorry ... If boy, his. If Anh, her. She, her. Girl, her. Boy, his.* Yes?

The students: Yes! (in chorus)

The teacher: Yes (nodding her head). Anh, boy or girl? (walking to the middle front, asking the students)

Some students: Girl!

Other students: Boy!

The teacher: Boy! (nod her head, then comes back to the section on the screen pointing at the sentence): Anh wears his pins on his jacket (smiling, nodding head and walking to the desk).

(Phuong, class observation)

The second feature of feedback and assessment category was the students' peers' comments on each other's performances. In several classes, after a group, a pair or individual students finished doing some task as asked by the teachers, other students were asked to give their feedback on their friends' performances. Some teachers did it promptly by asking the whole class questions such as *Is it correct? Is it right or wrong?* The class then replied in chorus with *Yes/No* or *Right/Wrong* and the teachers confirmed it. However, there were teachers who did it very thoroughly by asking students to give detailed comments about other students' performances such as in Minh's and Diem's classes. Below is an extract of how peers' assessment was carried out in Diem's class. After introducing the language pattern of

the lesson, Diem asked students to practice in pairs for a few minutes. She then asked volunteering pairs to perform the task while other students watched and listened.

The teacher: Who else? (point at a student) Long!
Long and the next student stand up.
Student 1: How many lessons do you have today?
Student 2: I have four.
Student 1: What lessons do you have today?
Student 2: I have Vietnamese, maths, art and music.
The teacher: Nhận xét dùm cô, My! [Assess them for me, please! My]
My (standing up): Dạ thưa cô là chữ *How* bạn đọc /hâu/, *lessons* bạn đọc lesson. [Yes, Ma'am.

The

word "How" was pronounced /həʊ/. "Lessons" was pronounced as "lesson".]
The teacher: Đúng rồi, 2 bạn phải luyện tập lại. [That's right. Two of you have to practise pronouncing them again.] How ... how many lessons ...
The student repeats following the teacher: How ... how many lessons ... do you have ... today?
The teacher: Ngồi xuống đi. Tuy nhiên 2 bạn cũng đã cố gắng đọc và trả lời câu hỏi rồi. Cho các bạn 1 tràng pháo tay đi các em. [Sit down, please! However, two of them did try to read and answer the question. Please give them a big clap, my students!]

The teacher claps hands and the class follows.

(Diem, class observations)

The third feature in the feedback and assessment category was the use of non-numeric assessment in observed classes as a reward system. This form of assessment was seen in seven observed classes where teachers avoided using a number to assess students' performances. For many of the activities in the classrooms, teachers usually gave students stars written on the board, stickers stuck on their books or notebooks, or tiny paper flowers to score students' performances. At the end of each activity or the end of the class, teachers would count how many of those each team accumulated to decide on activity winners.

In summary of the category, the participant teachers carried out a lot of corrective feedback on pronunciation and language forms to target students' accuracy of the areas. Students were also invited to take part in this kind of feedback and assessment. It was observed that the activity or learning assessment conducted by the teachers aimed at creating competition among students and provoked students' excitement in doing classroom activities.

4.3.1.6. Lesson materials

The sixth and also the final category in the classroom activities was the lesson materials. There were three characteristics regarding lesson materials drawn from the class observations:

- (1) Textbook-based lesson contents and students' practice;
- (2) Limited real-life practice;
- (3) Some expansion beyond textbooks.

Firstly, textbook-based lesson contents and students' practice was the first observed characteristic of lesson materials. This means that all of the observed lesson contents that the teachers delivered and most of students' practice were from the MOET's approved textbooks. In the observed classes, the teachers transferred the lessons in the textbooks into slides shown on the board. Some of them also used the electronic versions of the textbooks on the interactive boards. All students had their books in front of them or held the books in their hands while practicing following their teachers' directions. This characteristic was seen in all of the eight teachers' classes. More of this characteristic was also mentioned in the explicit textbook teaching approach above in section 6.1.1 about activities teachers used.

Secondly, limited real-life practice was another characteristic found in the observed classes. The real-life practice in the teachers' classes was shown through the link of the taught lessons with students' own situations. It was a part of the production stage when teachers asked students to provide their own information. The real-life practice aspect was limited as it was just accounted for short periods of time during class times. Also, the limitation of the real-life practice was that it was too little or not sufficient. For example, most of the observed teachers taught the same lesson *How many lessons do you have today?* and the sentence pattern of the lesson they taught was as follows:

How many lessons do you have today?

I have four: maths, English, art and Vietnamese.

After having students practice the sentence pattern in pairs through repetition and substitution drills, the teachers would ask students to answer with their own information. Students would substitute the pattern with their school subjects of that day.

The third characteristic in the lesson material category was the appearance of some expansion beyond textbooks. This expansion was shown through the use of songs outside the textbooks and the textbook's activity restructuring. Regarding the use of songs, as mentioned in section 4.3.1.1 above about activities teachers used, several teachers used songs they searched on the Internet to use for their lessons. However, also as mentioned above, the

songs were not considered important components of the teachers' lessons. Instead, they were just used to create some "good air" to start or finish a lesson. Related to the restructuring of activities in the textbook, there was only one teacher who did it. It was in Hoang's class that this took place. Hoang's observed class was supposed to be a writing lesson in the unit. He basically used the textbook, but with some activities he restructured them to make the class more communicative. Instead of getting students to do some simple writing tasks as in the textbook, he showed the lesson's reading text on the screen, underlined words or phrases where students should substitute with their own information. He then asked students to practice speaking based on the text shown on the screen. The writing task was then transformed into a speaking practice, which he later called it public speaking practice where his students stood in the middle front of the class and spoke with the prompts from the screen.

In short, almost all of the materials for the teachers' lessons were very textbook based. MOET's approved textbooks were the compasses for all of the teachers' teaching practices. Going beyond the textbooks was seen, but it was not considerable.

In summary, the findings about what activities teachers used and how they conducted them have been presented in this first part of the chapter. From the synthesis of the in-class observations of the classroom activities, activity focuses, teachers' pedagogies, classroom interactions, feedback and assessment and lesson material, they all showed that the practices were still traditional in the supposed CLT classrooms. The second major part, the findings about classroom language, about the teachers' actual practice will be presented in the next section.

4.3.2. Classroom language

Classroom language was the second major part in the findings about the participants' actual practices. The findings about classroom language were classified into five categories, summarised in Figure 4.19 below.

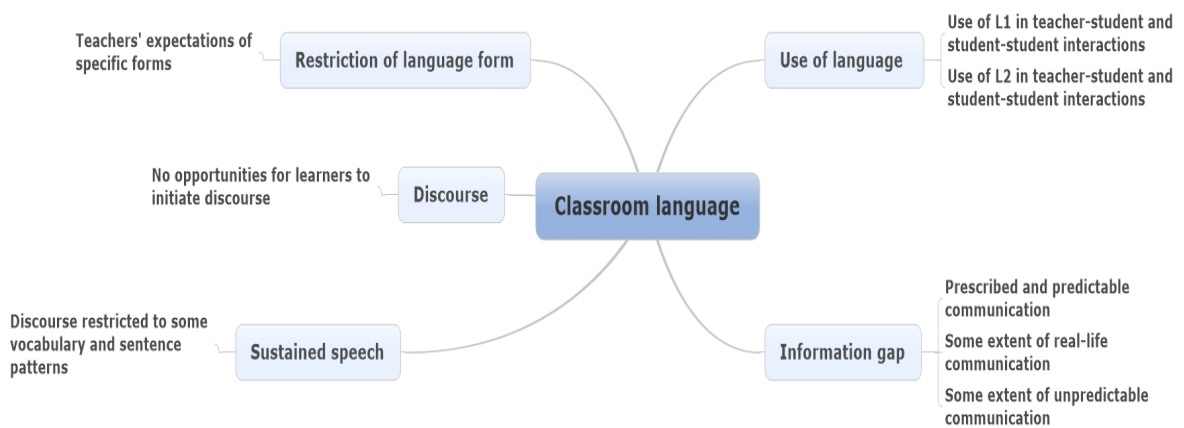


Figure 4.19. Classroom language in teachers' actual practices

As shown in the above figure, the five categories of the classroom language include:

- (1) Use of language (L1 & L2);
- (2) Information gap;
- (3) Sustained speech;
- (4) Discourse;
- (5) Restriction of language form.

Findings about these categories will be presented in detail in the following sections.

4.3.2.1. Use of language in the classroom

The use of language in the classroom includes the use of L1 and L2. Use of L1 and L2 was seen in both teacher-student and student-student interactions.

Firstly, regarding the teacher-student interactions, all of the eight teachers and their students used both L1 and L2 in their communications. First, the use of L1 was seen in all eight observed classes with various levels of how much L1 was used. It was observed that L1 was overused in most classes. On a scale of how much L1 was used, there were three levels of use identified: limited use, unbalanced L1 use, and excessive L1 use. The level of limited use of L1 was found in the two classes of Hoang and An. The two teachers had attempts to limit the use of L1 in their classroom communications. They used L1 when students seemed that they did not understand what the teachers said. They also used L1 when they expected answers to the lessons' questions, but the students looked silent for a little while. On the other end of the

scale, excessive use of L1 was found in other two classes of Diem and Minh. It could be seen that the two teachers almost use L1 most of the time except when they said the original English sentences in the textbook lessons and some other routine classroom language. Below is an extract of excessive use of L1 in Diem's class. In the extract, Diem was introducing the lesson's sentence pattern to the class.

The teacher (pointing at a section in the dialogue on the screen): *Như vậy là trong câu này, khi muốn hỏi về hôm nay bạn có bao nhiêu môn học thì bạn Long đã hỏi bạn Mai là How many lessons do you have today? Và bạn Mai sẽ trả lời là I have four: maths, Vietnamese, music and PE. Như vậy mẫu câu này dùng để hỏi về điều gì các em? [So in this sentence, when Long wants to ask how many lessons Mai has today, he asks Mai "How many lessons do you have today?" And Mai responds that I have four: maths, Vietnamese, music and PE. So what is this structure used to ask about, my students?]*

The teacher looks the students.

Some students raising hands.

The teacher points at a student): Như Uyên?

Uyên (standing up): *Dạ thưa cô là để hỏi về hôm nay bạn có bao nhiêu môn học. [Yes, Ma'am. To ask how many lessons someone has today]*

The teacher: *Đúng rồi. Như vậy là để hỏi về hôm nay có bao nhiêu môn học thì chúng ta sẽ dùng mẫu câu này hé. Các em chú ý, câu hỏi How many thì chúng ta sẽ trả lời là I have four. Các em có thể thay thế I have one/two/three/four/five/six. Và khi kết hợp với môn cuối cùng chúng ta sẽ dùng từ AND. [That's right. So, in order to ask how many lessons someone has today, we will use this structure. Alright? You notice that, for the question "How many?" we will respond that "I have four". You can replace it with "I have one/two/three/four/five/six" and for the final lesson, we will use the word "and".] (pointing at the sentences on the screen). Now class, listen and repeat! How many lessons do you have today?*

The students (in chorus): How many lessons do you have today?

(Diem, class observation)

In the middle of the scale was the unbalanced use of L1. It means that L1 was used very often and was also used more than L2 in these classes, but it did not reach the level of excessive use like in Diem's and Minh's classes. This level of use was seen in the rest of the other four teachers' classes. The teachers used Vietnamese in normal communications not related to the lessons' contents such as saying a joke. They especially used L1 right after saying the language in L2, which was similar to a translation to make sure their students understood what they said. Below is an extract from a very often-seen language use in most classes. The

extract was from Thanh's class observation when they just finished playing a game to review the vocabulary learned that day.

The students and the teacher clap their hands with excitement.

The teacher: *Chúng ta có nhiều triệu phú quá há! [We have so many millionaires!] (joking)*
Tết này lì xì cho thầy nhiều nhiều nha! [This Tet, will you give me more lucky money?]

The students laugh.

The teacher clicks the mouse to turn to a new slide. The screen shows it is about homework.

The teacher reads what is on the slide.

The teacher: *You will write new words and structures in your notebook and review the lesson. Ok, thank you!* (stands in the middle front looking towards the screen, clicks on the mouse to turn to a next slide.

A student: *Chép cái đó vô hả thầy? [Copy that down, right?]*

The teacher: *No, no, no.* (turn it back to the homework slide) *What have you learned today?* (standing in the middle front asking the whole class, then points at a student): *Hôm nay học được gì Trí? Em học được từ gì nè? [What have you learned today, Trí? What words have you learned?]*

The student: *Once a week* (standing up)

(Thanh, class observation)

Second, the use of L2 in the teacher-student interactions was also present in all eight classes, and the levels of how much L2 used by the teachers also varied. Like the L1 use, the use of L2 was also identified at three levels: mostly used, averagely used and the least used. On the use scale of the L1 above, those who used L1 the most would use L2 the least. That were the situations mentioned above in Diem's and Minh's classes. The group of four teachers who used unbalanced L1 above were the ones who used L2 averagely. Their uses were basically simple L2 classroom language (routine language), or language of the sentence patterns repeatedly said again and again. The two teachers who used L2 the most were Hoang and An who were mentioned above that they used limited L1 in their classrooms. They tried to speak English most of the time and just sometimes used Vietnamese when it seemed to be difficult for their students to answer their questions. The L2 they used was also at simple levels, and it was also repeated again and again. Below is an extract of maximum use of L2 in Hoang's class. In the extract, Hoang was conducting a simple game to review the school subjects that students already learned. Hoang just called on a student and the student picked his question.

The teacher: *Number four! (showing the question on the screen) What lessons does she have on Wednesday?)*

The student: *She has ... maths, Vietnamese, music and English.*

The teacher repeats after the student every time she says a name of a school subject.

The teacher: *Who can repeat? Sit down! (telling the student, then pointing at a student):*
She has ... That's right. Yes, in the back!

The student: She has ... maths, Vietnamese, music and English.
 The teacher: Ok. Raise your hands if you know the answer! (standing at his desk, pointing at a student)
 The student: She has maths, Vietnamese, music and English,
 The teacher: Yes! (Then sits down at his desk, working on the computer and shows on the screen the answer and he also reads aloud the answer): She has maths, Vietnamese, music and English. Consonant sounds: maths, Vietnamese, music and English! (repeating the subjects)
 The teacher looks up and look at the students. Some students raise their hands. The teacher point at a student.

(Hoang, class observation)

Secondly, regarding the student-student interactions, it could be seen that the students used much more L1 than L2 in their interactions. Student- student communication in L2 was mostly seen when they were asked reading aloud the lessons' dialogues, or when they were asked to practice asking and answering using the lessons' sentence patterns. Other than when students were doing tasks by teachers' orders, e.g. when they practiced the sentence patterns, they would use Vietnamese to talk to one another to communicate.

To summarise the language use in the classroom, both L1 and L2 were used by the teachers and their students with an overuse of L1 by most teachers and students. As the classes were teacher-fronted, the teachers were the ones who controlled the language use in class. Students followed their teachers in most classes. When the teachers used L2, students would try to use L2 to respond. When the teachers used L1, the students certainly used L1 in classroom interactions.

4.3.2.2. Information gap

The second category in classroom language was the information gap. As seen from Figure 6.8, there are three aspects in this category:

- (1) Prescribed and predictable communication;
- (2) Some extent of real-life communication;
- (3) Some extent of unpredictable communication.

The first aspect in the information gap category was the prescribed and predictable communication. This means that almost all communication taking place in the classrooms was prescribed or prepared, and thus predictable to all parties involved in the communication. This resulted from the explicit teaching of the textbooks and whole textbook-based students' practice. This aspect of the information gap took place in all of the eight observed classroom.

As mentioned above in the classroom activities, the teachers and students were strongly tied to the textbooks in the English teaching and learning. Therefore, when students practiced the learned language, they followed set dialogues in the textbooks. All of their communication was based on the textbooks or provided by their teachers especially in substitution drills. A common example of predictable communication was from students' practice asking and answering questions related to the sentence patterns they were taught. After introducing the sentence patterns, students were asked to practice in pairs and then demonstrated their practice for the whole classes to listen. The practice was based on exercises in the textbooks or the teachers showed the provided information on the screens. The sentence pattern that most classes learned was:

Student A: How many lessons do you have today?

Student B: I have four: maths, English, Vietnamese and PE.

Then the exercise would be a school timetable with given information such as weekdays and school subjects for each day. Students just needed to replace *today* with Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday with the correct school subjects given. Therefore, the students who asked the questions and all others listening already knew what the answers would be. Another noticed thing about the prescribed and predictable aspect of the classroom communication was a teacher's expectation that students must follow the teacher's prescription and should not break it. An illustration for that was from Minh's observed class. Minh was one lesson ahead in the unit compared to other teachers. In the observed lesson, he taught his students the sentence pattern:

Student A: How do you practice _____? (listening/speaking/reading/writing)

Student B: I _____.

The students then were given three minutes to practice the pattern in pairs with the given information as follows:

Speak English/speak English every day

Listen to English/watch English cartoons on TV

Write English/write emails to my friends

Read English/read short stories

Minh then asked a pair of students to say it out loud for the whole class to listen to give comments later. The pair of students stood up with one asking and one answering:

Student A: How do you practice speaking?

Student B: I watch English cartoons on TV.

At the end Minh told the pair and others that, “Ok, chưa chính xác nhé các em. Speak English thì mình không thể watch cartoons được” [Ok. It’s not correct, class. To practice speaking English, we just cannot watch cartoons].

The second aspect in the information gap category is the presence of some extent of real-life communication. As mentioned above, some real-life communication took place in the production stage of the observed lessons. Based on the sentence patterns, the teachers asked their students to substitute with their own information when answering their friends’ question. For example, with the sentence pattern of *How many lessons do you have today* above, students could replace the school subjects given with their own real timetables. However, this aspect of some real-life communication did not take away the predictability of the classroom communication. That was because all students in a class had the same school timetable for a week in real life, and thus they might have known clearly what the answers would be.

The third aspect in the category of the information gap is the appearance of some unpredictable communication. This aspect was connected with the second above about real-life communication. When real-life communication took place in the classrooms, there was some unpredictability in the communication. The unpredictable communication was seen in two classes of Phuong and Hoang. First of all, in Phuong’s case, it was a little different from other teachers because Phuong’s school used another approved textbook, the Oxford’s *Family and Friends*. The lesson Phuong taught during the class observation was a reading lesson about collections. After teaching the vocabulary of the reading text, the teacher asked students to do exercises in the textbook. In the production stage, the teacher asked individual students questions such as: *Do you have a collection? What do you collect?* The students then would have answers such as: *Yes. I collect teddy bears/cards/dolls/comic books*, etc. As students had different collection hobbies, their answers reached some levels of unpredictable communication when listeners did not know what it could be before they answered. Second, the case of Hoang was the most special of all of the eight teachers during the class observations. If the other six teachers used the same approved textbooks and the communication taking place in their classes was quite similar, Phuong’s class was a

coincidence when questions about students' collection hobbies brought about some differences in students' answers. Hoang stood out of the observed teachers when he still used the same approved textbook. The big difference was that Hoang restructured the lesson to make it more communicative. Hoang still went about with the basic information in the textbook lesson. However, he changed the kinds of exercises that students were supposed to do following the textbook. Hoang's lesson was a writing one based on a reading text, and students were supposed to read and then fill in the gaps with the given information. However, he partly re-designed the tasks by asking students to speak in front of the class after rehearsing themselves. He composed a paragraph with blank spaces where students would fill in with their own information to talk about their weekend activities. It was right there that the unpredictability appeared because individual students did quite different things at their weekends. The special aspects about Hoang's observed class will continue to be mentioned in later part in the next chapter about the post-observation interview.

To summarise this section, the communication taking place in most classes was prescribed and predictable. There was no or very limited information gap due to the fact that teachers explicitly followed the textbooks, and most of the ingredients for communication were already prepared or prescribed for the students. The information gap just appeared when there were differences in textbook use or teacher's intentional change.

4.3.2.3. Sustained speech

The third category in the classroom language was the sustained speech, which means the learners' abilities to maintain speech at a certain rate or level. The observation protocol regarding this category was to see if speech was extended or restricted to words, clauses or sentences. From the observations of the teachers' classes, it was apparent that the classroom communication was restricted to the levels of words, phrases and sentences. At the level of word restriction, students in all eight classes were restricted to using words of school subjects or collection hobbies. The level of phrase restriction appeared in the one class of Thanh when students learned and practiced using phrases such as *once a week, twice a week, three times a week*. The level of sentence restriction took place in all eight observed classes. It was when all students' learning and practice were tied to the lessons' patterns. One noticed thing was that some extended discourse was seen in Hoang's class. Once again, Hoang's was a special case when he intentionally broke his conventional practice *to perform differently during a*

class observation (more details in the next chapter). Hoang re-designed tasks in the textbook to allow students more oral practice to talk about their weekend activities. Therefore, students' communication then was extended beyond sentence patterns reaching a level of a spoken paragraph. However, it was also noticed that to some extent, this kind of extended discourse was also framed within the given structure that Hoang designed for his students to substitute with their own information.

In summary, sustained speech in most of the observed classes was restricted to the taught words, phrases and sentence patterns. There was no completely free communication among students in these classes.

4.3.2.4. Discourse

The fourth category in the classroom language was the discourse. Class observations regarding the discourse involved observing if learners had opportunities to initiate communication in the classrooms. As described repeatedly in the above sections, the observed classes were all teacher-fronted with the teachers controlling everything in the classrooms. Students merely just followed their teachers' orders and instructions to complete lessons' tasks. They learned the lessons' vocabulary and sentence patterns, repeated after their teachers for repetition practice, and then more substitution drills with teachers' instructions. There was no place for students to have their free communication if they wished. Therefore, the students in those observed classes did not have any opportunities to start communication on their own in their classrooms.

4.3.2.5. Restriction of language form

The fifth and also the final category in the classroom language was the restriction of language form. The observation regarding the language form restriction was to see whether the teachers expected some specific language form. It was clearly observed that language in all of the observed teachers' classes was restricted to specific forms. The restricted forms seen were the lessons' sentence patterns. The teachers did expect their students to use the lessons' vocabulary within the sentence patterns correctly. Most students' mistakes or errors during learning would be corrected to make sure students achieved accuracy in language use.

4.3.3. Summary

In conclusion, findings about the teachers' actual classroom practices have been presented in this chapter. From all of the points laid out above, it can be concluded that the teachers' practices were still quite traditional in the supposed CLT classrooms. There are several mismatched points between what they claimed to do and what they actually did in their actual classrooms. More revelations about the teachers' practices from their reflections will be presented in the next chapter, which presents the findings of post-observation interviews with them.

4.4. FINDINGS OF THE POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS – TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THEIR PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

Introduction

This section aims to present the findings of the post-observation interviews, which contains teachers' reflections on their practices and their professional challenges. As described in the Methodology chapter, Phase 2 of the research involved the use of the pre-observation interviews, in-class observations, and post-observation interviews. After the in-class observations, I reviewed the classroom videos to identify the participants' practices based on the CLT theory and practice presented in the Literature Review Chapter. During the review process, I also identified some matters of concerns, which would be brought to and discussed at the post-observation interviews with the individual teachers. At the interviews with each participant, the teachers had the opportunity to watch the videos of their EFL classes to help them recall their practices better. Based on the aims of this chapter, there will be two major topics covered including teachers' reflections of their CLT pedagogies in part one, and teachers' reflections of challenges affecting their teaching practices in part two.

4.4.1. Teachers' reflections about their teaching practices

This part presents the teachers' reflections on their CLT teaching practices in their classrooms. The teachers' practice reflections will be reported in terms of:

- Teachers' CLT elements and the ways they used those in their practices;
- Discussions after the teachers watched the entire videos
- Teachers' reticence to pedagogical changes.

4.4.1.1. Teachers' CLT elements and the ways they conducted those in their practices

This section presents the teachers' specific CLT elements as identified during the post-observation interviews. As previously mentioned, each of the teachers and I re-watched the videos of their lessons together at the interviews. The teachers had a full control of the videos such as rewinding and stopping the videos with the intention for them to feel the most comfortable and that they were in charge. They were asked to stop the video whenever they saw CLT elements in their practices so that teachers' CLT element identifications would be the most accurate possible. The findings from the interviews show that there were mismatches between the teachers' CLT understanding and practices versus current trends of CLT theory and practice. The evidence of the findings was drawn from the synthesis of the teachers' class video reviews with their CLT element specifications. Accordingly, the teachers identified 14 specific CLT elements in their practices during watching the videos of their classes as follows:

- (1) Explicit teaching of the textbooks;
- (2) Teaching and/or revising vocabulary, especially expanding beyond textbooks;
- (3) Using games;
- (4) Students' speaking practice in front of the class;
- (5) Speaking practice with given information;
- (6) Students doing listening tasks;
- (7) Linking current with previous sentence patterns;
- (8) Targeting students' abilities to practice using taught vocabulary and sentence patterns;
- (9) Repetition practice;
- (10) Lip reading guess;
- (11) Breaking conventional practice;
- (12) Teacher-student interactions in both L1 and L2;
- (13) Promoting student-student interactions through pair and/or group work and peer comments;
- (14) Teacher's class management.

All of the teachers' identification of their CLT elements will be described in detail in the following parts of this section.

The first element that the teachers thought was a CLT element in their practices was the explicit teaching of the textbooks. Throughout the literature review of CLT, explicit teaching of textbooks does not fit into anywhere in the CLT theory and practices. In fact, Richards (2006); Richards and Rodgers (2001, 2014) and several other scholars stated that CLT practices push towards using authentic materials in classrooms such as text-based, task-based, realia-based, and technology-supported materials. Nevertheless, when being asked about how they conducted their lessons following the CLT approach, two teachers – Phuong and Hong, gave their CLT practice descriptions of their lessons containing this element. Based on the descriptions, their lessons' layouts were the textbooks' exact instructions and activities. Phuong stated that "I covered all the contents required in the textbook". She also detailed her practice as follows:

At first, I let them review the previous lesson by singing along with a song and playing a game ... Then, at that time I let them recall the vocabulary, part of which related to the later reading. That was like a starter for them to gain some words. Then I taught the vocabulary in the reading so that they could understand the reading text. I then taught them about the tips which they could use to guess the contents of the reading. In addition to the main exercise, I let them play a game, the multiple choice, which they read and chose their answers. This was for them to understand and apply in everyday talking. That was what I meant to do.

Meanwhile, Hong gave a long and detailed description of his CLT practice. His description was the exact textbook's order and activities such as *Let's Talk, Listen and Tick, Read and Complete*. He concluded that "I also applied some methods following the CLT direction". It could be seen that the teachers thought what they did (following their textbooks) was part of the CLT practices. Although it is argued that the use of authentic materials is not necessarily an ultimate requirement for CLT practices provided teachers conduct their practices in an authentic manner (Savignon, 2002), the way the teachers conducted their textbook-based teaching practices were otherwise. As described in Chapter 6, the findings of the class observations, the teachers' textbook-based teaching practices were mostly a mechanical conducting of textbooks' contents and activities.

The second element that the teachers believed was CLT was teaching and/or reviewing the lessons' vocabulary. However, Brown (2007); Littlewood (1981, 2011, 2013); Richards (2006) Richards and Rodgers (2001, 2014) show that these vocabulary teaching and/or reviewing activities are not communicative activities regarding the nature of how these

activities were carried out in the teachers' classes. Despite the fact that these vocabulary activities were conducted with a great deal of mechanical repetition practice in order to target students' memorisation, there were two teachers specifying these activities as a CLT element in their practices. The two teachers, Phuong and Thanh, explained that vocabulary was a very important aspect of students' understanding of lessons and their practicing in speaking skills. Thanh said that when he was reviewing old vocabulary and teaching new words, "this part was to prepare students for speaking ... It was also a core part of my lesson". Therefore, when he reviewed old vocabulary or taught new words of the lessons, he surmised it was a CLT element. In teaching new vocabulary, Thanh also specified that when he used more words from beyond the textbook choices, this too was a CLT technique. He claimed that "this is the part I extended from beyond the textbook. In the book there are only four (names of) school subjects. I added some more so that when students speak, they can add more words from outside the textbook".

The third element the teachers believed was CLT was the use of games in their classes. Once again, scholars such as Brown (2007); Littlewood (1981, 2011, 2013); Richards (2006), and Richards and Rodgers (20) show that the ways the teachers used games were not in line with communicative activities. The games the teachers used were mostly memory-based games in order to strengthen or target students' memorisation of taught vocabulary and sentence patterns (as described in detail in Chapter 6). According to Littlewood (2013), these games fit into the category of non-communicative learning activities, in which the focus is on language structures, their forms and meanings. To some extent, it can be argued that the games the teachers used brought some fun and excitement into their classes. However, the nature of how the games were used did not bring the students the opportunities of learning by doing the games or negotiation of meaning through classroom interactions. Nevertheless, there were three teachers - Thanh, Minh and Anh who specified these game activities as a CLT element. According to these teachers, using games aligned with CLT element because the ways they used games could attract and motivate students to learn English. Anh specified that "when I showed pictures and asked the students, they listened, understood and answered what the subjects were. This is an interactive part, in which I used CLT here."

The fourth and the fifth elements the teachers believed were CLT elements were letting students practice speaking in front of the class (fourth), and students' speaking practice

with given information (fifth). These two are reported together as the nature of the activities were the same, just how they were conducted were a little different. However, the literature review of CLT and communicative activities from Richards and Rogers (2014) and Littlewood (2013) show that the teachers' understanding of the CLT elements were not aligned with CLT theory and practices. Nonetheless, there were two teachers who believed these activities as CLT elements in their classes. Regarding the fourth element, letting students practice speaking in front of the class, Thanh was the one teacher who believed it was a communicative element. The section Thanh highlighted from the video was when he asked pairs of students to take turn going to the front of the class to practice asking and answering questions about sentence patterns that they learned that day. The video showed that those students either looked at what was shown on the screen or looked at their textbooks in their hands and repeatedly did the mechanical repetition practice of textbook's or the teacher's-controlled practice. Thanh explained why this segment was a CLT element as follows:

They are afraid of speaking in front of the public because they are afraid of being laughed at by their friends. I try to train them the ability to speak in public so that if they do anything wrong, they will know where. To stand up and speak like this is already very brave.

If Thanh was talking about this activity as a measure to help students overcome their fear of speaking in front of other friends, he could have gained some success when his students could stand up and did the oral practice in such situations. However, when considering the activity as a CLT element, he mistakenly labelled the activity as a communicative activity because there was no meaning negotiation between students or no information gap but mechanical repetition practice of textbook's contents. Quite similarly to the fourth element, the fifth element of students' practice with given information was also mistakenly considered a CLT element by Quy. Quy indicated the video section that she believed contained a CLT element where she let students practice speaking near the end of her lesson. In the video, she gave each student a piece of paper with given information on it and asked them to stand in two lines facing one another and practice asking and answering questions using the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns. She explained her classroom practice as students spoke as partners:

At first, only the two students practiced speaking together. Now in this activity, one student would have the opportunities to speak with 15 other students. It means half of the class stood at the same positions, and the other half moved.

According to Quy, the activity she asked her students to do helped multiply students' chances to speak with many other different partners, and thus it was a CLT element. However, beside the fact that this activity was carried out in a similar manner to the fourth element with no meaning negotiation or information gap, it was not in line with principles of interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981) and comprehensible output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) and also as mentioned in the theoretical foundations for English primary textbook designing (Hoang, 2012).

The sixth element the teachers believed was a CLT element was when students did listening exercises. CLT theory and practice literature from Littlewood (1981, 2011, 2013); Richards (2006); Richards and Rodgers (2014) stated that this was a mistaken belief by one teacher, Thanh. How the listening tasks were carried out in Thanh's class was not communicative in nature. Accordingly, Thanh identified in the video of his class a CLT element when he asked his students to do listening exercises. He showed the exercises on the interactive board, explained the exercises, played the textbook's listening recording as the students listened and circled correct choices in their textbooks. The activity went on with the teacher checking the results by asking students the correct choice for each listening question. Thanh said that "it was the most fun part" as an explanation for his CLT specification. The way he carried out his practice regarding this activity was fun and made the students laugh because of his voice, actions, gestures, etc. However, identifying it as a communicative activity was a mismatch with CLT theory and practices.

The seventh element the teachers believed was a CLT element was linking current sentence patterns with previously learned ones. This specification of CLT elements was another misunderstanding from the teachers. Regardless of the nature of the activity conducted with mechanical repetition practice, one teacher specified this element as a CLT element. Minh pointed out from the video of his class that he linked a sentence pattern he was teaching with one pattern of a previous lesson during students' practice. Even though Minh explained that "I expanded the lesson helping students to link sentence patterns or

multiple sentences rather than a single sentence pattern”, the students were mechanically practicing repeating the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns with all information predictable and without any information gap. The activity Minh identified as a CLT element actually fit well into classroom activities commonly seen in traditional language pedagogy such as Audiolingual Method (Brown, 2007; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014)

The eighth element the teachers believed was a CLT element was students’ abilities to practice using the taught sentence patterns. However, based on the CLT literature review, the teachers’ belief and practices derailed away from the CLT theory and practices regarding the CLT characteristics and communicative classroom activities (Brown, 2007; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Littlewood, 1981, 2007, 2011, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). When students could practice asking and answering questions using taught sentence patterns, it was a CLT element in display. The teachers believed that the students’ abilities in practicing asking and answering questions showed their students’ speaking abilities. Two teachers, Anh and Thanh, who mentioned this element. Anh explained how the specified element was in line with CLT that “students followed the instructions, practiced using the sentence pattern in which they could ask and answer about the day’s timetable. They understood and could apply what they had just learned”. Similarly, Thanh asserted calling students to stand up to practice the taught sentence pattern a CLT element. He explained that “I think students standing up to speak like this (bravery) means there was some CLT element in there”.

The ninth element the teachers believed aligned with CLT was the repetition practice. Looking into the literature of language pedagogies, nobody will deny that this teaching technique is a key feature of Audiolingualism (Brown, 2007; Harmer, 2001; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). Nevertheless, there was one teacher, Quy, who specified it as a CLT element. Quy paused the video of her class to point out a repetition practice in which she asked her students to repeat after her. She confirmed that “All the way from when I taught vocabulary until now, I applied CLT by asking students to repeat what I said, such as when I read the words and students repeated, or when I corrected students’ mistakes”.

The 10th CLT element the teachers believed they were using was students’ vocabulary guessing by looking at their teacher’s mouth shapes while he talked voicelessly. The literature

review of CLT theory and practice show that this is a baseless claim of a CLT element (Brown, 2007; Littlewood, 1981, 2007, 2011, 2013; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014; Savignon, 2002). This element was related to an activity in which the teacher, Thanh, asked his students to look at his mouth shapes while he was saying the taught vocabulary words and phrases just by moving his lips and without producing any sounds. Thanh called it guessing or slip reading guess. He believed that it was very important in communication as “This is a useful way because when people say something, even though I do not understand it yet, I can guess (looking at their mouth shapes) by relying on the context, and it is also good to practice pronunciation”. The classroom activity was actually similar to teaching the pronunciation of sounds with students focusing on mouth shapes for accuracy. No characteristics of communicative activities were found during the conduct of this activity.

The 11th element the teachers believed was a CLT element was the breaking of conventional practices to lead students to communicative abilities. Based on the literature of CLT, this was probably the element that contained the most communicative property among all specified elements by the teachers. This element involved a teacher, Hoang, who went against conventional practices to re-design textbook’s activities towards getting students to speak. In his video, Hoang changed a fill-in-the-blank activity by giving a paragraph with blank spaces where students would fill in with their week activities, practice saying the paragraph and then go to the front of the class to do the presentations. The first few sentences of the paragraph would look similar to most other teachers’ major classroom activities where students talked about their week’s school schedules with the names of weekdays and school learning subjects. The activity was expanded towards some communication gap where students talked about their weekend’s activities where different students talked about different activities they had done in the previous week. The information moved from similarities of same school days and same learning subjects to different weekend activities. Although the activity contained some degree of information gap, it was not a true communicative activity. According to Littlewood (2013), this activity would be placed somewhere between pre-communicative language practice and communicative language practice on the communicative continuum (p. 12). One interesting thing Hoang shared was that he intentionally broke his conventional practice just for my class observation, and he would return back to his conventional practice after my observation. He explained that:

Normally, we just do not dare (to change). We usually just follow “the same path” (following the textbooks and syllabus distribution). We just do the same ... This lesson was because I taught for you; because I thought that the data you would bring back to Australia for others to see ... it would be more impressive that way.

The 12th CLT element in the teachers’ specifications was teacher-student interactions in both L1 and L2. However, this specification was another teachers’ misunderstanding about CLT theory and practice. The element they pointed out did not contain CLT properties most of the time or contained very few communicative particles in it sometimes. Promoting classroom interactions is a good strategy to support CLT if the interactions contain communication with information gap and meaning negotiation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), or the interactions provide comprehensible input, lead students in communication struggles to push out comprehensible output (Gass & Mackey, 2007; Long, 1981; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Furthermore, Harmer (2001) points out that in communicative activities, teachers should have no, or very little intervention in classroom interactions. Nevertheless, there were six teachers who specifically identified this element as a CLT element in their videos. Accordingly, this element related to routine classroom activities whenever teachers asking questions and students answered in both L1 and L2. In these activities, the teachers asked their students questions about the lessons’ vocabulary, explaining the lessons’ dialogue meanings, drawing out sentence patterns from the dialogues, instructing students to practice the sentence patterns and so on. Among the six teachers, Anh explained that when she asked questions or gave instructions, students understood and could answer or followed the instructions, it was a CLT element of CLT practices. Anh illustrated her point by pointing out one scene in the video that “When the students finished singing, I asked what the song was about, the students listened, understood, and answered about days of the week. I think there is some CLT in there”. The interactions seen in the videos were about routine classroom language, and mechanical repetition practice. In addition, the interactions took place in L1 more than L2 (details about how teachers and students used L1 and L2 in their classrooms were presented in section 6.2.1. of Chapter 6. Also, classroom interactions were described in section 6.1.4 of the same chapter). Another point to explain the CLT element in the teacher-student interactions was from Phuong and Anh. They both thought that it was a CLT element when teaching sentence patterns, they asked questions to link the patterns with students’ own

information. Once again, the linking of taught sentence patterns with students' meaning was very limited. Information gap almost did not exist in those classroom language practice (more about this was presented in section 6.2 of Chapter 6).

The 13th element that the teachers believed was a CLT element when they organised students to work in pairs and groups. However, pair and group work in the teachers' specifications were not in line with CLT due to the nature of the activities. Four teachers highlighted the scenes of their students practicing in pairs and groups as evidence of their CLT elements. In the videos, the pair and group activities involved students practicing reading aloud their lessons' dialogues in the textbooks after listening to the recording and repeating after the teachers (such as with Quy and Thanh). All of the four teachers also specified pair and group activities involving students practicing the sentence patterns in which they mechanically asked and answered questions with information given in the textbooks (more details in Chapter 6, presenting the findings of the in-class observations). The pair and group activities in the teachers' specifications were not aimed to develop students' fluency, but they targeted students' accuracy. Therefore, according to the distinction of fluency and accuracy activities by Richards (2006), pair and group work to develop students' accuracy cannot be labelled as communicative activities.

The 14th element that teachers believed was a CLT element was part of their classroom management. Although good classroom management may help create a better learning environment (Brown, 2007; Harmer, 2001), it is difficult to fit the teachers' classroom management specifications anywhere into the literature of CLT. In the teachers' beliefs of classroom management as a CLT element, there were three aspects that the teachers mentioned. The first aspect was teachers' monitoring and giving support while students were doing lessons' tasks. This means that when teachers asked students to practice in pairs and groups, they would move around the class to check and provide assistance when students needed. This aspect is in line with CLT if teachers take their roles as facilitators of the learning process (Brown, 2007; Harmer, 2001; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). However, in the teachers' practices, they were still the controllers of everything happening in their classrooms. Therefore, it is hard to consider the teachers' specification as something communicative. Nonetheless, one teacher, Diem, paused the video to point it out as a CLT element. Diem said, "When the students were practising, I walked around to monitor and

provided help to students if they needed". The second aspect in the classroom management was the teachers' corrective feedback. It is undeniable that teachers' feedback plays an important role in the learning process (Brown, 2007; Harmer, 2001). In addition, current CLT trends today have a balance between fluency and accuracy (Littlewood, 2013; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). However, the teachers' corrective feedback in the teachers' practices focused heavily on forms or accuracy and involved a great deal of repetition practice as the teachers asked their students to repeat correct answers. Therefore, it is also difficult to label their corrective feedback as a CLT element. Nevertheless, there was one teacher who specified corrective feedback moments as a CLT element in her practice. Quy pointed out a scene in the video when a pair of students standing up to read the dialogue in the textbooks. She said that:

This part here where I called on students to stand up and read (the dialogue), then the teacher corrected their mistakes. It means the interactions between the student and student, then the teacher and the students. I listened to them practicing reading together, and I corrected their mistakes.

The third aspect in the classroom management was when teachers educated students in the end of the lessons. Educating students in this case means that teachers gave some reminders outside their lessons to students before closing class periods. This claim of a CLT element is baseless and there is no literature to support that it is something communicative as in CLT. Despite the fact, there was one teacher, Diem, who identified this as a CLT element. Diem noted that "This part also contains some CLT because I asked the students to relate to the reality to educate students. Before going to class, they need to prepare enough books and notebooks based on the school schedules".

In summary for this section, from all of the evidence, the findings showed that the teachers' beliefs and their practices were derailed away from current CLT theory and practices. In other words, they misunderstood CLT theory and practices, and the way they conducted their teaching practices reflected their CLT misunderstanding. In fact, their beliefs and practices showed that they were still mostly following traditional language pedagogies such as the PPP and Audiolingualism. To some extent, the teachers' reflections also showed that they might have some understanding leaning towards the commonness of CLT such as pair and group work or getting students to speak more. However, when they put those beliefs

and understanding into real practices, what was observed was not really CLT practices. Above is the presentation of the teachers' specifications of their CLT elements in their practices when they watched the videos of their classes. After the video watching, the teachers had more reflections on what they thought they achieved and what they did not feel satisfied about their lessons, which will be presented in the following section.

4.4.1.2. Discussions after the teachers watched the entire videos

After the teachers identified CLT elements in their practices, they were asked to reflect on their satisfaction and dissatisfaction of their teaching. Their reflections are classified into two categories: (1) teachers' satisfaction about their classes, and (2) teachers' dissatisfaction about their practices, which will be presented in the following parts.

4.4.1.2a. Teachers' satisfaction about their classes

Through the reflections on their practices in the observed classes, the participants expressed their great satisfaction about their lessons, which also meant in their opinions that their lessons mostly were successful. The teachers talked in detail about their satisfaction within the following four aspects:

- (1) The lesson's smoothness;
- (2) Students' interest in the lessons;
- (3) Students' memorisation of the lessons;
- (4) Students' abilities to do lessons' tasks.

All of the four aspects of teachers' satisfaction are detailed below.

The lesson's smoothness

One of the aspects the teachers felt pleased about their lessons was the lesson's smoothness. This means that their lessons were carried out as planned without any problems or troubles happening. Phuong was the one teacher who mentioned this aspect in her recollection of the observed class. She repeatedly used the word *satisfied* to show that her lesson was successfully conducted.

Firstly, I was very satisfied with that one (the class). They cooperated with me quite smoothly in general. I was very satisfied with their learning. The second thing is that the lesson was presented very smoothly. I was very satisfied. Generally, I was satisfied with the whole lesson.

In her expressions, Phuong was pleased about her students' cooperation with her during the lesson. She was also happy that her lesson was presented smoothly without any problems or troubles. It was apparent that she completely felt her lesson was good.

Drawing students' interest

Students' interests in the lesson was the second aspect mentioned in the teachers' reflections on their satisfaction. There was also one teacher, Quy, who expressed her opinions regarding this aspect. According to Quy, it was an achievement in her class that her students showed they liked the lesson.

I think there were things that I was satisfied with in that class. That is students got what I wanted them to get. For example, I wanted students to be interested in learning during that period. I saw that they were very active. At the end of the day, they showed that they had fun, which means that they liked that lesson. I wanted them to like the lesson and they did. I wanted them to like the English class, and they did.

In Quy's views, her students showed they had fun playing games, and it meant that they had interest in the lesson. Quy also expressed in the interview that she had observed children learning English being "just very miserable". That was why she wanted students to "like learning English as a first priority". Therefore, when she organised games in class and students showed they had fun, she thought it was a big achievement.

Students' memorisation of the lessons

Students' memorisation of the lessons was the third aspect that led to teachers' satisfaction with their lessons. Memorisation of the lessons means students' abilities to remember the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns of the lessons. There were two teachers who mentioned this as their main source of satisfaction with their lessons. Quy was one of the two teachers who were satisfied about their students' memorisation of the lessons. Beside feeling satisfied about her students showing that they liked the lesson, Quy was pleased that they could remember well the vocabulary and sentence pattern taught that day. She explained:

I wanted them to remember the vocabulary and the sentence pattern. By the end of the class, when I asked to check, they did. Students were also able to

answer my questions about the lesson's contents. Those are things that I wanted.

The other teacher who was content about his students' memorisation of the lesson was Hong. He expressed his satisfaction in a similar way to Quy. When being asked about how he thought he achieved the lesson goals, he detailed it that "The student could remember the vocabulary of school subjects. They could write those words on the board. They would listen and identify what school subjects were mentioned in the listening recording". Hong explained that in the lesson, it was a very difficult task to identify which friend had which subjects on the recording. However, he claimed "my students were able to do it", and thus he was satisfied with his lesson.

Students' abilities to do lessons' tasks

Students' abilities to do lesson tasks were the final aspect in the teachers' satisfaction in their practices. This aspect was reflected by six out of the eight teachers. The three teachers – Phuong, Quy and Hong expressed their satisfaction with their students' abilities to remember the lessons' vocabulary, sentence patterns as well as their abilities to do the lessons tasks smoothly as asked and instructed by the teachers. Anh was the fourth teacher who felt pleased about her students' performances. She said, "I saw that my students could answer questions and understand the lesson, I was quite satisfied". The questions that Anh mentioned here were the ones about the lesson's vocabulary and sentence pattern. Similar to the others, Thanh described his satisfaction in regard to his students' abilities:

I was satisfied that I transferred the knowledge. I introduced the contents, and students were able to use the vocabulary and sentence patterns right in the classroom. They could also practice the sentence patterns with their friends as well as the teacher. They could answer relevant questions from that lesson.

Minh was the sixth teacher who was pleased with his students' abilities to do the lesson's tasks. The main tasks so far for Minh as well as other teachers were that students were able to remember the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns. They should also be able to practice asking and answering questions tied to the vocabulary and sentence patterns. Minh was proud to say about his students that "I was most satisfied that my students could excitedly say good sentences and sentence patterns. Most of them understood the lesson contents. It was a success".

In summary, the teachers' critical reflections on their satisfaction were shallow, short-term, lacking theoretical basis and little focused on CLT. They were satisfied about their planned lessons going smoothly with students following teachers' directions. Most of them were also pleased that their students could remember the taught vocabulary and sentence patterns as well as successfully did the mechanical practices. These aspects are apparently not in line with CLT theory and practices. Beside feeling satisfied about their lessons, some teachers also expressed their dissatisfaction about some points in their lessons. Their reflections on those will be presented in the following sections.

4.4.1.2b. Teachers' dissatisfaction about their practices

While most teachers reflected their lessons mainly with success or achievements, some of them also included discontent about their classes. There were four teachers who mentioned their dissatisfaction, which was related to the pressure of having limited time. Accordingly, they had to rush to complete their lessons in allocated times. Therefore, they had to skip some steps in their procedures, limit time for students' practice, and used more L1 than expected.

The first cause of teachers' dissatisfaction under time pressure was that they had to skip some step/s in their teaching procedures. As reported in the previous finding chapters, the teachers believed that their CLT practices should follow a step-by-step procedure from teaching small to bigger things, i.e., teaching vocabulary, then sentence patterns and then having students practice. There were three teachers who shared that they felt discontented as they had to skip some step/s in their lessons because of the limited class time allocation. Hong recollected that when he let his students do the listening exercise, he skipped asking them to share or check the results with each other. He explained the reason because "If I let them share the results (with each other), we would not have made it on time. It was nearly the 35th minute" (one class period lasts 35 minutes). Similarly, Diem talked about her disappointment as she did not have enough time to follow the procedure during the listening task activities. She reflected that, "In part four, *Listen and Tick*, I did not follow enough steps yet. I should have let the students guess first. As I found that I did not have much time left, I went ahead and guessed myself". The third teacher who was not satisfied about skipping steps in her procedure was Quy. She was also under time pressure that forced her to rush, and thus had to leave some steps out of the class procedure. Quy stated that:

There are some areas where I was not satisfied during the class procedure. Specifically, there should have been transitions between parts in the lesson. For example, if we have finished one part, how that part can be applied in the following part should be introduced at the beginning of the following one. Generally, it was about the class procedure. The second one is the part about the dialogue. I think it would be better if I let the children listen to it first, and then I explained the meaning. That day, I was a bit rushed, so I just let students listen and I explained the meaning simultaneously.

The second cause of the teachers' discontent under time pressure was about lacking time for more speaking practice. One teacher, Anh, reflected that she did not have sufficient time to let students practice more about linking the sentence patterns with the students' realities. She shared that "I was not satisfied about the last part of the lesson, I should have let students practice speaking more, but I did not have much time left. The speaking practice with their own real information was not enough".

The third cause of teachers' dissatisfaction related to time pressure was the excessive use of L1 in their classrooms. There were two teachers recalling this matter. When recollecting her lesson, Quy regretted that she used more L1 than she expected. The part involved was when she explained the lesson's dialogue meaning and turning it into a task similar to translation from L2 to L1. She said:

And in fact, when I recalled the way I explained the meaning, I did not feel very satisfied. I felt like I was translating sentence by sentence. Like, well, when students listened to one sentence, then I asked what it meant instead of asking them to look at the pictures and guess what they meant.

The other teacher who recollected this same matter was Hong. While Quy regretted using much L1 in helping students get the dialogue's meaning, Hong identified this matter with his teaching of the sentence patterns. He shared that he was discontented about his use of L1 and L2 in class. He reflected, "Another thing was that when I explained the sentence patterns, I did not use English completely but used both English and Vietnamese".

To sum up this section, the teachers' reflections on their dissatisfaction about their classes strengthen the derailment of their CLT practices from current CLT theory and practices. They were dissatisfied that their procedural practices were not complete as they had to skip

some step/s in teaching procedures. They also felt dissatisfied because of lacking time for students' practice, which confirms that class time was not spent for a very important factor: students' practice using the learned language. Finally, they were not satisfied because they used excessive L1 in class, which confirms the finding that teachers used more L1 than L2, or even mainly L1 in their English classes.

In summary, discussing with the teachers after they had watched the entire videos of their classes and talked about their satisfaction and dissatisfaction confirms the major findings so far. There were mismatches between their CLT understanding and CLT theory and practices, and their so-called CLT practices were not really CLT practices either. For the most parts, their understanding of CLT was at odd with common CLT trends today. In addition, traditional language pedagogies were seen very clearly in their teaching practices. The post-observation interviews revealed that the teachers were pleased with their overall practices, except a few minor points mentioned in section 7.1.2.2. One question raised was that if they would ever change their practices towards more communicative practices or they would just teach the ways seen so far. The answer to this question will be presented in the next section.

4.4.1.3. Teachers' reticence to change

When being asked if the teachers would follow the same practices for their other classes or if they would ever change, seven of the eight teachers' answers were that they would conduct the same practices with some conditional changes while the other one teacher, who changed his practice for this research, would return back to his normal conventional practice. It means that all of the teachers would continue their conventional practices, found out to be traditional language teaching practices as observed and described. The discussion with them revealed that overall, the teachers were satisfied with their teaching, and thus they would be unlikely to make changes in their teaching but they would just adjust some minor ones which eventually did not change the panorama of their teaching practices. Details about teachers' reticence to change will be explained in the following two sub-sections below.

4.4.1.3a. No or little intention to change

Teachers' reticence to change could be seen through their confirmations of continuing their teaching as being observed. Regarding the stability of their practices, seven teachers

replied that what they conducted in the observed class would be applied similarly to other classes as well. Anh confirmed that “I will use this pedagogy for other classes too”. Similarly, Quy affirmed that her practices would be “almost the same for all classes”. Diem also expressed that “I teach other classes the same way”. Phuong gave an extra explanation that “I will still use the same methods for other classes. As I plan the lesson that way, I will teach all classes the same”. Minh also explained his stance that “I will generally use the same pedagogical methods for the rest of other classes because those are the methods that I have been trained and I have been using them a lot during my teaching”. Another two teachers said they would teach differently based on different Year groups (Year 3,4 or 5), but within the same Year group they would follow the same practice for all classes. Thanh gave an example to explain his choice that because “Year 3 students will learn the most simple and normal things, so I will teach them in a normal way because they are just starting to learn English”. However, within the same Year group he confirmed that his practices would be the same for all classes. Similar to Thanh, Hong said that he would “change some questions according to the grade levels” but his overall practices would be conducted unchanged as he said that “I will use them for all classes”. The final case mentioned was related to Hoang. Hoang was mentioned repeatedly in the previous chapter about his intentional change for my research. He intentionally changed his conventional practice to adopt a practice that he thought to be more communicative. Hoang honestly shared that he studied a new progressive method and “I want to follow that, but now honestly, I cannot do it yet because I am tied to several conventional procedures”. However, after he intentionally broke the convention, he witnessed that his students liked it. He said, “That day they ran out of the class and told me: ‘Teacher, teacher, today you taught differently, and it was so great!’. It was what they said”. The change made Hoang re-think that “but after this lesson ... actually, after my lesson for your observation, I have thought about it a lot”. Hoang thought he would want to change, but added “I have enough enthusiasm to act, but to put our dream into reality, there are still many things to be concerned about, just as what I have told you so far”. With what he shared, if there was not any kind of approval from leaders, Hoang would just go back to his conventional practice, which was explicitly following the textbooks as the other seven other teachers did, and after all they would follow the same path: following textbooks and conventional procedures which were considered to be safe.

4.4.1.3b. Some conditional adjustments which might be considered

Regarding the conditional changes that teacher might have, after watching the videos and discussing their practices, some teachers expressed that they might conditionally change some small things. The following list of changes was synthesised from what the teachers shared:

- (1) Building more student-student interactions;
- (2) Some more focus on forms in some cases;
- (3) More time and some small changes for the production stage;
- (4) More use of L1 with weaker and younger classes;
- (5) More use of songs outside textbooks;
- (6) More contextual communicative situations.

The first and the second points of building more student-student interactions and some more focus on forms were related to Hoang and Hong respectively. The discussion with them showed that these changes, if ever to take place, would not make their current teaching become more CLT practices. Hoang was the one who re-designed his textbook lesson activities. The highlight of his lesson was the activity in which he designed a paragraph with blank spaces for students to substitute with their own information for a speaking practice. The students then were invited individually to the front of the class and talked about their weekend activities, a classroom activity that Hoang called public speaking. After they finished their presentations, they would go back to their seats and the activity went on that way. Hoang mentioned building more student-student interactions which meant that “I would let my students do the presentation part, and then others would ask questions”. He explained why he might add that question-and-answer section that “They can just ask to make it clear from what has just been said ... It should be ... just a condition for the speakers to speak more. Well, it is about communication”. However, Hoang expected a problem that could make his change difficult to take place. The problem was that his students “cannot form questions”. If Hoang was to make changes to add question-and-answer section between speakers and listeners, he thought that he would re-teach his students to make questions. It means that he would give some more instructions on language forms. He pictured the path he might take:

When I design a lesson in that way, I am not sure if my students can form questions. Yeah, I still have some hesitation right there. So, if I do it later

(continue to have students practice speaking following his way), I will probably prepare them before with making questions. I will focus on that during my teaching. Then I think when I do it (students making presentation and asking questions), students can do it.

According to Hoang, more instructions on (language) forms would help boost student-student interactions following the question and answer pathway. However, if students continued to do mechanical practice with given information, it would not guarantee that the change could make his practice closer to CLT. Also, Hoang said he would have to return to his normal practice, from which other teachers in this research were suffering pressure to cover their textbooks within a limited time allocation. Therefore, this would probably put him under time pressure like other teachers to cover all textbooks' contents. The change he mentioned might be done conditionally but not surely that it would happen. Regarding Hong with the second point of some more focus on forms, Hong thought that he would focus more on the part of sentence patterns. It was because sentence patterns were the core of lessons after all. Everything teachers did was bound to them. From the in-class observations, it was seen that teachers conducted most classroom activities to mainly target students' memorisation of sentence patterns and taught vocabulary. The main reason for this was mostly originated from the focus-on-forms testing and assessment that Hoang and Diem shared in their interviews as Diem said that "When there are tests, they are all about doing (grammar and writing) exercises". Hong chose to focus more on sentence patterns because of his schools' and students' conditions. The school had a sub-branch one about two kilometres away where facilities for teaching and learning were old and not sufficient with just tables and chairs. Classes there were also more crowded and also with weaker students compared to ones at the headquarter school. In order to deal with those situations, Hong chose to focus on the 'core' of a lesson, sentence patterns. He said:

I mainly teach them to master the question patterns in the Let's Talk part. When they ask their friends this question, others must be able to answer it; or when they want to ask their friends that question, how they should ask. It is the focus, and I will show them that.

In Hong's case, if he made this change, it would push his practice further away from CLT theory and practices as he was planning to focus mainly on grammar or language forms even though

at the time of the class observation, what and how he taught were more traditional than leaning towards CLT.

The third point in the teachers' possible practice changes was that they might make changes in the production stage of their lessons. There were two teachers who mentioned this point. The first one was Anh who thought that she might lengthen the production stage. Reflecting on her lesson, Anh thought that she spent too much time reviewing vocabulary and thus did not have much time left for the production stage when students could practice the sentence pattern longer. Viewing it as a limitation, Anh pictured that she would fix it by reducing time on vocabulary teaching and/or reviewing and increasing time for students' practice. She said, "There is just one thing and that is I let students guess the subject a little too long. Therefore, I would reduce the time on this part so that they would have some more time to practice in the production". With Anh's anticipated change, it might be better when students could have some more time to practice. However, if the production practice continues to be with repetition drills or mechanical practice, students still do not have opportunities to engage in real communication with information gap, to struggle in their interactions to communicate to push out comprehensible output. Therefore, it will be still a long way for students to reach the demanded communicative competence. The second teacher who talked about making changes in the production stage was Phuong. Phuong stated that she would follow the same practice for all of her classes. However, she raised a possibility that she might make a minor change in the production stage. In her observed lesson, Phuong conducted a question-and-answer section where she asked individual students about their own collections (of items) in the production stage, and the students responded to her orally. She guessed that she might change from oral question-and-answer version to written forms and then back to oral forms. She detailed her choice:

If there is any change, it will be the last one. If I do not do the Q/A, I will ask them to go to the board and write (answers) about their own collections, then they present it in front of the class. I may change that part, but the main lesson's contents will be conducted the same.

The minor change Phuong mentioned would let students add some more writing before saying their answers to her questions. As she said, her practice was still unchanged, or even the part she might change would slow down the production stage, and thus less students

could participate as it would take more time for students to write each answer and then say it out loud.

The fourth point in the teachers' reflections about possible changes was that they might use more L1 with weaker and younger classes. There was one teacher who reflected on this point. Answering the question about teaching practices for other classes, Hong stated that "I will use the same methods, but I will explain more clearly in Vietnamese". With younger and weaker classes, Hong chose to use more Vietnamese with the hope to help his students understand more clearly.

I will change some questions according to the grade levels. I will explain more in Vietnamese for games. I cannot speak English as much with other classes because generally class 5/1 (the observed class) is a little bit better than the others. For example, things would be more difficult with class 5/3 at the sub-branch school that you visited the other day.

According to Hong's sharing so far, his possible changes would be focusing more on forms (sentence patterns) and then using more Vietnamese in some certain classes. These anticipated changes would hold Hong's practice further back to traditional language pedagogies where language forms and L1 translations were the focus.

The fifth point in the teachers' reflections about possible changes in their practices was that more songs available on the Internet might be used for their lessons. One teacher, Diem, who reflected on this matter. In her observed lesson, Diem used a song found on the Internet for the first time. She recollected that her students seemed to like the song a lot. Therefore, when being asked if she would continue to use songs searched and found on the Internet, she said:

Yes, I like that idea a lot because students enjoyed it so much. The pressure of learning was no longer there. When I stick to the songs in the books, students just listen and do not want to sing along although I ask them to do so.

It is worth to re-mention that Diem and other teachers who used songs in their classes not for teaching their lessons through songs but for some fresh moments or just because songs happened to be in their textbooks (details about how songs were used in the teachers' classes were presented in section 1.1 of Chapter 6, the in-class observations). Furthermore, Diem was

the one who complained about lacking time to cover textbooks' contents and that she had to cut back some parts supposed to be more communicative to focus on main contents of a lesson following teaching-to-the-test practice. Therefore, using more songs found on the Internet would be a conditional change if only Diem could find more time to do so.

The sixth and also the final point in the teachers' reflections about possible practice changes was the use of more contextual communicative situations. Thanh reflected that as to following the textbooks, he imagined there would be changes and he would teach differently only "If I could be set free from the textbook frame". If he could have some agency to conduct his teaching practice, Thanh would want to put students to learn English in contextual situations as in his example that "I would set specific situations. For example, if there was a foreigner, what would it be like ...". Once again, this will strictly be a conditional change. Thanh would only do it if he was granted agency to teach beyond textbook frames.

To sum up teachers' reticence to change, the discussions with the teachers after they had watched the entire videos of their classes revealed that there was a resistance to change from all of the teachers. Eventually, they did not want to change their practices except for some contents mentioned in this section above with appropriate conditions. Their reflections on their practices presented in section one and two above showed that more or less they believed their English teaching pedagogies were CLT practices. They expressed that they were pleased with their practices as well as their students' performances except some small dissatisfactions, which might be changed conditionally.

In summary, teachers' reflections on their practices have been covered in Part I. The teachers believed that they used communicative activities (elements) in their classes and that their practices were CLT practices. They were generally satisfied with their teaching and would not change their overall practices. However, the findings so far show otherwise that the teachers' practices were actually not CLT practices. In fact, what and how they were teaching reflected that they were using traditional language pedagogies such as Audio-lingual Method, Grammar-Translation Method and the PPP model. So far, answers to the research questions to find out what communicative activities and how teachers used those activities in their classrooms have been found. This research was also aimed to find out why teachers taught the ways they did, what challenges they were facing in their practices and what kind of help

and support they needed to improve their practices. Answers to all of these questions will be reported the following Part II.

4.4.2. Issues affecting teachers' primary English practices

This part will present the findings of issues affecting the primary English teachers' practices, which were identified and presented in the two previous chapters and more reflections in Part I of this chapter. The evidence to answer what issues affecting the teachers' practices, what challenges were facing them, and what kind of help and support they needed was drawn from both the post-observation interviews (discussions with them after they watched the videos of their classes) and the pre-observation interviews. It is because the teachers already mentioned some of the issues in their interviews prior to the class observations, and they reflected more in the post-observation interviews. From the teachers' responses, the issues affecting their practices, their challenges and needs of help and support were grouped into five categories:

- (1) Teacher assessment;
- (2) Student assessment;
- (3) MOET's approved textbooks;
- (4) Primary English teachers' challenges;
- (5) Teachers' needs of help and support.

These categories of teachers' reflections on their professional issues will be reported in detail below.

4.4.2.1. *Teacher assessment*

Primary (English) teachers were contemporarily assessed based on several official criteria. Teacher assessment in this section was reported from what the teachers reflected that was challenging to them. From what the teachers responded; teacher assessment involves the following:

- (1) Academic inspections and peer observations;
- (2) The powerful academic inspectors and critical peer observers;
- (3) "Required" teaching procedures;
- (4) Students' performances in tests and exams.

The first and second issues related to teacher assessment were academic inspections and peer observations as well as the people who conducted the inspections and observations. As part of the teacher assessment, academic inspections and peer observations greatly influenced how teachers conducted their teaching practices. There were three teachers who directly mentioned these issues during their interviews. It was learned from the pre-observation and post-observation interviews that academic inspections and peer observations were conducted regularly. Regarding peer observations, it was as regular as what Phuong mentioned, “Teachers in a school – all primary teachers have to be assigned into groups. We do class observations every week to get peer appraisals or comments”. Phuong informed that the main purpose for the peer observations was that “Teachers learn from one another’s experience when we do the peer appraisals and class observations”. However, Hoang provided his unfavourable feelings about regular academic inspections and peer observations. He contrasted the feelings he had about conventional inspections and peer observations with my observation for this research. He said:

I must say that not each class observation is the same after I have been through many observations. It is different. Like the class observation with you, I honestly say this not to make you feel pleased. I feel that after the class observation with your presence, I have awakened to learn many things. I feel a little more mature. That is true, compared to professional academic observations. After those observations are over, people say this and that. They criticise me about this and that. I ignore them all. But for this class observation, there are still many things in my mind that make me excited about hoping to do it again. (Hoang, post observation-interview)

Hoang opened up about the drawbacks of academic inspections and peer observations. Instead of helping improve the quality of teaching and learning, they brought some opposite effects on teachers like him. Related to this issue, it even made teachers’ practices more influenced by academic inspectors. In the teachers’ descriptions, they were very powerful but rigid people. Another teacher, Anh, informed that academic inspectors were from the local DOET or BOET who visited teachers’ classes periodically or unexpectedly to make sure teachers were on track with DOET’s/BOET’s syllabus distribution schedules and other teaching and learning quality issues. Anh shared that:

Yes, the District's BOET. They said that it is not compulsory to teach a unit with how many periods, but the most important thing is that how you need to teach so that students can understand. However, when (BOET's) academic inspectors come to do class observations, they question why we are at some certain unit at the time, and that we are later than other teachers based on the syllabus distribution schedules. Then they ask us to prepare better, to speed up so that our students can keep up with other students. (pre-observation interviews)

Supporting Anh's reflection, Hoang strengthened the idea of powerful and rigid academic inspectors and observers influencing teaching practices in his sharing. He complained, "I mean that they still always have something to criticise you about", and that "if the inspection observers are flexible, I will do as the class I have had with you. But there are many of them. They are very rigid. They do not accept (the creativity) to be frank". Hoang said that what he did for the observed class would be criticised as wrong by other observers because of his changes. He stated, "If another teacher came to observe my class, they would say that I did wrong. What is wrong? They would say that this period is about writing. You cannot teach students speaking". As academic inspections assumed an important role in teacher assessment, teachers had to make sure that they performed well in the eyes of the observers. Hoang shared what he knew that "Actually, I go to observe other teachers' classes. I clearly see that teachers have already fed the lessons to students (rehearsing the lessons before the observations)". Hoang was referring to the fact that they saw it, knew it but accepted it as it was, provided it was in line with teaching conventions.

The third issue related to teacher assessment that influenced teachers' practices was the underlying "required" teaching procedures. As described previously about teachers' understanding of the CLT approach and their practices, they followed procedural practices with a step-by-step approach progressing from smaller to bigger things in conducting a lesson. It turned out in the interviews with the teachers that their procedural practices originated from some underlying "required" teaching procedures. Such procedures were imposed on them as they participated in professional training workshops. Quy was one teacher who mentioned previously that she got the teaching procedures from in-service training sessions. Another teacher who shared this matter was Anh. She shared her experience about academic inspections in relation with the "required" teaching procedures. When there were academic

inspections and peer observations, teachers would be criticised if they did not follow certain procedures

For example, the next period will be one about grammar. Then they expect us to follow the procedure, the steps of a grammar lesson. Regarding their evaluation, they will see at the end of the lesson if students can understand the lesson or not, but they will definitely evaluate us about the lesson procedure. They will say things like ... well you do not teach that part well, or that part needs to be taught this way or that way. Generally, we will be criticised for whatever we do.

When being asked where some “required” procedure was from, Anh responded:

It has come from the (DOET/BOET) training sessions, which have been many years ago. At the trainings, there was an agreement that something should be taught like that and so on. It has been applied since then ... It has been many years and I do not remember how many years, but we were trained with those. For example, if we teach a reading lesson, there are steps we must follow.

Hoang’s sharing could be used to conclude the power and rigidity of academic inspectors. Teachers like him would be in a situation that they had to listen and accept. He bitterly admitted, “Well, for an academic inspector, whatever they say, I will have to agree *Ok, Ok. I was wrong at that point.* It is that way”. From the teachers’ responses, it was learned that the local DOET/BOET organised in-service professional training sessions, and teachers got trained with those teaching methods as well as how they should teach following the training. Those underlying “required” teaching procedures were explicitly or implicitly imposed on the teachers.

The fourth and also final issue related to teacher assessment was students’ performances in tests and exams. Students’ performances in tests and exams were related because they were considered part of the teaching quality. This matter led to another related issue: teaching to the test practice. Teachers would concentrate on teaching students to do well in tests and exams instead of focusing on developing students’ real abilities to communicate in English. There were two teachers who reflected on this issue. Diem shared her experience that “when there are tests, they are all about doing (grammar and writing) exercises”. She explained her practice to cope with it that “So, if I did not guide the students

to do those, then they would not do tests and exams well". The other teacher sharing his knowledge of the matter was Hoang. He talked about his experience when he was first transferred to the primary school where he was teaching:

When I came to this school, I was told (by school leaders) that I should try so that students can do the written parts (grammar and writing) because they were tested in exams. Therefore, although the MOET states in the curriculum that listening and speaking skills should be concentrated on, but ... (post-observation interviews)

He expressed his worries about his teaching that "... but if it fails". Hoang explained:

What does it mean by "fail"? It means when they take exams, they ... they ... You should remember that (English) tests now are mostly written. There may be speaking, reading, and writing. And if students cannot write and get bad scores, then I will be the one to be held responsible for that. Their parents will blame me, "I don't know why others' children can write and get 9,10 marks while my child cannot?". While speaking skills only account for two points, do you believe that teachers can evaluate whatever they want with (students') speaking skills?

As a result, to avoid being assessed as "fail", teachers like Hoang and Diem would have to focus on teaching students in a way to guarantee that they would do well in their tests and exams; and it forced teachers to follow a practice as Diem described, "I have to cover all of the exercises in the books, so my time is very limited, and thus the communication part is not applied much". Hoang expressed that following conventions (teaching to the textbooks and to the tests) provided a safe zone. As after all no teachers would want to be labelled as "fail" just like what Hoang said above about a new progressive method "I have studied that, and I want to follow that, but now honestly, I cannot do it yet because I am tied up to several conventional procedures".

To sum up, based on the teachers' reflections, teacher assessment was textbook driven, and it looked like it held back their use of CLT. It was learned from the teachers' reflections that the system including academic inspections and peer observations, conventional teaching procedures and testing and assessment traditions limited teachers' capacities to exploit what was good to improve their teaching practices leading students to

the desired communicative competence. Beside teacher assessment, there were still other issues affecting teachers' practices, which will be continued to report in the following sections.

4.4.2.2. Student assessment

The second category in issues affecting teachers' practices related to student assessment, which was closely related to the fourth issue in the immediate above section about teacher assessment. Accordingly, part of the teacher assessment was related to students' performances shown through their tests' and exams' results. That led to teachers' tendency of teaching to the test practice. This category of student assessment will provide more details about how students contemporarily assessed based on what the teachers stated. There were two characteristics to be mentioned in the matter of student assessment:

- (1) Focus-on-forms testing;
- (2) The trustworthiness of (oral) tests.

The two characteristic of student assessment were focus-on-forms testing and the trustworthiness of oral tests. It means that tests and exams for primary students contained mostly language forms, in relation to vocabulary and sentence patterns that students learned in class. In important tests and exams, the proportions divided for test components were 80 percent for paper-based tests and 20 percent for oral tests. There were two teachers who mentioned these characteristics in their reflections. As described above, Diem shared her experience that "when there are tests, they are all about doing (grammar and writing) exercises". Hoang also recollected above that his school leaders told him that he "should try (to teach) so that students can do the written parts (grammar, reading and writing) because they were tested in exams". Hoang noted, "You should remember that (English) tests now are mostly written", and that tests contained parts about "speaking, reading, and writing". The teachers did not openly mention in their interviews, but to the best of my knowledge, the oral tests (speaking) were carried out during class times by teachers who were in charge of their classes. The written parts were conducted during major test times as whole-school testing activities under the DOET's/BOET's directions and administration. Coming to this point, it was time to mention the importance and trustworthiness of the English oral tests. On a scale of 10 points (100 percent) for an English test, oral test sections were account for only two points (20 percent). Hoang informed that, "While speaking skills only accounted for two points, do

you believe that teachers can evaluate whatever they want with (students') speaking skills?". What Hoang meant was that for the speaking tests, teachers could give their students whatever scores they wanted as the parts were not audio-recorded. Hoang's explanation for what he said led to an opening of another related issue: a good-score oriented education where schools, teachers and parents wanted to see students' good scores rather than their real competencies. Hoang said:

That means with the speaking skills' marks, now ... for example, if a student gets eight marks for the English exam, but he needs 8.5 points to be overall ranked as an excellent student, teachers will never dare to correct the results of written test papers ... but they correct the speaking (scores). It is easier to do with speaking scores. (post-observation interviews)

The focus on students' good scores was another story and would not be discussed in detail here. However, it was briefly mentioned to see that student assessment in English tests was still heavily placed on forms rather than on their English communicative competence, and the oral test scores might not give people a confidence that students could speak English well.

To sum up, testing and assessment were still mostly paper-based and forms-focused (focused on language forms rather than meaning) and against CLT compatibility, which is meaning focused. Such a testing system influenced teachers' practices in general as they had to make sure their students achieved high test scores to please their schools and students' parents. This way of testing was one of the forces that affected teachers' practices, leading them to teaching-to-the-test practice instead of focusing on developing students' communicative competence.

4.4.2.3. MOET's approved textbooks

The third category in issues affecting teachers' practices was the MOET's approved textbooks. As previously mentioned, the teachers in this research were following a textbook-based practice in which approved textbooks could be considered as their Bibles and compasses navigating their teaching. Therefore, textbooks played essential parts in their practices. Through interviews with them, the teachers shared their opinions about MOET's approved textbooks, summarised in the following figure.

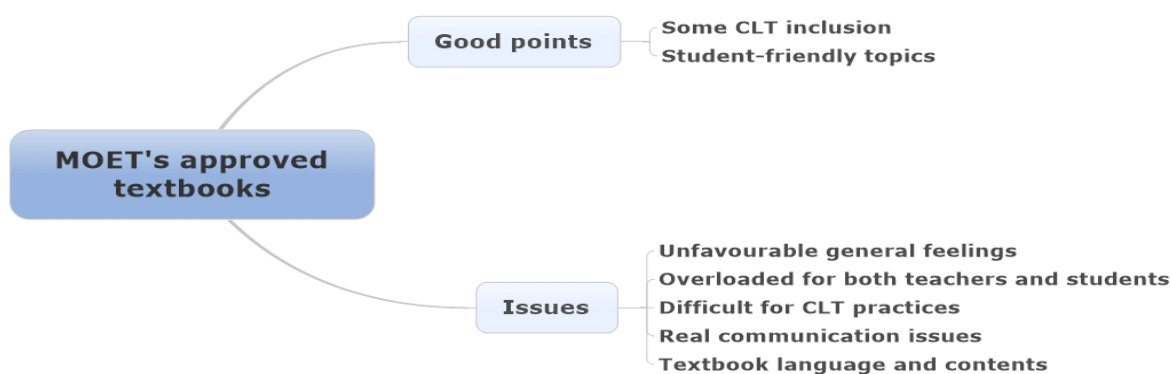


Figure 4.20. Teachers' opinions about MOET's approved textbooks

As seen from Figure 4.20, teachers' opinions about MOET's approved textbooks are classified into two groups: (1) good points and (2) issues.

The first group of opinions about the MOET's approved textbooks was the good points about them. Within this group, there are two opinions including (1) some CLT inclusion and (2) student-friendly topics. There were two teachers who shared their opinions regarding these contents. Hoang thought that the textbooks were written towards communication. He stated, "In general, I see that there is also a communication direction (in the books)". Similarly, Anh agreed that "teaching primary English using the MOET's textbooks, I feel that it is also teaching in the direction of CLT". Hoang explained his opinions that "In English 3,4,5 textbooks, there are many things we can connect with the outside world". Meanwhile, Anh estimated that "when children finish the English curricula, they can still communicate with people around them on familiar topics. Then those textbooks can meet the teaching following CLT". Anh's claim about the textbooks was also related to the second opinion about the student-friendly topics of the textbooks. She explained her claim that, "because some lessons from the textbooks are topics close to children's real life". Similarly, Hoang shared the same explanation with Anh. He stated, "There are lessons which are quite close to the students. For example, talking about family, talking about toys, talking about break times at school like I told you before. Then talking about the weather".

The second group of teachers' opinions about the MOET's approved textbooks was about some issues or drawbacks that teachers reflected. Accordingly, there were five main issues that teachers mentioned:

- (1) Unfavourable general feelings towards the textbooks;
- (2) Overwhelming for both teachers and students;
- (3) Difficult for CLT practices;
- (4) Real communication issues;
- (5) Textbook language and content issues.

The first issue about the textbooks was the teachers' unfavourable general feelings towards the books. It means that without yet discussing deeply into the issues about the textbooks, the teachers expressed their dislike of using the books. There were two teachers who opined about this. When being asked if the approved textbooks she was using supported her CLT practices, Quy stated that "Yes, it is generally good, but the thing is ... I do not really like them in general". When she briefly informed me about the textbooks' contents, she concluded that "there are things (in the textbooks) I do not like very much". Hong gave several explanations for why he did not favour using the MOET's textbooks, and one was that there were contents that were not suitable for children. He unloaded:

There are many lessons or parts in the (MOET's) textbooks that students may not use but they are forced to learn. They are forced to remember things that they do not know what they are about or used for. Just like with me, there are things (in the textbooks) that I have to check in advance to know what they are about, let alone the children. Those are not suitable for the students.

The second issue regarding the MOET's textbooks was the overload for teachers and students. Accordingly, the amount of work for teachers' teaching and students' learning was overwhelming. Three out of the eight teachers reported this issue. Phuong was a special case among the eight teachers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, at Phuong's school, different MOET's approved textbooks by Oxford were used instead of the MOET's Education Publishing House textbooks as with other seven teachers. However, Phuong shared some of her knowledge about the MOET's textbooks. According to her comparison, the Oxford's textbook series were good while MOET's textbooks made teachers and students "overloaded". She said, "Other teachers and I think that the way teaching contents are put into the MOET's textbooks is very cumbersome. Too many things to learn but students did not remember much". Another teacher who opined similar sharing about the textbooks' loads was Minh. He found that "the programs (syllabus and textbooks) are relatively heavy" for him and thus

made his teaching practice difficult. Diem was the third teacher reflecting this issue of the textbooks. She complained that it was overwhelming for her because “the amount of knowledge in the books is too much to cover”. She added, “I must cover all (textbook) contents and it is all about rushing with the time”.

The third issue regarding MOET’s approved textbooks was that teachers faced difficulties to teach in the direction of CLT based on the textbooks. There were four teachers who directly or indirectly opined on this issue. Minh was the first teacher who directly made the claim. When being asked if the use of MOETs’ textbooks gave him any support for his teaching practice, Minh replied:

I think that is difficult for me to teach in the direction of CLT. If for every class period, I have to stick to the frames of the textbooks or stick to the syllabus distribution schedules, then it will be a difficulty.

Hoang was the second teacher who implied following the textbooks was difficult for his practice. For the class observation of this research, Hoang changed the textbook’s activities to create more opportunities for students’ speaking. He did it because he viewed textbook’s activities as boring. He said, “For this lesson, if I just follow the textbook, it will be very boring. The lesson (that was taught exactly as the textbook design) is boring”. Diem was the third teacher who added her opinions about extra difficulties when teaching following the textbooks. As teachers taught following the textbooks, there were activities in the textbooks that were difficult for teachers and students to follow. In the class observation, Diem used a song found on the Internet in her observed class. She reflected that her students liked it, and it encouraged her to use songs more in the classroom. However, Diem considered songs (and chants) included in the MOET’s textbooks to be more difficult to use in class. She clarified that:

I only play some easy songs for students to sing along with. However, many songs in the books often have difficult melodies, and students cannot follow them. They only listen and they cannot sing along ... When I stick to the songs in the books, students just listen and do not want to sing along although I ask them to do so.

Diem also admitted that “especially the chants in the books are impossible (for students) to follow. Therefore, I do it myself”. Diem concluded that in the future, she might use more

songs, but not the ones in the textbooks. Instead, she would search for more suitable songs on the Internet.

The fourth issue teachers found with the MOET's textbooks was the matters of real communication concerning adhering to the textbooks. Accordingly, teachers claimed that the textbooks did not serve well for learners' real communication needs. There were four teachers reflecting on this issue. Hoang was the first to voice his opinions that the textbooks did not contain (enough) real-life elements for students' communication needs. Hoang explained that there were things "not in the textbooks, but in fact there are those things in the world out there". Hoang stated that he had problems regarding students' communication needs when they asked him. He admitted, "The difficulty as I told you is that sometimes the students ask about things that I do not expect, and it causes me difficulty". In those circumstances, Hoang chose to solve the problems by telling his students that 'let me go home and I will review it'. Quy, Anh and Thanh were three other teachers who gave comments about real-life communication issue regarding the MOETs' textbooks. According to them, the textbooks did not facilitate real communication. Quy opined that the textbooks limited students' access to real communication. Her point was that all major work when teaching an English lesson in the textbooks was just revolving around some sentence pattern, and thus "it is not expanded to reach real communication outside". In addition, Quy felt the textbooks' language was not authentic in a way that it was "so far removed from the students' current realities". Similarly, Anh also agreed that the textbooks did not contain much real communication when main contents were just circulating around single sentence patterns. She argued that "communication cannot be just about asking a question (asking and answering questions using some sentence pattern)". Like Quy, Anh thought that the textbooks' language was not as it was in real life because:

*in real communication people do not talk the same as it is written in the books.
I guess teaching students using the books is just to let them know that there
can be sentences like those, but in reality, there may not be.*

Anh eventually raised her awareness that "I should teach them what they can be able to communicate normally when they meet foreigners, not teaching them what exactly as in the textbooks". Thanh was the final teacher who claimed that the textbooks did not help much

with teaching students to communicate. He pointed out that “if I follow those textbooks to teach, then students will not communicate well”.

The fifth and also the final issue about the MOETs’ approved textbooks was the one about the textbooks’ language and contents. Accordingly, there were three details reflected by the teachers. Firstly, there were two teachers who evaluated that the MOETs’ textbooks mainly focused on forms instead of communication. Thanh expressed that the MOETs’ primary English textbook series (*English 3,4,5*) which he was using did not support students’ communication well. It was because the books were composed with a “leaning more to (language) knowledge. Similarly, Hong expressed his views that the MOETs’ textbooks were not supportive of communication. He detailed his views:

The textbook series by the (MOET’s) Educational Publishing House, which I am using English 4,5, mainly focus on grammar. There are not many parts for listening and speaking lessons for students. It is mainly about grammar and doing exercises. I think the textbooks do not have many communicative activities. They do not have many games and songs either. There are many exercises of reading and writing. There is also vocabulary check exercises but not many about listening and speaking. Students only say along, answer following patterns available in the books. There are no parts for students to practice their own (listening & speaking) lessons.

Secondly within the fifth issue concerning the textbooks’ language and contents, it was claimed that the language in the textbooks was not clearly linked together. Instead, each unit in the books was about some separate and isolated sentence pattern. There was one teacher, Anh, who made this claim. She pointed out, “Another thing is the sentence patterns in the books: they exist in separation from one another” while her point extracted above that in real life, people did not just ask questions around some certain sentence pattern when they communicated. Thirdly, the final detail of textbooks’ language and contents in the teachers’ descriptions was the inappropriateness of some textbooks’ contents. There were two teachers who made the claim. When being asked if the MOETs’ textbooks supported her in her CLT practices, Anh first gave some good points about the books. She then talked about the issue of textbooks’ content appropriateness. Accordingly, the appropriateness was related to the different regions in the country when the same approved textbooks were used nationwide. Anh stated that “In general, it cannot be all good. Maybe because the English

textbooks are written for the whole country. Not everything in them can be appropriate for all places”. Backing Anh’s claim, Thanh gave his explanation for the inappropriateness as follows:

Besides, this book series were designed by the MOET, so I see the culture in the books is also leaning to the Ministry, leaning to the Northern part of Vietnam. About the South, well sometimes I teach and find units/lessons that are even not understandable to teachers, let alone young students. I find it difficult for students to apply here and difficult to use English to practice.

What Thanh meant was that the series of MOET’s textbooks (*English 3,4,5*) were designed by a group of people from the North part of Vietnam, and thus the cultural features inserted in the books were mainly the ones of the North. Therefore, there were things that were not appropriate for teachers and students in the South, which caused difficulties for him teaching using the books.

In summary, except few good points, the teachers in this research expressed their unfavoured opinions about the MOETs’ approved textbooks. Accordingly, textbooks were too much language focused and with excessive amount of knowledge and skill to be taught in limited allocated class time. Generally, the use of textbooks is antithetical to CLT as CLT pushes towards authentic language use. Although textbook designers today have tried to make textbooks’ contents and layouts look like authentic materials to some extent (Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014), it is undeniable that textbooks together with textbook-based practices limit and hold back teachers’ CLT practices at least in this research.

4.4.2.4. Other issues impeding CLT delivery

Beside major issues presented above, there were also other issues that impeded the teachers’ CLT delivery. From what the teachers responded, there were other challenges facing their teaching practices, which are summarised in figure 4.21 below.

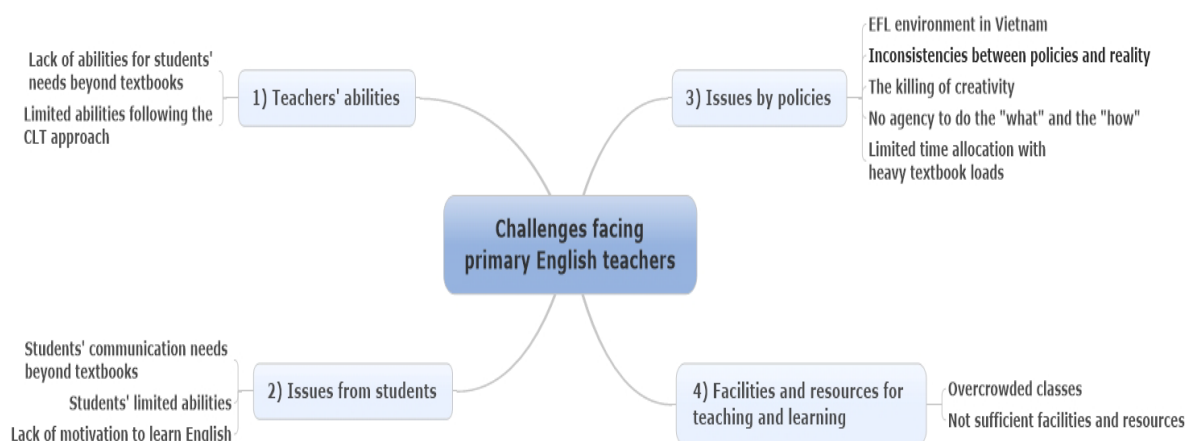


Figure 4.21. Challenges facing primary English teachers

As seen from the summary, there are four group of challenges facing the teachers including:

- (a) Teachers' abilities;
- (b) Issues from students;
- (c) Issues by policies;
- (d) Facilities and resources for teaching and learning.

All of these challenges will be reported in detail below.

4.4.2.4a. Teachers' abilities

The first group of challenges facing the teachers was teachers' abilities. Accordingly, there were two concerning matters consisting of (1) teachers' abilities to cater students' communication needs beyond textbooks, and (2) teachers' limited abilities to teach following CLT. Firstly, regarding the teachers' abilities to meet students' communication needs beyond textbooks, there was one teacher sharing that he was not able to respond to students' immediate needs of communication beyond textbooks. Hoang revealed above that there were things in the world outside the textbooks that students wanted to learn. However, he was not able to completely meet those needs. Hoang gave an example to make what he said more clearly that one of his students asked him "Thầy, con muốn nói con biết chơi yoyo thì nói như thế nào (Teacher, how should I say if I want to say I know how to play yoyo?)". Hoang admitted that "I had no idea what it was at all. I just told them I did not know yo-yo. Then they all burst into *Oh*. They might mean that I was more stupid than them". Hoang drew out from the example that:

There you know, they saw people playing it and they asked me. Those are some situations of the reality. They really have a need to know things, but I do not know. But how can you teach something if you do not know about it? Those are a few things that I see communication outside (the classroom) is very immense, but we teachers ...

Hoang concluded that “I would say CLT is about the reality, but we will ‘die’ by the students’ questions because we do not know about the reality”, and that “I think I have to improve myself”. Secondly, regarding teachers’ limited abilities to teach following the CLT approach, there were two teachers who directly mentioned this challenge. According to Diem, she believed that in teaching following the CLT approach, teachers needed to create good teacher-student interactions. However, it was one of her shortcomings as she explained that “I have not been able to create conditions for being close to the students, so teaching in the direction of CLT is quite limited for me, I think”. The other teacher, Hoang, also shared his limitations in his practice. Hoang thought that he had limited abilities to interest his students as he said, “for some other students, I think that I have not been able to stimulate their interests or abilities”.

In a nutshell, the research findings of teachers’ abilities as admitted by the teachers showed that teachers’ abilities were hindering their CLT practices. They had limited abilities or insufficient abilities to teach following the CLT approach. They did not succeed in meeting their students’ immediate needs of communications. Their textbook-based teaching practices tied them to textbook frames, and if there were questions regarding the reality out there from students, they could not answer the questions to meet their students’ communication needs.

4.4.2.4b. Issues from students

The second group of challenges facing the teachers was the issues from students. Accordingly, there were three matters concerning this challenge group:

- (1) Students’ communication needs beyond textbooks;
- (2) Students’ limited abilities;
- (3) Students’ lack of motivation to learn English.

Firstly, regarding the matter of students’ needs beyond textbooks, as mentioned in the immediate section above, Hoang concluded that students did have their own needs of

communication outside the textbooks' frames. Their needs brought challenges to him as he did not have sufficient abilities to meet all those needs immediately in class. Hoang addressed that with the systematic administration of primary English contemporarily, students' communication needs were not paid attention to seriously. He sadly admitted, "We live in our worlds without thinking about their worlds (students'). It is very difficult". With a quick glance into this matter, Hoang revealed that he knew his students (led by their parents) looked for solutions for communicative abilities by attending private English classes beside learning English at school. Reflecting his observed lesson, Hoang informed that in the textbook lesson, there were eight vocabulary words of school learning subjects introduced. However, when he brainstormed vocabulary to prepare for later activities, his students provided a lot more than eight, and those were not taught in school. Hoang stated:

There are not that many subjects in the textbook. These students go to extra classes like foreign language centres in town. They wanted to fool me, so they talked about geography and all that. They must have learned about all that somewhere else. I have never taught them all that".

Secondly in issues from students, students' limited abilities in communication in English were reflected by the teachers. Accordingly, the teachers were alarmed that their students did not have real abilities to communicate in English despite learning English. There were two teachers who shared their opinions concerning this matter. Anh was the first one to mention this in her interview. According to Anh's observations during her practice, teaching and learning English following the textbooks as the contemporary conditions did not bring fruitful results. She described that students might show that they could do textbooks' exercises, but it did not mean that they could really communicate in real situations beyond the textbooks. Anh said, "If we just teach by following the textbooks, we just go from one unit to another. Students seem that they can do well, but when they hit reality, they cannot be able to communicate". Hoang backed Anh's opinions with his descriptions of students' abilities. According to Hoang, many of his students "cannot speak ... cannot ask questions (in English)". Reflecting on his observed lesson, Hoang expressed his hope for a smooth lesson for the in-class observation. During the class time, he "was so worried to call on students to respond to my questions. I was not confident that my students could do the tasks (answering

his questions in English)”. When I praised that students in his class seemed to be able to speak English quite well, Hoang debunked it in detail:

But the thing is that if you paid attention, you may have noticed that of the whole class there were only those students (who could do). There were about eight of them. But eight students in a class with 46, I think it is a bit ... However, who can know more about students than their own teachers! I teach a lot of classes and I see that if I ask the other students (not the good students), it would ... You see, when I asked one student to answer and then called another (to repeat), he or she still could not make it smoothly.

Thirdly in issues from students was students’ lack of motivation to learn English. One teacher acknowledged this issue in her interview session. According to Quy, many students were not motivated to learn English. Per her observations during her practices, she repeatedly said that “It is miserable for students to learn English”, or “Learning English is miserable to them”. For Quy, she wanted to “raise students’ spirits to learn English. I want them to like learning English as a primary thing. They need to like it first before they can make progress”.

In summary, the findings showed that beside teachers’ limited abilities to teach following the CLT approach, teachers faced challenges coming from their students. Students had communication needs beyond the textbooks, and teachers might not be able to meet the needs. Also, learning English at school was viewed and treated as learning to pass tests and exams rather than concentrating on real communication abilities. As a matter of fact, students did not improve as much their communicative competence as required in the primary English curriculum. Therefore, students (driven by parents) had to seek somewhere else to look for improving their communicative abilities, and their solutions were private English classes beside official English at school.

4.4.2.4c. Issues influenced by policies

The third group of challenges facing the primary English teachers was the issues influenced by the contemporary policies of English language teaching and learning. Six identified challenges were compiled from the interviews with the eight teachers including:

- (1) EFL environment in Vietnam;
- (2) Inconsistencies between policies and realities;
- (3) The killing of creativity;

- (4) No agency for teachers to do the “what” and the “how”;
- (5) Time allocation for English vs. textbook loads.

Firstly, one issue challenging teachers’ CLT practices was the EFL environment in Vietnam. It was a common challenge for teaching and learning English in a non-English environment like Vietnam. Although this was not something that Vietnam could possibly fix, teachers expressed that it was difficult for them to teach English following CLT in Vietnam. Hoang and Diem were the two among the eight teachers who talked about this matter. According to Hoang, teaching following CLT meant that he needed to create “the language environment which is like the reality outside so that students can use what they have learned to communicate”. However, he admitted that “I just try to create it ... If you ask me to make the (class) environment like it is outside, then in Vietnam we do not have it (an environment where people speak English)”. Hoang concluded that he just tried to practice towards the communication goal knowing that he could never have an adequate environment where people used English to communicate often. Expressing common difficulties in teaching and learning English in an EFL environment in Vietnam, Diem hoped that:

I also hope that there will be a (suitable) language environment. For example, students should have some chances to interact or communicate with native speakers or foreigners. It is not necessarily for the whole school year, but just sometimes, for example, during a month or a semester. If students can meet with them for a few times, they will have the opportunities to interact and develop their communication skills.

Secondly and thirdly, two big inter-related issues challenging teachers’ practices were (2) the inconsistencies between policies and realities and (3) the killing of creativity. According to what teachers expressed, the inconsistencies between policies and realities took place at two levels: MOET’s policies versus realities, and DOETs’/BOETs’ policies versus realities. Regarding the inconsistencies between MOET’s policies on primary English education versus realities, Hoang expressed that:

Although the MOET states in the (primary English) curriculum that listening and speaking skills should be concentrated on, but ... When I came to this school, I was told that I should try so that students can do the written parts because they are tested in exams.

Regarding the inconsistencies between DOET's/BOET's policies and realities, two teachers voiced their opinions about the matter. Accordingly, the local DOETs and their academic inspectors were inconsistent with one another. This means that the local BOETs issued policies about English teaching and learning in one way while the academic inspectors conducted their class observations and assessment following another way. Anh was the first teacher who expressed in length what she experienced during the years regarding this matter. In one of the interviews with her, Anh revealed that the BOETs' leaders encouraged English teachers like her to teach following flexibility and progressive methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, in reality, she would face problems if she did as the leaders encouraged. She gave an instance to illustrate what she said:

About instructions, I find that there are many things about their instructions. When we met the head of the BOET, he said that we can be as flexible as we want. (He said) it is important to consider how we teach and if our students can understand or communicate. However, when it comes to academic observations. For example, the next period will be one about grammar. Then they expect us to follow the procedure, the steps of a grammar lesson. Regarding their evaluation, they will see at the end of the lesson if students can understand the lesson or not, but they will definitely evaluate us about the lesson procedure. They will say things like ... well you do not teach that part well, or that part needs be taught this way or that way. Generally, we will be criticised for whatever we do.

Anh shared one more thing to show the contrast between policies and realities in relation to the syllabus distribution schedules. As the previous one, BOETs' leaders said teachers could be flexible to teach provided their approaches were beneficial to students. However, when it came to practice, academic inspectors would question teachers' progress in delivering the syllabus in a timely manner. Anh stated:

They (BOET leaders) said that it is not compulsory how many periods teachers have to teach a unit, but the most important thing is that how you need to teach so that students can understand. However, when academic inspectors come to do class observations, they question why we are at some certain unit at that time, and that we are behind other teachers based on the syllabus distribution

schedules. Then they ask us to prepare better, to speed up so that our students can keep up with their friends.

Based on her own experience, Anh concluded that “There has not been a consensus that there should be flexibility for teachers”, and thus with the reality, Anh decided that “Although the leaders said that we can be comfortable or flexible, we have to follow the teaching procedures when there is academic inspection”. The second teacher mentioning the issue of inconsistencies between DOETs’ policies and the reality practices of academic inspection was Hoang. It is worth mentioning again that Hoang was the only teacher among the eight who re-designed textbook activities to create more opportunities for students’ speaking practice. As described previously, Hoang did it solely for this research’s in-class observation. He honestly shared that he was not afraid to make a change to teach that way for my observation, but “If the observation is by the MOET’s or DOET’s academic teams, then I will never dare (to do it different from the conventions)”. Hoang backed Anh’s claims with his opinions that “the MOET’s and local DOET’s directions are correct ... But the reality of its implementation here, it is ... there are many inadequacies”. Like Anh, Hoang detailed the difference between DOET leaders’ policies and academic inspectors’ practices:

Although people (DOETs’ leaders) tell you to be creative, just do it, go for it. However, in reality, when I do it creatively, you are not sure whether people (academic inspectors) will accept it or not. People will say OK, this part is aiming at ... the part about speaking should already be during the first and the second period. This part asks students to write, read for comprehension, and write. It is sad, so sad that things are like that. For example, you may think I am creative, but be careful ... To be honest, I did it that way just because it was you who observed the class. If it had been the DOET academic team, I would not have dared to do it. I really do not dare for being afraid of them saying this and that. Yeah, it is what it is.

Hoang came to a conclusion that “They call on us to do it, to be creative. It is just what they say. They say it as in theory. But in reality, do not be so sure that you can do it as they say”. Based on the reality, Hoang led his story to the third issue, the killing of creativity. As class observations during academic inspections were a part of the teacher assessment as reported previously, teachers would normally choose to be safe by adhering to textbooks and syllabus distribution schedules, which were considered as teachers’ compasses. They came to

learn that they could not be wrong if they proceeded following those two. As a matter originated from the killing of creativity, it was found that teachers were tied to textbooks and syllabus distribution schedules, which were considered standards or compasses for them to navigate in their practices. It was as Hoang described that:

Besides, the (teachers') difficulty is the time and the syllabus distribution schedules. At some certain time, you have to progress to some lesson. So, there are many times when you feel you are not satisfied yet with some lesson, but I do not dare to stop there for too long or any longer. If I stop at some learning point longer than expected, then ... your lesson plan is burned (failed); the syllabus is burned; you cannot make it on time. Then when the examination comes, and I will be criticised, "what have you taught? Others they have all finished the syllabus and you are just right here?" But no-one understands the reality of the matter.

During the interviews with Hoang, it could be learned that there was a fear from him to try new things or to be creative in his practice. He repeatedly said "I did not dare to do it" when mentioning applying something new in his teaching practice. From his own experience, knowledge, and observations in his circles of teachers, he revealed that "Sometimes I also do unplanned things ... Sometimes in the process of a lesson ... but often ... Generally, teachers in Vietnam do not dare (to be creative)". Hoang opened his opinions that the system killed his enthusiasm or intention to be creative by saying "I do not dare to be creative. I will tell you honestly, and this is just between me and you. It (the system) almost squeezes and kills all creativity ... Yes, it stifles creativity".

Fourthly, another challenge, closely related to the two issues above, facing teachers' practices was that teachers had no agentic power to carry out 'the what' and 'the how' in their practices. It means that they did not have any power to conduct what was beneficial for their students' learning in a way that was suitable to their conditions. The reflections from Anh and Hoang in the second and third issues about the inconsistencies of DOETs'/BOETs' policies versus realities and the killing of creativity above, it showed that teachers like Anh and Hoang did not have much power to exercise what they thought, what they researched and believed in their teaching practices to improve their students' abilities. Instead, the current system forced them to obey the "laws of conventions" as Hoang admitted above "I have studied that (a new method), and I want to follow it, but now honestly, I cannot do it yet

because I am tied up to several conventional procedures". During interview sessions with the teachers, they expressed their hopes to be handed some agency to do what was good for their students in their practices, which will be covered in section five about teachers' needs of help and support.

Fifthly, among the challenges facing teachers' practices was the issue of limited time allocation with heavy textbook loads. There were five teachers who mentioned this challenge. The eight teachers from eight different schools shared two different syllabi: one with four and one with two class periods per week for English (one period lasted 35 minutes). Seven of them used the *English 3,4,5* by the MOET's Education Publishing House while one of them used another MOET's approved textbook series, *Family and Friends*. While the one who used the *family and Friends* series did not complain about the books, the other teachers voiced their opinions about the heavy loads of the MOET's textbooks. Phuong was one teacher who claimed that "Other teachers and I think that the way teaching contents are put into the MOET's textbooks is very cumbersome". Similarly, Diem added to the idea that, "The amount of knowledge in the books is too much to cover". While heavy contents were loaded in the MOET's textbooks, Hoang thought that "The set objectives with the duration of time they give us; in general, it is not enough". Like Hoang, Diem criticised the unreasonable assignments she had to endure. She said, "I think the MOET's textbooks and the syllabi schedules are not very reasonable. The textbooks are designed for English syllabi with four class periods a week while I only have two-period schedule weekly". The limited time allocation for heavy-loaded textbooks brought the teachers and students hard times. Diem moaned that "I must cover all contents, and it is all about rushing with the time". Quy was another teacher among those who opined about the limited time allocation for English versus heavy-loaded textbooks. Like Diem, Quy only had a time allocation of two periods per week. However, she carried out the textbook-based teaching differently by cutting back some certain parts of a unit or lesson and just focusing on important parts of a unit or lesson, which were vocabulary and sentence patterns. She explained her choice that:

So, students only have two periods of English per week. The difficulty is if you only have two periods then you cannot ... For example, lesson one of a unit has six parts and you have to cover all of those in just two periods. How can I do them? I have to omit some parts in order to ... I just teach major contents.

Therefore, students do not have opportunities to practice much. In my thoughts, I think if we want to teach well following the CLT approach, then the Project section in the textbooks, for example, is a very good part which can help students to develop good communication skills. However, that part is usually omitted just because we do not have time to do it.

It could be seen that in Quy's case, the limited time allocation for English consequently stripped students the opportunities to practice communication skills as Quy said. The limited time allocation decreasing teachers' chances to expand their lessons and declined students' opportunities to practice was also mentioned by Minh. When reflecting his observed lesson, Minh explained why he could not make his lesson better as he wanted that:

It is also partly because of the time. If I want to add some more words to be more diverse, it is difficult because there is not much time, nor is there any class period for the official practice time.

In summary, this section highlighted the policy issues facing the primary English teachers in their practices in this research. The findings suggest that policies related to the teaching and learning primary English in realities put teachers in difficult positions to conduct CLT practices. It was learned that the implementation of primary English at schools was inconsistent with the "good" policies by the MOET and local DOETs. The inconsistencies brought about negative effects on the primary English teaching and learning. Some of the major negative effects included the killing of teachers' creativity and having no agency to conduct their practices to benefit their students.

4.4.2.4d. Facilities and resources for teaching

The fourth group of issues challenging teachers' practices was the facilities and resources for teaching and learning. There were two main issues in this group including:

- (1) Not having sufficient facilities and resources for teaching;
- (2) Overcrowded classes.

The first issue of facilities and resources for teaching and learning was the inadequacy of facilities and resources. The inadequacy of facilities and resources reflected that teachers either did not have enough facilities and resources, or they had some but not with good quality. Regarding the facilities for teaching, there were two teachers mentioning the issue in

their interview sessions. Hoang was the first teacher to talk about his conditions. While watching the video of his observed class, Hoang commented on a scene where he was operating the projector. He said, “This projector causes me to have heart attacks sometimes. It is just like that and then suddenly it is off (screen)”. Hong was the other teacher who described that his school lacked necessary facilities for English classes. In his description, the school had only one classroom with a projector and a TV. Those teachers at the school who wanted to use that classroom to teach had to book and check if it was available for their schedules. Hong detailed his situations:

Talking about the classroom in the information technology era, we still have to use chalk and board. If we want to use the projector, I must drag my students from the classroom down here (to that classroom). It takes a few minutes of the class time. Then it takes some more time to prepare the machine or the computer ... then I have to ...

Hong’s school also had a sub-branch school about a few kilometres away from the main school. Hong informed that the facilities there were even worse with small classrooms, overcrowded students and unmovable fixed tables and chairs. Hong described, “At the sub-branch, we are still using the old-style table and chair sets ... The fixed table and chair sets just make me not want to organise any activities”. Hong added that if any teachers wanted to use the school’s only projector, they had to move it from the main school to the sub-branch with great efforts and time consumption.

At the other sub-branch, we will have to bring the projector from here (main school) to there. Then all of the preparation takes a long time again. Only those teachers who really can overcome the mess do it. Others choose not to use it to be away from all hardship. Those things we need are not available for us to teach with.

Regarding resources for teaching, Hoang and Hong were also the two teachers who were vocal about the lack of resources for teaching. Hoang regretted that he missed the chance to order the picture card sets for the textbooks he was using. The thing was that he accepted to pay for the resource by himself, but he was not able to get it. He expressed that “If I had them (the picture sets), I could teach very well. But I do not. I ordered them but it was said to be out of stock. I accept that I will buy them”. Hong also described his shortage of resources,

including the lack of picture card sets to be used in conjunction with the textbooks. In closing his case, Hong concluded, “I do not have enough, from machines, equipment, picture cards, or a classroom for English learning ... They give you some sets of books, and that is it”.

On top of the lack of facilities and resources for teaching, the second issue which made it more difficult for teachers’ practices was the overcrowded classes. There were two teachers who included this issue in their interview responses. In opining about academic inspectors, Hoang mentioned a difficulty of having too many students in a class. Hoang described the situation:

But you know what I am bad about? I cannot remember my students’ names (46 students in a class) ... We (teachers) just show up in class after a long while (limited time allocation for each class) ... But for people (inspectors), they will blame me that I do not care about my students. But actually, I cannot remember all their names, not that I do not care about them.

Phuong was the second teachers who expressed having difficulties in organising class activities due to overcrowding of students in her classes. When being asked about the way she organised group work, she stated:

In such a crowded class like this, we cannot move tables and chairs. Therefore, group work is limited. For example, if I organise group work, I divide the class into group A and group B, which are the two rows of tables in class. If it is not like that and I have to, I ask five students to line up in two lines in front of the board. For example, group A writes some word or sentence, then group B will do the same. Then we will see which group writes faster than the other. With such an activity, I cannot divide the class into half and half (as usual).

To sum up, the findings indicate that limited facilities and resources for teaching were obstructing teachers to conduct their practices communicatively. The teachers in this research did not have reasonable facilities and resources for teaching. The lack of those limited their capacities of making their lessons better. In conclusion for section four, the findings together provide important insights into impediments to CLT practices. There were many issues hindering the primary English teachers in conducting their CLT practices. The issue came from teachers themselves, from their students’ needs, from the contemporary primary English language teaching and learning policies, and from their teaching conditions at their schools.

The teachers themselves also voiced their needs of assistance and support so that they could improve their teaching practices. The next section, therefore, moves to address those needs by the teachers.

4.4.2.5. Teachers' needs of assistance and support

From what the teachers in this research voiced their opinions about the assistance and support they needed to carry out their CLT practices properly, it was synthesised and summarised into five categories as follows:

- (1) Teachers' agentic power;
- (2) More proper professional training;
- (3) Empathy;
- (4) Time allocation for English and textbook covering;
- (5) Compatibility between syllabus and testing & assessment;
- (6) Improving facilities and resources for teaching.

Firstly, one of teachers' important needs of help and support reflected was the need to have some agency to exercise in their teaching practice. Specifically, in their interview responses they needed to have some power to do two things (1) going beyond textbooks and being creative, and (1) teaching to students' communication needs. There were six out of eight teachers mentioned this need in their answers. Throughout the beginning of finding chapters until now, Hoang was a prominent case who had a strong desire of agency. Through the interviews with him, he showed to have enthusiasm and hope and make changes in his practice to benefit his students' communication abilities. Hoang researched and wanted to apply new things in his classrooms, but he previously described the system that killed teachers' creativity in language classrooms. He expressed "I have studied that (a new progressive method), and I want to follow that, but now honestly, I cannot do it yet because I am tied up to several conventional procedures". During his practice as mentioned previously, Hoang observed that students had their real communication needs, and he thought he should teach accordingly as he said, "Actually, as I said I would want to follow this direction (communication) normally. Yeah ... I will follow this direction because I feel that my students like it. Therefore, Hoang had a need to be handed some agency to carry out changes. Similarly, the second teacher, Anh, also voiced her need to get some freedom in her practice as she saw what would be good for her students. Anh stated, "If I want my students to be able to speak

or do something, then in my subjective views I think I should do things that are different from the (required) procedures". Anh came to a wish that "I think I like being a little more flexible" in her practice. The flexibility she mentioned here was the space she needed for exercising her agency. The third teacher who mentioned his need of some agency was Thanh. He stated he would go beyond the textbooks if allowed. He said, "If I could be set free from the textbook frame, I would do it differently. I would teach sentence structures or vocabulary outside the books". The need to be set free was also reflected in the interview with Hong. He expressed that if he could, "I would use different materials (other than the MOET's textbooks) that follow CLT ... I could also select from different materials to mix them together". Importantly in Hong's need of agency, Hong wanted that "I would not follow a (single) framework or pattern" in his teaching practice. The desire to be set free in their practices was also found in the interviews with Minh. Minh expressed his wish to have an "experiment period" which he defined as "when I do not need to follow the textbooks". According to Minh, when English teachers like him were set free, it was then the teaching and learning came closer to serving students' real communication needs. Minh said:

If we are no longer tied up within the framework, it will bring students excitement while learning and playing are taking place. Teachers do not have to follow the syllabus or textbooks. That is when teachers and students are closer to one another, and closer to the reality. That (is what) I call the experience period. If there is a chance ...

Secondly, beside teachers' agency, the second category in teachers' needs of assistance and support was the need to have more proper professional training. The major point in the need of more professional training was about CLT specifically (Teachers' needs of professional training were reported with full details in section 4.2.1.3 about teachers' training backgrounds and their training expectations.

Thirdly, the need of empathy was the third category in teachers' needs of help and support. Accordingly, the teachers expressed that they needed the empathy from the DOET, BOET, and their colleagues of other subjects at school. There were two teachers who included these in their interviews. Phuong was the one who mentioned the need of empathy from the DOET and BOET. In the previous chapter presenting the pre-observation interviews, Phuong was one of the teachers who told their stories about following the DOETs' demands in

improving English skills as well as teaching methods. Phuong shared that she suffered a lot of pressure to achieve the goal of passing the English proficiency tests. She said, “Oh, my goodness, we were really suffering a lot then ... It was a lot of pressure ... I just felt like I could cry, but cry without tears”. As a teacher at school and also a wife and a mother at home, Phuong claimed that it was hard for her to go through all to get a balance of life and work. She acknowledged:

The DOET/BOET generally, of course they also wanted us to improve ourselves. But you know us, as a teacher here, you have to take care of all your schoolwork and then housework. In general, many teachers are very miserable ... We have families and children and all kinds of ties or bonds. Besides, it is also about your moods when you have to do both teaching and studying at the same time. You just cannot take all of those at once.

Phuong concluded her story that “in general, there should be empathy for English teachers” from the DOETs’ leaders. The other teacher mentioning the need of sympathy from teachers of other subjects at school was Hoang. He included in his interview that because of the limited facilities and overcrowded classrooms, English classes were usually noisy when he organised pair or group work. The noise from English classes usually made teachers from neighbouring classes uncomfortable. He detailed it that:

When you create such an environment for working together like that, it is usually noisy. It is difficult to manage. Sometimes I am teaching or letting students play a game, then the students speak out loud, then the next-door teacher/s come to my class to have a look.

Fourthly, teachers’ needs of help and support also included time allocation for English classes and the covering of textbooks. Accordingly, the teachers hoped that DOETs and schools should consider to increase time for English classes and hoped textbook coverage should be cut back. There were three teachers involved who voiced their needs regarding these matters. Quy and Diem were two teachers discussing the time allocation for English at their schools. They were both in the same situation in which for each English class, they only had two class periods per week to cover textbook contents designed for syllabi of teaching four class periods per week. Quy expressed that “I hope to have four official periods a week, or maybe some extra periods for students”. Quy pointed out that there were primary schools

that adopted either a two-period or four-period English schedule because DOETs let schools decide which syllabus schedules to take. She suggested that “the local DOET should rule that if you use some certain textbook, you need to have a four-period schedule so that all schools can follow the same regulation”. Similarly, Diem also voiced her opinions to show the need to increase time for English classes. She stated that “the textbooks are designed for four class periods a week while I only have two-period schedule. Therefore, the amount of knowledge in the books is too much to cover”. The third teacher, Minh, was the one mentioning the need to cut back on textbook coverage to save time for the “experience period” previously described above. He suggested, “the syllabus (textbook coverage) should be cut back in half and replaced with experience periods”. Minh concluded his need was that “my dream is to have one practice period when I can help students bond together and demonstrate the skills they have learned”.

Fifthly, another need of help and support from the teachers was the need to have compatibility between (English) syllabus and testing & assessment. As mentioned previously about the inconsistencies between policies and realities, the MOET’s and DOETs’ policies about teaching and learning primary English were good. However, there were still problems about the implementation of the primary English in realities. One of the inconsistencies was the testing and assessment, which was described in detail before. One teacher, Diem, mentioned this issue in her expressions of needs. As teachers were adopting textbook-based practices, Diem asserted that:

Textbooks and testing should be more reasonable. If textbooks are designed to develop speaking skills, then when it comes to testing, they should not impose and heavily concentrate on doing (written) exercises ... Yes, there is speaking skill test, (but) ... Normally, I can guide students with speaking skills, but doing exercises will take more time. I have to spend more time on grammar.

The problem Diem revealed was what Hoang already mentioned previously about the trustworthiness of speaking tests in class, and large proportions of English tests and exams were still focused on written exercises. That was why teachers had to focus on teaching-to-the-test practice. Diem pointed out that if communication was to take an important position, then testing and assessment should be changed respectively.

Sixthly and also lastly, improving facilities and resources for teaching was the final category in teachers' needs of help and support. As conditions of facilities and resources for teaching were challenging the teachers' practices as described above, they expressed their needs of assistance and support in these areas. There were four teachers talking about these needs. Hong, who was mentioned above concerning the lack of facilities and resources for teaching at his school, strongly voiced his needs in these areas when being asked about what he needed. He stated, "The thing now (I need) is facilities and resources. I think they are the most important. I do not have enough from machines or equipment, pictures, or classroom for English learning". Describing previously that he had to take his students from place to place in the school to come to a classroom to learn English, the first thing he hoped to have was a stable place, a fixed room for English classes. He said:

There must be a place for our English classes. I wish to have one whole room like that used for English classes. Everything in that room should be ready to be used so that teachers can just walk in and teach to save time.

Similarly, Diem described the need to have a stable place for English classes. She expressed, "I hope that I will get one English learning room, a room that is for English classes only. The room should be equipped with all the necessary equipment, such as a projector or television". The third teacher expressing the needs in facilities and resources for teaching was Hoang. He described that for Year 3 and Year 4 children, English textbooks were about all kind of pictures for them to learn. However, "For Year 3 and 4 classes, I do not have projectors ... (or) there are not any TVs to show things". Therefore, to cope with the lack of facilities, Hoang just hoped he could have the picture sets that should have been combined in the textbooks' sets as teacher's resources for teaching the textbooks. Different from other teachers, Minh's school was equipped to have a fixed English classroom with an interactive board, speakers, new-style students' tables and chairs. However, Minh was not pleased with teaching within the textbooks' frames. He hoped to be able to reach out and obtain other teaching resources. He said, "I think there should be some more open resources such as YouTube (channels) or teaching and learning soft wares to support teachers while teaching".

In summary, the findings from the teachers' reflections show that primary English teachers indeed needed a lot of assistance and support in order to teach better. What stands out throughout the findings so far was that teachers needed to be trained properly about CLT

theory and practices. Also, it is essential that teachers should be given the agency they need so that they can practice the CLT they should be teaching to lead students towards achieving their communicative competence.

4.5. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has presented findings of teachers' reflections about their CLT practices and issues affecting their teaching. Overall, the teachers' reflections about their CLT practices showed that their understanding of the mainstream CLT approach was incomplete or even incorrect, and thus derailed their practices from CLT. They thought they were teaching in the direction of CLT, but the findings show that their practices were actually not CLT. It was a real challenge for the implementation of CLT practices in primary English education as the teachers were accepting with their current practices and had reticence to make major changes. On top of those, there were a lot of impediments hindering teachers' CLT delivery that needed to be addressed for better English teaching and learning. Taken altogether, several questions are raised regarding the findings of this research. Some of the questions include how the situations can be changed, how CLT can be better practiced, and even if CLT should be the goal in primary English education in Vietnam. Therefore, the next chapter will move on to discuss these questions.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction and points of discussion

In the previous chapter, all of the findings of the research have been presented. In this chapter, I will discuss the importance of what all my research findings uncovered. Key findings of the research in light of the research questions will be analysed and discussed based on what I have learned from the literature review. This introduction section will provide a brief summary of the research finding of the whole two phases with four rounds of data collection. From the summary, points of discussion will be pointed out and discussed.

5.1.1. Summary of research findings

As previously mentioned in the introduction and the methodology chapters, this research was aimed:

- To assist Vietnamese primary English teachers to improve their teaching practices towards building and developing learners' communicative abilities
- To explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT
- To discover if teachers are facing any challenges or having any opportunities in teaching towards building and developing students' communicative competence
- To investigate what help or support they need to improve their teaching practice

The research was conducted in order to answer the central research question:

How do Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT from a socio-cultural perspective?

Four research sub-questions were raised to help answer the central question:

- (1) *What ELT pedagogies do Vietnamese primary English teachers use in their teaching?*
- (2) *How do they teach following the identified ELT pedagogies?*
- (3) *What informs Vietnamese primary English teachers' current ELT pedagogies?*
- (4) *Do Vietnamese primary English teachers perceive any difficulties and opportunities in implementing the primary English communicative curriculum, and what are they if any?*

As previously introduced, there were two phases in my research project. Phase One involved the use of an online questionnaire to screen participants' initial understanding of CLT

and to recruit participants for the next phase. Phase Two involved three rounds of data collection: pre-observation interviews with individual teachers, in-class observations, and post-observation interviews with individual teachers, which were aimed to probe more deeply into the research matters guided by the research questions. The research findings about teachers' understanding of CLT and their practices were gradually unravelled along the four rounds of data collection, which can be summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 9.1.

Summary of major findings in the four data collection rounds

Data collection rounds	Aims	Findings
Phase One: The online questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To screen participants' initial understanding of CLT and their practices - To recruit participants for Phase Two of the research 	Teachers thought they understood CLT. However, most of their understanding did not match with CLT theory.
Phase Two: The pre-observation interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know more about the participants' backgrounds - To explore how teachers understood CLT and how they practiced CLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers did not get enough CLT training; - Teachers had favourable opinions of CLT, but also had misconceptions about CLT theory and practice, or their understanding of CLT was incomplete.
Phase Two: The in-class observations	To observe how teachers actually conducted their CLT practices	There was no, or very little, CLT practices observed.
Phase Two: The post-observation interviews	To see how teachers reflected on their actual (CLT) practices	Teachers' reflections show they generally did not understand CLT theory and practice.

In Phase One of the research, the online questionnaire results seemed to show that there were misconceptions about teachers' understanding of CLT. Their understanding was either incomplete, simple, and sometimes even incorrect. Their pedagogies as they described were not in line with CLT theory and practice, or in other words it sounded like they were teaching following conventional practices rather than CLT. However, due to limitations of the

online questionnaire, there was not insufficient data or information to be sure of those findings. The online questionnaire also revealed that primary English teachers were facing a lot of challenges. The challenges consisted of ones from the teachers themselves (their abilities, time and efforts, training, overloaded workload), from their students (mixed abilities, their attitudes towards and lack of interest for learning EFL, shy and passive characters), from their schools (limited teaching facilities and resources, crowded classes), from the primary English policies (overwhelming textbooks, appropriateness of textbooks' contents, limited time allocation for English as an area of learning), and other challenges such as the difficult EFL context and problems from students' parents. It seemed that teachers' understanding of CLT and their practices were influenced by the socio-cultural factors of the Vietnamese context. However, these were just initial and superficial findings and not yet verified with individual teachers. These needed to be clarified with teachers further into Phase Two.

The first round of Phase Two was the pre-observation interviews with individual teachers. In this round, some initial findings about teachers' misconception of CLT were verified and confirmed. It was uncovered that teachers did not sufficient training or their training was inappropriate to teach primary English following CLT. It was also confirmed that teachers' understanding of CLT was incorrect or incomplete. From their interviews, misconceptions and contradictions in teachers' activity systems also appeared: They showed positive attitude towards CLT; they said they were teaching following CLT, but their descriptions of their practices suggested otherwise that their pedagogies were still traditional. The pre-observation interviews also confirmed that Vietnamese contextual factors strongly influenced teachers' CLT understanding and practices.

The second round of Phase Two was the in-class observation. During this stage, teachers' actual pedagogies were revealed and misconceptions in their CLT activity systems were confirmed. The major finding of this round was that there was no or very little CLT practices in the teachers' classrooms. Their pedagogies were still traditional which focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary. Only one teacher tried to change his conventional practice to make it look like CLT solely for my observation. Even with his best efforts, the classroom used teacher-fronted features and some little controlled communication practice.

The third round of Phase Two involved post-observation interviews with each teacher after the in-class observations. The teachers were asked to reflect on their practices during

the observed classes with stimulated recall videos of their recorded classes. The findings of this round reinforced and re-confirmed that there were misconceptions in the CLT implementation in primary English as teachers did not understand CLT theory and practice. A highlighted example was that several of them incorrectly identified oral repetition practice as a communicative activity. Teachers also shared in deep details about challenges and obstacles they were facing. Most of them were trying to teach towards the communicative curriculum. However, Vietnamese contextual factors prevented them from moving towards communication-oriented language teaching.

5.1.2. Reference to the research questions

With what the research findings uncovered, answers to the research questions can be summarised as follows. For the first research sub-question of *“What ELT pedagogies do Vietnamese primary English teachers use in their teaching?”*, the findings showed that the ways teachers conducted their practices were still traditional and did not include communication, or very little and simple communication was observed.

For the second research sub-question of *“How do they teach following the identified ELT pedagogies”*, the research found that teachers followed traditional and conventional ELT practices. Their practices were textbook-based with a heavy focus on language forms, vocabulary, and students’ accuracy.

For the third research sub-question of *“What informs Vietnamese primary English teachers’ current ELT pedagogies?”*, a synthesis from the findings of all data collection rounds suggested that there were several forces for the teachers’ practices including, but not limited to, the teachers’ misunderstanding about CLT theory and practice, teachers’ insufficient and proper CLT training, ELT policies in Vietnam and the implementation of the policies into primary English classrooms.

The fourth research sub-question asked, *“Do Vietnamese primary English teachers perceive any difficulties and opportunities in implementing the primary English communicative curriculum, and what are they if any?”* Synthesised research findings suggested that primary English teachers in Vietnam faced several challenges similar to those in EFL contexts. The challenges include conceptual constraints (the socio-cultural context of Vietnam, the ways teachers conceptualised CLT), classroom level constraints (teachers’ insufficient abilities, students’ abilities and needs, difficulties coming from ELT policies, lack of facilities and

resources for English teaching and learning), and societal-institutional constraints (EFL language environment, testing and assessment culture). However, there was also some hope for change emerging from the reality, which is viewed as opportunities. Among teachers' misunderstanding and mis-practice of CLT pedagogies, there were still some bits of understanding leaning towards correctness. More importantly, teachers favoured of teaching towards communication and had a desire of agentic power to act towards communicative goals.

Finally, from answers to all the research sub-questions, the central research question can now be fully answered. The question raised was "*How do Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT from a socio-cultural perspective?*" The answer was that teachers either misunderstood or did not understand CLT theory and practice. Due to several contextual factors, primary English teachers claimed to teach in the direction of CLT, but still held on to traditional pedagogies in their teaching, which include the Audiolingual Method, the PPP model and the Grammar Translation Method.

5.1.3. The points of discussion

In summary for the Introduction, socio-cultural factors of the Vietnamese context have hindered the implementation of CLT in primary English education. The overall findings of this PhD research project have revealed that teachers misunderstood or did not understand CLT, and that CLT was generally *not* being practised in primary English education in Vietnam as required. In this discussion chapter, I ask why CLT is not being practised and whether it actually matters that that is the case? The chapter will ponder those questions from the policy, curriculum, pedagogic, and then individual teacher levels of misconceptions and/or contradictions. Therefore, apart from the introduction and summary sections, the chapter will have five major points of discussion including (1) misconceptions about CLT policies in the Vietnamese primary English education, (2) misconceptions about primary English CLT curriculum, (3) misconceptions about primary English CLT pedagogies, (4) contradictions about primary English teachers' agency, and (5) the matters of the CLT practices in the primary English education in Vietnam. All of these points will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.2. Misconceptions about CLT *policies* in the Vietnamese primary English education

This section will discuss why there has been a policy failure regarding the implementation of CLT in primary English in Vietnam. Although the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) requires that teachers practice CLT in primary English, the research has revealed that CLT was not practiced as it would be expected. It suggests that the policy to mandate CLT implementation in the primary English education has failed to some extent. Explanations for this failure include the unsuccessful overall primary English language education policy, and more specifically the failure to consider local socio-cultural features and a concrete definition of CLT when mandating its application – a Western teaching approach in the Vietnamese context.

5.2.1. The failure of considering the cultural appropriateness of CLT in Vietnam

While my discussion will mainly focus on the failure in policy to consider Vietnamese contextual factors when adopting CLT and what CLT really means in the Vietnamese context, it is helpful to know that overall ELT policies in Vietnam have been evaluated as constrained, not fully successful nor effective. Several scholars and researchers including Cao, Ta, and Hoang (2016), T. T. N. Bui and Nguyen (2016), T. T. T. Nguyen (2012), Thanh-Pham (2011), and T. M. H. Nguyen (2011) have raised concerns about the Vietnamese ELT policies through their studies. For example, Cao et al. (2016) identified the problems with ELT policies in Vietnam. They found that despite a great deal of effort and money spent on promoting ELT, improvements in teaching and learning have been very limited. The limited improvements imply that ELT policies have not played a significant role in paving the way for the ELT and learning to take place as expected. The research findings from Cao et al. (2016) suggest that the causes for the unsuccessful ELT policies come from the ambiguity and constant changes of policies that have created confusion for teachers and students. In addition, a key problem is that ELT policy-making is a top-down process in which scholars, practitioners and teachers are not consulted. Thus, it leads to the lack of full support for ELT policy implementation from local communities. Regarding the mandate of mandatory primary English following CLT approach in the Vietnamese national ELT curriculum at the macro-level, T. M. H. Nguyen (2011) and T. T. T. Nguyen (2012) used Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework of language-in-education policy and planning goals (Table 5.2) to evaluate the Vietnamese primary English policy in both urban and rural areas. Their studies pointed out several problems regarding this

policy making such as staffing, professional development, resourcing, teaching methods and materials. Limitations in all of the primary English policy goals have hindered the effectiveness of teaching English in schools.

Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 is not available in this version of the Thesis

From a brief look above, it can be seen that there are several issues in Vietnamese ELT policies, in general, and primary English policy, in particular. The issues raised by researchers in their studies imply that there have been failures in ELT policy-making in Vietnam. More specifically, with respect to the mandate of CLT implementation in the primary English education, my research findings have also confirmed previous research that there has been a failure at the policy-making level in adopting CLT in Vietnam. The failure involves (1) a lack of considering the appropriateness of CLT in the Vietnamese context, and (2) a definition of what CLT means in Vietnamese primary English.

Regarding the first major point of discussion of considering CLT appropriateness, ELT policy makers in Vietnam have seemed to ignore consideration of CLT appropriateness in Vietnam despite a large body of literature highlighting difficulties implementing CLT in EFL contexts (chapter 2). Cao et al. (2016) mentioned in their research that ELT policy-making process in Vietnam is top-down and with “an ignorance of contextual factors and local needs”

(p. 1). Thanh-Pham (2011) argued that several failures in learning reforms in Asia have mainly come from the copy and paste model in which Western-developed practices are adopted or applied into Asian contexts with a negligence of their appropriateness evaluation in socio-cultural contexts of those countries. This copy and paste model faces a high risk of failure as Western practices are built on structural conditions and cultural values that are not always found in Asian countries. Within the case of Vietnam and its failure in adopting CLT in ELT, this discussion section will now specifically focus on the cultural differences between the West and the East (Asia) through the lens of the socio-cultural perspective, and conflicts between Progressivism and Formalism in education to explain the failure of policymakers to consider these issues in mandating Western-developed CLT in the context of Vietnam.

The failure at the policy level in mandating CLT implementation in Vietnamese ELT is the omission to carefully consider if CLT is appropriate in the Vietnamese socio-cultural context. As reviewed in the literature, culture exists as an objective force in each society and it shapes how people interact within it (Thorne, 2005). A poor outcome of CLT practices in Vietnam (such as findings from this research and other studies mentioned in the literature review) has partly originated from the socio-cultural conflicts between Western values and Far Eastern values in education. In order to see how probable cultural conflicts may have arisen and influenced the CLT implementation in the primary English education in Vietnam, it is helpful to look at the cultural differences between the West and the Far East. Hofstede (1986) identified those cultural differences in teaching and learning by surveying people from 40 different countries to build his 4-D model of cultural differences, which includes four dimensions: Individualism versus Collectivism, small Power Distance versus large Power Distance societies, weak Uncertainty Avoidance versus strong Uncertainty Avoidance societies, Masculinity versus Femininity societies. Tables 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 below contrast cultural differences in teaching and learning following this framework.

Table 5.3.

Cultural differences between Collectivist societies and Individualist societies

Table 5.3 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Note: From Hofstede (1986, p. 312)

Hofstede (1986) explained the interpretation for the dimensions that Collectivism is a characteristic of a culture as opposed to Individualism. Collectivist societies assume that anyone through birth and later belongs to one or more tight “in-groups” (e.g. extended family, clan, or organisation) from which they cannot detach themselves. The groups protect their members’ interests and expect their permanent loyalty in return. In contrast, Individualist

societies assume that anybody takes care of primarily their own and their immediate relatives' interests (e.g. husband, wife, and children). Also, Collectivist societies are tightly integrated while Individualist ones are loosely integrated.

Table 5.4.

Cultural differences between large and small Power Distance societies

Table 5.4 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Note: From Hofstede (1986, p. 313)

According to Hofstede (1986), Power Distance is a cultural characteristic, used to define the degree to which people with less power in the society accept power inequality and view it as normal. Although inequality takes place in all cultures, the extent to be tolerated varies between different cultures in the sense that "all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others" (p. 307).

Table 5.5.

Cultural differences between strong and weak Uncertainty Avoidance societies

Table 5.5 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Note: From Hofstede (1986, p. 314)

In Hofstede's 4-D framework, Uncertainty Avoidance is a cultural characteristic, used to define the degree to which unstructured, unclear or unpredictable situations perceived by people in a society make them nervous, and therefore, they will try to avoid by following strict behaviour codes and a belief in absolute truths. Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures are "aggressive, emotional, compulsive, security-seeking, and intolerant" while weak uncertainty avoidance cultures are "contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting personal risks, and relatively tolerant" (Hofstede, 1986, p. 308).

Table 5.6.

Cultural differences between Masculinity and Femininity societies

Table 5.6 is not available in this version of the Thesis

Note: From Hofstede (1986, p. 315)

In Hofstede's 4-D framework, Masculinity is a cultural characteristic as opposed to Femininity. They are different in terms of the biological fact of the two genders, and particularly in terms of social roles attributed to men. Men in masculine cultures are expected to be "assertive, ambitious, competitive", to strive for material success, and to respect whatever is "big, strong, and fast". Meanwhile, women in those cultures are expected to care for the non-material life quality, for children and the weak. In contrast, in feminine cultures, there are overlapping social roles for the different sexes (Hofstede, 1986, p. 308).

Based on Hofstede's 4-D framework, it is implied that Vietnam is a collectivist society with high power distance, one that is inclined towards femininity and strong uncertainty avoidance resulting from the influence of Confucianism in education (T. N. M. Nguyen, 2016). Contrasting the cultural differences in Hofstede (1986), it is apparent that the Western culture of learning shown in CLT is different from Vietnamese traditional cultural expectations in education. Cortazzi and Jin (1996) stated that a culture of learning will shape what constitutes to be a good teacher and a good student, how to teach or learn, if and how to ask questions, roles of textbooks, and how language teaching and learning is related to broader issues of the

nature and purpose of education. Any given culture of learning is rooted from the cultural and educational traditions of that society. Taking a socio-historical look, after being under over a thousand years of Chinese domination in the history, Vietnamese educational traditions have been strongly influenced by Chinese Confucianism where Confucian doctrines remain central in Vietnamese culture and education (H. T. Do, 2006b; Hang, 2017; Lam & Albright, 2018). According to Guthrie (2011), there are three key elements in Confucian philosophy underpinning traditional education: respect for traditional moral authority, emphasis on memorising ancient lore in Confucian documentation, and crucial importance of social advancement through the examination system. If the classroom can be viewed as a small society, a student in that classroom is supposed to respect their teacher. They need to copy down what their teacher says so that they can memorise it. Finally, they need to show their success in learning through formal examinations. In other words, the culture of learning here reflects the copy and paste model where students copy from their teachers and paste wherever applicable in the process of learning. In such a culture of learning, a teacher is expected as the most powerful in the classroom, and a student is expected to obey their teachers without questions (Hang, 2017). In a detailed description of the pedagogical context in Vietnam, V. C. Le (2001) described that the traditional view of the teacher-student relationship is central to pedagogical practices in Vietnam. Therefore, teacher-centred practices and structured curriculum are supported by this traditional view. Teachers are considered the only knowledge providers, and thus they are respected by their students, students' parents as well as the whole society. Teachers hold a position that "what the teacher or the textbook says is unquestionably the standard" (V. C. Le, 2001, p. 35). In such a learning culture, that students should take an active role in their learning, initiate and negotiate communication as CLT promotes is undeniably incompatible. This relates to one of the conceptual constraints of the CLT implementation in Asia, presented in the literature review.

Another perspective to view CLT cultural appropriateness in the Vietnamese context is through the lens of Progressivism and Formalism in education (Finney, 2002; Guthrie, 2011; Richards, 2013; Silcock, 2002). According to Silcock (2002), formalistic teaching is a practice that obeys conventions or pre-designed rules. In contrast, informal teaching (or teaching following the progressivism) is a practice that abandons prescriptions in order to adapt behaviours to situations as they occur. Guthrie (2011) stated that a key distinction between a

teacher-centred formalistic classroom and a learner-centred progressive classroom is the underlying way to view knowledge, which is revelatory or scientific respectively. Accordingly, a formalistic classroom is organised around the teacher's pedagogical role featuring an expert to transmit or reveal knowledge as a product. Meanwhile, a progressive classroom centres around "students' culturally-defined learning processes", one that students should construct their own knowledge, which is facilitated by the teacher (p. 4). In the view of Western progressive educators, formalism is usually portrayed as an obstruction to modernisation. Guthrie (2011) argued that despite over half a century of efforts to install Western progressive educational reforms in many developing countries, progressive curricula have failed in revelatory cultures. In seeking explanations for such failures, attention is usually misdirected to teachers, teacher training, inspections and educational administration. However, a key underlying reason for failure, cultural incompatibility, is often neglected. The point of issue, according to Guthrie (2011), is that we do not intend to accept formalism in its totalities nor should we attempt to improve teachers' practices. Instead, improving teaching should be a legitimate act in which incremental change is made. In revelatory cultures, this may succeed well, but attempting to change it into another style of another culture will not work. A concluding remark from Guthrie is that the adoption of Western progressive cultural precepts into societies with different value systems can create conflicts with their local cultural values, and that is why progressive educational reforms in those countries with revelatory cultures have often failed. In other words, the copy and paste of Western progressive educational models into Asian countries, in general, and into Vietnam, in particular, does not work contextually. This can be an explanation for why the mandated CLT implementation in the Vietnamese primary English education has produced such poor outcomes as my research has revealed.

To sum up this point of discussion, a large body of literature shows that it is difficult to implement CLT in Asian EFL countries. Also, there is previous research calling for considering cultural appropriateness of CLT in a different culture of learning other than those of the West (Gregory Ellis, 1994; Lewis & McCook, 2002; T. N. M. Nguyen, 2016). However, there has been a failure at the policy making level in Vietnam to carefully consider the cultural incompatibility of Western values imbedded in CLT to be applied into the Vietnamese local context through the implementation of CLT mandate at the primary English education in Vietnam. Part of that

policy failure has led to poor outcome of CLT practices in Vietnamese ELT, and my research findings have added more evidence to that.

5.2.2. The policy failure of definition in CLT implementation in primary English in Vietnam

Besides a policy failure in considering CLT cultural incompatibility in the Vietnamese context, another failure at the policy level is the lack of a clear definition of what CLT really means for the Vietnamese context. As reviewed in the literature, one of the highlighted problems of CLT is its problem of identity, which is a lack of clarity and consistency in its definitions and conceptualisations. There have been many different interpretations and implementations of CLT since its inception. The vagueness and vastness of CLT identity can be felt through remarks such as “no-one knows what it is” (Littlewood, 2011, p. 541), “the term (CLT) has always meant a multitude of different things to different people” (Harmer, 2003, p. 289), “we have interpretations enough to send us reeling” (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 31), “CLT is not a decriable phenomenon anymore (except in the very vaguest way – e.g. we want students to communicate)”. In such a mosaic panorama of CLT, it is necessary to clearly define and detail what CLT means in the context of Vietnam. In terms of CLT for local contexts and/or teachers, a Vietnamese scholar, H. H. Pham (2005) asserted that the Western version/s of CLT should not be imposed in non-Western contexts as it carries values that are not universal nor compatible with other non-Western countries. H. H. Pham (2005) also suggested that to adapt CLT into a local context, it is necessary to redefine CLT with consideration of what real communication means, what learning activities are suitable for teachers and students in that context.

Reading the Vietnamese national curriculum for primary English issued by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), one may have a feeling that this official instruction with respect to the teaching methodology is too general. Based on the CLT literature, this guidance from the official governmental ministry does not help make it clear how CLT is defined in the Vietnamese context to avoid any possible confusion or misunderstanding. The MOET’s document states in the teaching methodology requirement that:

The main methodology to teach primary English is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in which students take an active role in the teaching and learning process, and teachers are the ones who organise, facilitate and adjust students’ learning activities. Learning activities must

be organised in communicative and interactive environment with a variety of activities (games, songs, role play, storytelling, questions, drawing, etc.) in which students work individually, in pairs and groups [...]

Students must be involved in communicative activities actively, proactively, creatively and consciously [...]. Teachers must create opportunities to maximise students' use of English in classrooms.

During the teaching process, teachers must concurrently use teaching resources and facilities such as textbooks, reference materials, audio-visual, and other technological means to support the students' English learning ... (MOET, 2010, p. 14)

The extract above is from the MOET's national primary English curriculum where they specify the required teaching methodology. The description mainly contains assignments of students' role (i.e. active role of their learning), teachers' roles (i.e. facilitators), learning activities (i.e. communicative activities), materials to be used. With such description and specification, CLT in this case may probably have been viewed in the most general sense, if not saying that it sounds like the Western version of CLT except for the instruction on the use of materials. The general mentioning of CLT as a methodology is proof that there has been a lack of a clear definition of CLT for the Vietnamese context. If the CLT mentioned here is the Western version, MOET has neglected a large body of research about the many manifestations of its implementation in the world and in Vietnam. It also confirms that CLT appropriateness in the Vietnamese socio-cultural environment has been ignored.

Littlewood (2011) argued that when people mention CLT, it is often unclear if they are talking about CLT in the sense of an overarching curriculum framework to achieve communicative goals or in the sense of a methodology in which students are always engaged in communication. From Littlewood's remark, the MOET should have made their definition clear. If they define CLT as an overarching curriculum framework to achieve communicative goals, then CLT in Vietnam should be led by the CLT spirit (H. H. Pham, 2007). In this case, teachers should be encouraged and allowed to carry out their practices with the guiding light that: *do whatever you can to teach, to help your students be able to communicate in English effectively*. This guiding light will be in line with the proposal from Bax (2003) about the Context Approach in which contextual factors are prioritised first. Then "empowered, educated, and encouraged" teachers, the ones who know their contexts, their students and their conditions, will be capable of deciding how best to teach (p. 284). On the other hand, if MOET defines CLT as a methodology in which students always engage in communication, they

should also have evaluated if such a communicative curriculum would be able to be implemented successfully and effectively in the context and with available conditions of Vietnam. This matter will be discussed more deeply in the next section where I will discuss the misconceptions about Vietnamese primary English curriculum.

In summary, this section has discussed that there has been a failure at the policy level regarding the mandated CLT implementation in primary English in Vietnam. The policy failure includes a failure to consider the cultural differences when adopting a Western-developed teaching approach like CLT into the socio-cultural context of Vietnam. It also involves the failure to give a clear definition of what CLT really means for the Vietnamese context to avoid possible confusion for all related stakeholders and also to make it feasible in Vietnam.

5.3. Misconceptions about CLT *curriculum* in Vietnamese primary English education

In the above section, I have focused on discussing failure at the policy making level in mandating CLT for the Vietnamese primary English education in terms of considering cultural appropriateness and providing a clear definition of CLT for the Vietnamese socio-cultural context. In this section, the focus will be shifted to misconceptions about CLT in Vietnamese primary English at the curriculum level. Specifically, there has been a mistaken belief regarding the implementation of the Vietnamese primary English's CLT curriculum with respect to assessing students' learning outcomes compatibly with CLT.

There are various ways to understand the term *curriculum*. Finney (2002) stated that curriculum can be viewed as *syllabus* in its narrowest sense while in a wider sense, curriculum refers to all aspects of planning, implementation, and assessment of an educational program. Richards (2013) used the term curriculum to refer to the overall design for a course in which the course content is transformed into a detailed action plan for teaching and learning, and this action plan will enable the desired learning outcomes to be achieved. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), the process of curriculum development in language teaching usually involves steps such as (learners') needs analysis, goals and objectives development, syllabus design, selection of teaching approaches and materials, and decision on assessment procedures and criteria. In the framework of language-in-education planning by Kaplan and Baldauf Jr (2005), evaluation is one of the policy goals that planners must address involving specifying the connection between assessment with methods and materials that define the educational objectives. It can be seen that in any models of curriculum development and

syllabus design, assessment is a very important component to ensure that a course's objectives and goals are achieved. In implementing a communicative curriculum, Savignon (2018) asserted that assessment is the "driving force behind curricular innovations", and thus stakeholders must commit to address a complex issue of how language proficiency to be measured in CLT (pp. 4-5). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the paradigm shift from more traditional approaches to CLT has pushed forwards several changes. One change is the push for alternative assessment to make it more compatible with CLT. Such change involves the need to replace traditional assessment forms with new ones to comprehensively build up what students can do in their L2 learning. With the case of Vietnamese primary English, the MOET did mention something new in their instructions about assessment in the primary English curriculum. However, from a document statement to a real practice is still a big gap. The MOET's primary English curriculum states that:

Students' learning outcomes need to be assessed based closely on the curriculum' objectives, shown through the specified detailed goals of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students' learning outcomes are assessed through two types: on-going and periodic, based on evidence of students' communicative competence gained during the learning process. The assessment is also based on teachers' observations and comments during an academic schoolyear. Assessment forms need to be diverse, including both oral and written forms. (MOET, 2010, p. 15)

From the directions about assessment of students' learning outcomes, it can be seen that to some extent, the MOET did consider more suitable assessment forms to measure students' communicative competence. However, there has not been much to ensure that all involved stakeholders are committed to enforce such an assessment scheme, and most importantly, to ensure that it is feasible to be conducted in contemporary Vietnamese conditions. In fact, that CLT compatible assessment forms are difficult to implement in EFL contexts of Asia Pacific is not something too new. Researchers such as Littlewood (2007) and Butler (2011, 2017) surveyed the literature of CLT/TBLT in Asian EFL contexts and found a common problem about compatible assessment with CLT. Accordingly, CLT practices are not easy to be implemented in Asian countries because of local testing and exam cultures. Littlewood (2007) pointed out a recurrent concern for the implementation of CLT/TBLT in Asian nations is that they do not prepare students well enough for the more traditional, form-oriented high-stakes tests and examinations that will determine students' future education and opportunities. Teachers, students and their parents place a great emphasis on those tests

and examinations, and therefore, classroom practices following CLT are constrained in this situation (Butler, 2011, 2017). Realising that there needs to be reforms in assessment to make it fit with CLT/TBLT, several Asian countries have amended their assessment systems to include assessment on oral communicative abilities. Nonetheless, what has been done is still insufficient to bring about intended positive (wash-back) effects in actual classroom practices (Butler, 2017). The case of Vietnam is not an exception. Although the MOET directed an addition of more diverse assessment forms for the 2010 communicative curriculum, what is currently in practice is far from sufficient and effective to push forwards CLT practices in classrooms. As evidenced in my research findings, none or few of assessment reforms have taken place. Currently, as long as students' performances in tests and exams are still used to view or evaluate teaching quality, teachers will continue to do what matters most in reality – teaching to the test practice. (Primary) English teachers in Vietnam like Diem and Hoang in my research will continue to teach as they have taught to make sure that their students pass important tests and exams with high scores as expected by their schools and parents. Reading what they said, one will see that assessment directions stated in the curriculum have not been enforced effectively. Diem said, “when there are tests, they are all about doing (grammar and writing) exercises, so, if I did not guide the students to do those, then they would not do tests and exams well” (Diem, pre-observation interviews). Hoang gave more details that on a score scale of 100 percent, students' speaking skills are accounted for only 20 percent. The more important paper-based tests are administered by the local DOETs while speaking tests are conducted in real class time by teachers. That was why Hoang was told by his school leaders that he should try to teach so that his students can do the written tests (grammar and writing) well. The speaking test section is generally not placed at an important position because as Hoang explained, “while speaking skills only accounted for two points, do you believe that teachers can evaluate whatever they want with (students') speaking skills?” (Hoang, post-observation interviews). How honest and valid the speaking section is in the assessment is another never-ending saga, but the point here is that teachers like Hoang are afraid that their students will score bad in important tests and exams, and they will be labelled as “failed”. Teachers will be held responsible for their students' bad scores by their schools and students' parents. Therefore, in most cases, teachers will go with the flow to meet the expectations from schools and parents. Butler (2017) noticed that how to figure out the negotiation between CLT practices and the assessment system is probably the most challenging in the

CLT/TBLT implementation. Actual CLT/TBLT practices only take place in classrooms when there are fundamental and drastic changes within the assessment system itself as well as in the way teachers', students', and parents' attitudes towards learning and assessment. Does the Vietnamese MOET know about the reality of students' English proficiency assessment? They probably know more than any involved stakeholders, but in order to enforce real changes, the people involved may have known that it is not feasible. Vietnamese (primary) English teachers have already carried a lot of burden on their shoulders with limited class time for English, crowded classrooms, limited facilities and resources for teaching and learning, mountains of paperwork and responsibilities, and required improvements of individual capacities. Primary English teachers have felt exhausted, uncertain and vulnerable in their efforts to respond to the MOET curriculum change (Grassick, 2019a). In addition to this, if CLT alternative assessment forms such as observations, interviews, journals, and portfolios (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) are included into their practices on a daily basis, it is apparently not feasible, at least at the time being. Given all of the above points, mandating a communicative curriculum with curricular instructions about diverse assessment forms of students' learning outcomes in the Vietnamese traditional exam culture and believing that 'the dream will come true' is really a misconception if not a fallacy at the curriculum level. This situation of Vietnamese primary English curriculum innovation is just like that of the Chinese one of which Liu (2016) convinced that communicative curriculum innovators need to take into considerations of contextual factors among several others. One will not deny a communicative curriculum for its value in developing students' communicative abilities in the globalised world today. Still, it is necessary to admit a fact that curriculum innovation does not take place "through a top-down prescription of official document change" but through the change of teachers' classroom practices on a daily basis (Liu, 2016, p. 85).

In summary, there has been a mistaken belief about Vietnamese primary English CLT at the curriculum level in terms of students' English proficiency assessment. The Vietnamese MOET has ordered to implement a Western-based teaching approach into the socio-cultural context of Vietnam within its traditional testing and exam culture. However, there have not been effective measures to ensure valid, holistic and honest assessment of students' communicative competence for such a communicative curriculum. Believing that Vietnamese primary English is enforcing a CLT curriculum and students are scoring well in tests and exams

as evidence of such curriculum is a misconception. As Savignon (2018) put it, there needs to be revision of assessment policies in language programs that reflect current understanding of communicative competence. The point is that assessment policies must be feasibly and effectively enforced. Such feasible and effective assessment policies are essential to the promotion of CLT practices in the classroom.

5.4. Misconceptions about CLT *pedagogies* in the Vietnamese primary English education

It is discussed in the above section there has been a mistaken belief at the Vietnamese primary English curriculum level in terms of assessment of students' communicative competence. This section will discuss misconceptions about CLT pedagogies, which involve primary English teachers' methods and practices to influence students' learning. One major finding of my research is that CLT was not generally practiced. However, all teachers involved believed that, to some degree, they were teaching following CLT. The question raised is why there are such misconceptions? This discussion will argue that teachers' misunderstanding about CLT, their lack of proper and sufficient CLT training coupled with other factors such as MOET's CLT policies and communicative curriculum mentioned above have led to misconceptions about CLT pedagogies in the primary English.

5.4.1. Teachers' misunderstanding of CLT as a cause for misconceptions about CLT pedagogies

First of all, it is necessary to briefly look back at the teachers' actual classroom practices. As presented in the previous chapters, and especially summarised in section 5.0.1, the teachers in this research were still practising traditional ELT pedagogies. The word *traditional* here is in the sense that teachers used traditional methods such as Audio-lingual, PPP model, Grammar-Translation, and the focus of their pedagogies was not on communication or meaning, but on linguistic forms and usage. However, in the interviews with them (both pre-observation and post-observation interviews), all teachers believed that they were teaching in the direction of CLT, or they were teaching to assist students' communication. Therefore, there have been misconceptions about their CLT pedagogies. The cause for the misconceptions may have originated from how teachers conceptualised their CLT pedagogies including their understanding of the communicative competence, communicative activities, and CLT practices.

Firstly, while building students' communicative competence is at the core of CLT pedagogies, teachers' have mistakenly conceptualised the term. The mistaken beliefs about students' *communicative competence* are one big issue from which teachers form their CLT pedagogies. As shown in the literature, a very influential and most accepted model of communicative competence is by Canale and Swain (1980), which comprises of four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Teachers' CLT pedagogies should nurture the development all of these elements of competence in students. However, the teachers in this research conceptualised students' communicative competence mainly as grammatical competence and some very small aspect of discourse competence. In the teachers' understanding, they commonly defined communicative competence as students' abilities to use sentence patterns (i.e. forms, structures) and vocabulary that they are taught to communicate with each other in class. It is also necessary to notice that the word *communicate* in their conceptualisations means that students can understand their friends when they practice asking and answering questions related to taught sentence patterns and vocabulary. The questions and answers that students practice are mostly pre-determined by the teachers and are mainly from the MOET's approved textbooks. Larsen-Freeman (2000) argued that the most important thing about CLT is "asking teachers to look at what is involved in communication" (p. 134). Language teachers need to truly understand what it entails in being communicatively competent if they really want their students to communicate using the target language. As the teachers' understanding of the term *communicative competence* was limited mainly to grammatical competence, they attempted to teach to achieve their lesson goals of having students to remember and use textbook lessons' sentence patterns and vocabulary. Therefore, the way teachers conceptualised their understanding of communicative competence partly led them to believe that they were teaching following CLT while they were actually not. That is where there are misconceptions about teachers' CLT pedagogies in the Vietnamese primary English.

Secondly, misconceptions about CLT pedagogies have also originated from how teachers formed their concepts of communicative activities. CLT pedagogies promote to develop students' communicative competence through letting them engage in (real) communication. Teachers facilitate students' learning by organising communicative activities in their classrooms. My research findings suggest that it is very important for teachers to

recognise what a communicative activity actually is if they are to follow CLT pedagogies. The post-observation interviews with the teachers show that they incorrectly identified communicative activities (elements) in their classroom teaching. While their teaching did not align with could hardly be portrayed as CLT practices, they listed almost everything they did in their classrooms as communicative activities. Tasks such as repetition, drill practice, or their reminder for students to prepare for following class time (e.g. doing homework, preparing school kits) were stated by the teachers as all communicative activities. When teachers view accuracy activities in class as fluency activities (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014), they have misconceptions about CLT pedagogies as in my research.

Finally, there are misconceptions about CLT pedagogies in the Vietnamese primary English in the way that teachers conceptualised their CLT practices as a whole. Apart from an incomplete understanding about core components of CLT, communicative competence and communicative activities, teachers' misconceptions about CLT pedagogies are also originated from their own conventional or methodical practices, which they are still practising and still believing they are CLT pedagogies (although to some degree). Teachers' misconceptions about CLT pedagogies are shown through both the pre-observation interviews, where they talked about how they understood and practised CLT, and the post-observation interviews, where they reflected on their actual classroom teaching. The major point of discussion here is the misconceptions about how teachers orient their CLT pedagogies. Mentioning in both the pre-observation and post-observation interviews, the teachers stressed the importance of and planned to target their students' memorisation of textbooks' sentence patterns and vocabulary. All of their lesson plans were then carried out through procedural and textbook-based practices. Viewing from the angle of targeting students' memorisation of sentence patterns and vocabulary, it is not argued here that it is all negative. In fact, the literature review shows that there is more and more evidence that explicit teaching and learning is regaining its significance in effective L2 learning, specifically in enhancing students' L2 retainment (Dörnyei, 2013; Spada, 2007). Also from the position of L2 teachers, who would not want their students to retain what they have learned after some period of learning? Viewing from the angle of form focus in L2 teaching, CLT does include teaching language forms (Savignon, 2018, 2002; Spada, 2007), and also it is one of the components in the structure of

communicative competence, the grammatical competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Also, Dörnyei (2013) proposed to provide students with explicit initial input through controlled practice in Principled Communicative Approach (PCA). Similarly, Littlewood (2011, 2013) suggested using the communicative continuum of classroom activities where teachers also include non-communicative activities in their classrooms. However, misconceptions of CLT pedagogies happen when teachers target students' memorisation, teach them language forms and vocabulary through non-communicative activities and then stop there. What makes CLT different from other (traditional) approaches and methods is that it stresses the significance of meaning. As Spada (2007) argued, CLT did not intend to exclude form, but it was intended to "*include communication*" (pp. 275-276). It may be helpful to teach students the language forms they need to communicate, but in the case of Vietnamese primary English teachers, they did not include communication, or very little of limited communication was intended. On the other side of a coin in proposing the PCA, Dörnyei (2013) placed the principle of *meaning-focused and personally significant* on the top of the list as a priority of the PCA before including controlled practice or explicit instructions. Similarly, on the CLT communicative continuum, Littlewood (2011, 2013) suggested that teachers need to gradually expand their practices from non-communicative activities towards communicative activities. In refining CLT principles, Brandl (2008) argued that CLT trends today set a reconciliation with traditional approaches by compromising and keeping their aspects that are still valued today. Some of new added values are communication and personal meaning achieved through the organisation of communicative activities. If teachers just teach language forms, vocabulary and target students' memorisation as the most important, and do not expand towards communication, their pedagogies cannot be labelled as CLT pedagogies. Having come to this point, it is helpful to add to the story of Vietnamese primary English teachers' CLT pedagogies an old saying in the Vietnamese culture, "bình mới, rượu cũ" [new bottle (but) same old wine]. This saying is usually applied to situations when we say we will carry out changes or innovations but we actually end up doing the same (old) things. In the case of primary English's CLT pedagogies, it is similar to the saying "new bottle but same old wine". At least in the saying, we have a new bottle; and in the primary English, we have the new term added - CLT. With what is going on in primary English classrooms in Vietnam, teachers' pedagogies cannot be viewed as CLT pedagogies. If involved stakeholders continue to believe they are conducting CLT pedagogies, then there lie the misconceptions.

Furthermore, misconceptions about CLT pedagogies can also be viewed from another angle about teachers' conducting textbook-based practices. As shown in the literature, CLT pushes towards the use of authentic materials reflecting real-life communication and learners' needs. Nonetheless, it does not mean that ESL/EFL textbooks should be avoided in CLT as English textbooks today are greatly improved towards reflecting real life outside and also because of several other benefits (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The point as Savignon (2002) asserted is that teachers use textbooks in authentic manners. Teachers should understand language learning and how it takes place, engage students with texts and meaning through use and discovery. Therefore, CLT does not reject the use of textbooks, but how they are used is what matters. The teachers in my research literally based all their teaching on textbooks by following the same textbooks' contents, orders, activities. What they did was that they were rushing to cover all textbooks' contents in limited allocated class time, similar to other primary English teachers in previous studies (L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011). In such as rush to the finish line, terms such real-life language use, learners' needs, communication, and meaning are often left behind so that teachers can get finish their lessons on time. Textbook-based and conventional pedagogies by the teachers in the research are just not what CLT pedagogies are all about. Therefore, considering their practices aligned with CLT pedagogies is a misconception.

5.4.2. Mismatch between what teachers understand about CLT and how they put their understanding into practice as misconceptions about CLT pedagogies

The misconceptions about CLT pedagogies in the Vietnamese primary English are also reflected in the gap between what teachers understand about CLT and how they put their understanding into practice. Apart from mis-conceptualising CLT practices as a whole discussed above, to some extent, teachers also have some positive and correct understanding about CLT. However, how they put into real practice is their misconceptions about CLT pedagogies. The misconceptions involve aspects such as: setting communication as the centre of CLT pedagogies, creating real-life language environment in the classroom, prioritising students' speaking skills, and promoting student-student interactions.

Firstly, placing communication at the centre of CLT pedagogies is a correct understanding, which is in line with CLT principles (Brandl, 2008; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). CLT was born as a desire to add communication to language learning,

something that was lack or failed to achieve with traditional approaches and methods. CLT pushes to build learners' communicative competence by engaging them in communicative activities to enact interactions, negotiation of meaning, exchanging information and thus all of those facilitate learning. It is just as simple as that the 'C' of Communicative has to be related to communication. Therefore, teachers said that putting communication at the heart of CLT pedagogies should totally be applauded. However, how teachers put the communication principle into their practice causes the misconceptions to happen. Since they mis-conceptualise the communicative competence, communicative activities, and CLT practices as a whole (as discussed above), their practices are still very methodical and conventional. They still strongly focus on language forms and strictly follow textbooks with the absence of (real) communication in their classes. Therefore, there is a mistaken belief that they are following CLT pedagogies.

Secondly, creating a real-life language environment in the classroom is another teachers' positive understanding of CLT pedagogies. This aspect is related to the CLT's authenticity and catering for learners' communication needs. When students learn English as a L2 in the environment of ENL or ESL, what they learn in the L2 classrooms will be applied directly in real-life communication. Also, L2 classrooms need to prepare students to be able to communicate in the real world. In contrast, in the EFL environments, students may not have similar needs as L2 students in the cases of ENL and ESL. Besides, it will be very challenging to replicate an EFL classroom language environment as one in the other two cases. However, dedicated language teachers may attempt to organise their classroom teaching a bit closer and closer towards positive L2 environments to assist students' L2 learning. In the case of Vietnamese primary English teachers, what they understand about creating real-life language environment in the classroom sounds good, but the ways they practise it is very limited. It turned out in the in-class observations and teachers' reflections after teaching that when students could ask and answer questions (mostly mechanical practice) as set in some language pattern, and when the language pattern was linked (a little) to ask about the students themselves, it was students' abilities to communicate and that was the language environment as they said. For example, when teachers teach the pattern:

Student 1: How many classes do you have today?

Student 2: I have four.

Then after a lot of repetition practice with whole class, pairs or individual students, teachers would ask students the same question about *their classes* that day. All students in class would just have the same answer. There was no information gap as everything was obviously predictable and already set. The practice there is basically mechanical or accuracy practice. Nothing or very little is communicative. If such practice is considered belonging to CLT pedagogies, then it is a misconception.

Thirdly, teachers conceptualise that prioritising students' speaking skills is what CLT pedagogies are about. Although this view may be incomplete, there is still some positivity about the case of Vietnam. The interpretation that CLT mainly focuses on speaking skills is considered a misconception about CLT as CLT promotes to teach all language skills (Savignon, 2018, 2002; Spada, 2007). In the case of Vietnamese ELT, students usually spend years of learning English but cannot speak English in face-to-face communications (T. M. H. Nguyen, 2017). Therefore, it is understandable that the MOET stated in the primary English curriculum that it aims to develop students' four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) but with a priority on speaking and listening skills (MOET, 2010). The issue raised is how teachers actually develop students' speaking skills in the classroom. From their reflections about identifying communicative elements in their teaching and their whole CLT practices, most teachers think that they prioritise students' speaking skills. Actually, what they do is all about repetition and accuracy practice. Students repeat vocabulary and sentence patterns after their teachers in whole class activities, then in small groups and individually. In their teachers' beliefs, when students practice asking and answering questions using taught sentence patterns and vocabulary, it is their priority to develop students' speaking skills in the communicative directions. While prioritising students' speaking skills may be positive in CLT, the way teachers conceptualise developing students' speaking skills is a misconception. If after controlled practice or non-communicative learning, teachers organise for their students to participate in activities towards communication as Dörnyei (2013) and Littlewood (2011, 2013) suggested, their pedagogies then may be ones in line with CLT trends today. However, as teachers do not expand their practices towards communication, claiming that they are teaching following CLT is a misconception at the pedagogic level.

Finally, misconceptions about CLT pedagogies also exist in the way teachers believe they are promoting student-student interactions in the classroom. Accordingly, teachers

thought that in their CLT pedagogies, they organise for students to work in pairs or groups, and through activities in which students give comments about their peers' performance. First, with respect to putting students to work in pairs and groups, it is a common belief and usual practice that it is a signature feature of CLT. It is because through pair work and group work interactions, students carry out communication with negotiation of meaning and thus facilitate learning. It can be also considered a feature of collaborative and cooperative learning in CLT principles (Brandl, 2008). However, the pair and group work assignments in the teachers' classroom are what Richards (2006) already warned about accuracy or fluency activities. If communication is not set as the goal of pair and group work, the interactions there are not communicative. In the teachers' classrooms, students are asked to sit in pairs and groups to practice asking and answering questions based strictly on taught sentence patterns and vocabulary. The activities are not anything more than mechanical and accuracy practice. Therefore, labelling it as a communicative component of CLT pedagogies is a mistaken belief. Second, in terms of giving peer comments, teachers' beliefs that they are promoting student-student interactions in the direction of CLT is also a misconception. Through the class observations, it is observed that the focus of the activities are mostly for students to point out their peers' mistakes and give alternative corrections, just as teachers giving corrective feedback. It is correct that students do pay more attention (as teachers claim) to their friends' performances so that they can comment. However, it can be seen that the focus of those activities are also on the accuracy of students' performances, and not on the message or meaning (actually no message or meaning as the performance is tied to the accuracy of taught sentence patterns and vocabulary). If such activities can be viewed aligned with CLT pedagogies, it is a misconception. Furthermore, in many cases, the teachers may have ignored the affective factors related to such activities. Students may feel that they are under scrutiny from both teachers and their friends all the time, and that they must get it right or else. That will be against a CLT principle that teachers need to pay attention to affective factors in teaching and learning (Brandl, 2008).

In summary, there have been misconceptions about CLT pedagogies in the Vietnamese primary English education. The misconceptions are from primary English teachers' misunderstanding of CLT and also from how they put their (somewhat correct) understanding into practice. This case of Vietnamese primary English supports previous research about the

conceptual constraints in the implementation of CLT/TBLT in Asian EFL contexts (Butler, 2011, 2017; Littlewood, 2007). ELT at the primary English education level is still methodical where teachers are still practising traditional pedagogies and following conventional practices. Nonetheless, teachers still believe that they are practising CLT, and right there lie the misconceptions about their CLT pedagogies.

5.5. Contradictions about *teacher agency* to implement CLT in the Vietnamese primary English education

As discussed above, the failed CLT implementation at the primary English education level in Vietnam revealed in this research took place involving misconceptions about CLT at policy, curriculum and pedagogic levels. The discussion now will be shifted to concentrate on fallacies about teacher agency in the mandated primary English CLT curriculum in Vietnam. This section will discuss what teacher agency is within the scope of my research, why it matters, and how the fallacies about teacher agency in the Vietnamese primary English CLT curriculum take place.

Teacher agency has recently become a growing topic of interest in educational research. In the literature, teacher agency is emerging as a means to understand how teachers may engage with educational policies and enact practice (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015). What is teacher agency? Its definitions are divergent according to different discipline views (Jenkins, 2020; M. D. Le, 2018; Namgung, Moate, & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2020; Priestley, Edwards, & Priestley, 2012; Sang, 2020). Teacher agency can be understood as teachers' willingness and competence to "plan and enact educational change, direct and regulate their actions in educational contexts" (Sang, 2020, p. 1). In this discussion section, I would like to view teacher agency according to an ecological approach by Priestley et al. (2015) (as elaborated from Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Accordingly, the ecological conceptualisation of agency stresses the importance of both agentic capacity and agentic spaces in shaping teacher agency and viewing agency achievement as a temporal process. In this view, teacher agency is positioned within contingencies of contexts in which teachers take actions based on their personal capacity (knowledge and skills), beliefs (professional and personal), and values they have gained. Also in this view, teacher agency is achieved through their active engagement with contextual conditions rather than just some capacity or property possessed within individual teachers. Teacher agency in the ecological view also encompasses a temporally embedded

social engagement process, which is informed by the past (e.g. previous experience), oriented towards the future (e.g. motivation, desires, fears), and engaged in the present (e.g. judgments about contextual opportunities and constraints) (Priestley et al., 2015; Sang, 2020).

In their narrative, Priestley et al. (2015) raised two questions: Why does teacher agency matter? And why is it important to understand how teacher agency occurs in educational settings? Answers to those questions share a common ground that view teachers as agents of change (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Priestley et al., 2012). Teachers are increasingly recognised as the interface between an intended curriculum and a practice-enacted curriculum (Jenkins, 2020). In other words, qualified, aspirated and well-supported teachers are the ones who will put curriculum innovations into practice. According to Jenkins (2020), teacher agency is enacted when they attempt to influence on curriculum to achieve their desired outcomes. In her study, Jenkins (2020) identified that teacher agency is manifested through three ways: proactive agency, reactive agency, and passive agency. Accordingly, proactive agency is enacted when teachers initiate and are motivated to carry out a curriculum change. It enacts all of the key properties of agency: “intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness” (p. 173). Reactive agency occurs when teachers respond to top-down curriculum policies. They engage with mandated curriculum change to attempt to carry out that change in their classrooms. Finally, passive agency takes place when teachers do not engage with a mandate of curriculum innovation. Instead, they continue their practices as they have taught, or they modify the curriculum in their classrooms to suit their agendas. Jenkins (2020) also noticed that with passive agency, some teachers may describe themselves to others that they implement the required change in their classrooms but actually not much has changed in reality. Going back to Priestley et al. (2015) who raised the questions about the importance of teacher agency and understanding how teacher agency occurs, they argued that one key implication for educational policymakers and authorities to take into consideration is the importance of context to teacher agency. If teacher agency is achieved instead of being merely agents’ own capacity, they should recognise that some certain contexts may discourage or even disable teachers with high agentic capacity. In other words, teachers who are well-equipped with sufficient knowledge, skills and strong educational aspirations may come to realise that in their contexts, innovations are just too difficult to enact, or it is too risky for them to really carry out curriculum innovations.

With the case of Vietnam, there have been misconceptions or fallacies about primary English teacher agency in implementing a mandated curriculum innovation requiring teachers to move from traditional ELT pedagogies to conducting CLT pedagogies in primary English classrooms. Teachers are required to exercise their agency to carry out that curriculum change. The misconceptions about teacher agency in this case exist in an assumption that the key to teacher agency lies within their agentic capacity, rather than the relationship of “what teachers bring to the situation and what the situation brings to the teachers” (Priestley et al., 2015, pp. 7-8). This does not mean that focusing on teachers as agents of change is not a right thing to do. In fact, the important roles of teachers in classrooms to carry out pedagogical changes or facilitate learning have been repeatedly confirmed (Brown, 2007; Brown & Lee, 2015; Harmer, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Savignon, 2002). The point of issue here is that educational policymakers and authorities often focus on teachers’ capacity building (and apparently it is insufficient also) and mostly ignore what educational contexts affect on teachers exercising their agency in the implementation of a CLT curriculum.

Viewing teacher agency from the perspective of what teachers bring to the situation, it is obvious that they are not yet well-equipped with necessary knowledge and skills required for the mandated top-down communicative curriculum change. In other words, Vietnamese primary English teachers are not properly and sufficiently trained to conduct a CLT curriculum in their practices. My research findings support what has been found or mentioned previously about the primary English teachers’ capacity to teach primary English following CLT (Hoa & Tuan, 2007; Moon, 2009; C. D. Nguyen, 2018; L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011; Vu & Pham, 2014). The Vietnamese MOET has shown their attempts to build primary English teachers’ capacity through their re-training programs and professional development training workshops (Vu & Pham, 2014). However, all of those efforts are not sufficient to boost teachers’ capacity and also not well-organised, shown through the teachers’ resistance to attend and dissatisfaction about those training sessions in my research findings. Also, several teachers in my research such as Hoang, Diem, and Anh expressed that they were not confident with their abilities to teach, and to respond to their students’ immediate needs. Thus, even with focusing on building teachers’ capacity, the efforts are not enough to bring about good effects on teacher agentic capacity. According to Priestley et al. (2015), it is very often that the language of “capacity building” in teacher development is misleading as it suggests a focus

on raising teachers' capacity as individual actors to carry out curriculum innovations. This view ignores the ecological context that frames teachers' practices. That is to ignore what the context brings to teachers to see if it promotes or inhibits teachers to exercise their agency to conduct a curriculum change.

Viewing teacher agency from the ecological angle or adding what the context brings to teachers in the curriculum change, there lie the fallacies about teacher agency with the case of Vietnam. The fallacies are when teachers are encouraged to conduct and engage in CLT pedagogies but the reality of educational contexts constraints them from igniting (proactive and reactive) agency to achieve the curriculum goals. Most teachers in my research are young who favour CLT and have aspirations to bring about changes in English teaching and learning towards communication. However, they are welcomed into classrooms with overcrowded students (usually 40-46 students) and insufficient facilities and resources for teaching and learning. All of those are coupled with heavy assigned workload to be completed in a limited allocated time. It may have been enough to feel that working as a teacher in that situation is very difficult, but the constraints do not stop there. With the scheme of "capacity building", primary English teachers have been required to improve their knowledge and skills in English teaching methodology and English proficiency to reach the MOET's desired primary English teacher capacity (as presented in the Introduction chapter). Improving teachers' capacity is certainly a good, necessary thing to empower them to work towards achieving the curriculum goals. Nevertheless, how the capacity building has been conducted has added unnecessary pressure, stress and worries to teachers who have been worn out by their educational contexts. With passionate teachers, they may be able to manage to overcome these disadvantages to attempt to achieve the curriculum goals when their level of agency is high. It is similar to the situation in which teachers must swim against the tide in a difficult environment, but nevertheless they manage to "hold true to deeply held principles" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 8). However, the main issue of the fallacies about teacher agency with the case of Vietnam is that educational policymakers and authorities require them, encourage them to exercise their agency to carry out the curriculum innovation but also at the same time inhibit them to effectively enact that mandated curriculum. How can such a contradiction happen? Vietnamese primary English teachers are told to teach so that students can communicate in English. Their educational leaders (the district DOET) encourage them to be creative, to be

free in their practices provided they can achieve the communicative curriculum's desired goals. In reality, teachers do not dare to be creative as it is too risky for them to be judged as "wrong" (Hoang, post-observation interview). As shared by Anh and Hoang, teachers are required to follow MOET's approved textbooks, to cover all of the textbooks' contents, to follow the syllabus distribution, and follow an underlying law which is that teachers should follow conventional practices. If they do not do those things and get caught by DOET's and school academic inspectors, they will be in trouble. In the relationship of teachers and academic inspectors, teachers are usually inferior and in a vulnerable position to the inspectors. Like Hoang talked about his experience, he has to force himself to always agree with whatever academic inspectors say or comment and promise to do as they suggest. Just by that, such educational contexts have successfully and effectively killed teachers' creativity as openly said by Hoang. Another thing that drags them even farther away from the CLT curriculum is the expectations from schools and parents. The Vietnamese testing and exam culture has rooted deeply in individuals that schools and parents want their students and children to receive high scores as the most important thing of learning. In that culture, teachers are easy to be blamed if their students do not score high in important exams. All teachers in my research have certainly chosen to go with the flow to be safe. The agency they exercise in this case is passive agency (Jenkins, 2020). They say they are teaching towards the direction of CLT but actually resist the communicative goals of the curriculum, go with traditional and conventional practices, follow teaching-to-the-test practice. My research findings support the research on Vietnamese primary English teacher agency in implementing the language policy reform by M. D. Le et al. (2021). The Vietnamese primary English teachers in their research are positioned merely as implementers of the language policy. Their work is regularly supervised and inspected. In their normal classrooms, they struggle to conduct their practices and eventually resist the policy change to adapt their teaching suitable to their interpretations, choices and preferences, and their teaching conditions. In the fallacies about primary English teacher agency exists a possible controversy. How they are implementing the curriculum CLT innovation is apparently incorrect, but also they are doing the right thing at the same time. The intended CLT curriculum promotes to develop students' communicative competence. How the teachers are teaching can be seen as not CLT pedagogies as their practices are still methodical. This is not just temporary but has been so since 2010 when the national primary English curriculum was issued. Why are they not in trouble as they do not

implement the curriculum properly? The answer is because they have done as expected by their schools, students' parents and local academic inspectors. While I repeatedly saw teachers' passive agency taking place during my research, there was a moment of light when passive agency was moved to reactive agency when a teacher was trying to make a turn on the common path. The teacher, Hoang, intentionally broke his conventional practice by adapting textbook's contents and activities to add a somewhat communicative component in which students could practice speaking, adding some of their personal meaning to the activity. However, Hoang admitted that he did it solely for my research purpose, only for the in-class observation. He did it because he felt safe within my research space. After I left, he would return to the common path as it was unsafe to be creative like that. It can be seen that the educational contexts and how the educational system is operating, are preventing Vietnamese primary English teachers from exercising their (reactive) agency to achieve the communicative curriculum goals although they are required to do so. Meanwhile, the MOET, the DOETs, and the ecological school communities continue to believe that they are implementing a primary communicative English curriculum. They are continuing to believe that they are encouraging teachers to exercise their agentic capacity to take curriculum innovation into practice. They are continuing to accept that they are achieving communicative goals based on their students' performances in important tests and exams. All are fallacies about teacher agency in implementing the primary English communicative curriculum in Vietnam.

In summary, there are fallacies about Vietnamese primary English teachers exercising their agency to carry out a CLT curriculum implementation. Educational policymakers and authorities require primary English teachers to take their agentic roles in the curriculum change. They have focused on teacher agency from the aspect of teachers' capacity building rather than paying attention to what their educational contexts bring to teachers in exercising their agency. The fallacies about teacher agency is just like Priestley et al. (2015) put it that curriculum policies demand teachers exercise their agency to carry out changes in their practices. However, at the same time, they also deny teachers the means to exercise their agency, and thus effectively disable them. Such policies apparently focus on teachers' individual capacity to be effective teachers while they ignore or subvert cultural and structural conditions which are very important to allow teacher agency to be exercised effectively.

5.6. Does it matter?

My research findings together with other studies from the literature about the CLT implementation in national ELT curriculum reforms in Vietnam have suggested that there has been failure in implementing CLT in primary English in Vietnam. The failure appears at all levels from policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and individual teachers. Such failure has largely originated from misconceptions or fallacies about CLT implementation in the Vietnamese sociocultural and educational context. The main issue now is that does it matters that CLT is generally not practised as expected? This section will discuss the matter from two angles: the school communities and the Vietnamese government/MOET.

Viewing the matter from the angle of school communities, the research findings suggest that it does not matter (or not so much) for them that CLT is not being practised in primary English classrooms as required by the curriculum. The whole picture of what is going on can be briefly summarised in the following conversation among a school ecological community:

- Teachers:* We are required to teach following CLT (by the MOET).
- DOET's leaders:* Be creative. Be innovative. It does not matter how many periods you need to cover a lesson. What matters is that we want to see your pedagogical innovations.
- School leaders:* You should teach in whatever way so that our students can perform well in exams. Do not forget that students' performances in exams show our school's teaching quality.
- Parents:* Other students can get 9 or 10 points in the exam. Why my children cannot? What do you teach?
- Inspectors:* You have to follow the syllabus distribution schedules...
We are here to ensure that you do not cut back on syllabus (textbooks) contents ...
There is a procedure of how this should be taught, and we believe you need to follow that.
- Teachers (to school leaders):* Yes. We will certainly focus on helping our students be able to do tests and exam well.
- Teachers (to parents):* Yes. I will make sure I try so that your children will score better.
- Teachers (to inspectors):* Yes. You are right. I will go faster to catch up with the schedules.
Yes. I will deliver the whole syllabus (textbooks) contents.

And yes, you are right. I will try to teach this as you suggest.

Teachers (to leaders and the world out there): Yes. We are teaching following CLT (though to some degree).

Through the summary conversation above, it shows clearly why it does not matter to the school community whether CLT is being practised or not. What matters to all the involved is that teachers must meet the expectations raised in their school communities. For DOETs' leaders, with common sense, they will expect the local educational system under their directions will run smoothly without bad reputations or scandals, and certainly with excellent teaching quality. For school leaders, they expect that their school teaching quality is highly ranked for the school reputation. That is usually shown through their students' high scores in tests and exams in the community conventional thinking. That expectation from school leaders is put on teachers' shoulders that they are agents to make that happen. For students' parents, they also expect that their children "learn well", which is also shown through the children's test and exam scores. It is very common among parents that as long as their children get high scores, they can be proud of their children and believe in their children's bright educational future. With (DOETs') academic inspectors, usually they have teaching backgrounds, once worked as teachers and then were promoted to work at the local DOETs. As inspectors, they function like "teaching police" who enforce formal educational directives from authorities to ensure the system is functioning properly. They base their work on formal papers such as directives from the MOET, provincial and district DOETs, curriculum, and syllabus schedules, etc. They will expect teachers to teach as directed such as: following syllabus schedules, following syllabus (textbooks) contents, allocating correct time for each lesson, or using (agreed) methods and techniques delivered at professional training workshops. After all, what matters in the school community is that the system is running well and their students learn well. It does not matter how teachers teach in their classrooms, teaching quality reflected through students' abilities to perform well in tests and exams with high scores is almost everything that matters for the school community.

As discussed above, my research findings suggest that it does not matter for the school community that CLT is generally not being practised in the primary English classrooms as long as teachers teach as the school community expect them to do. However, it will matter for the

government of Vietnam that their foreign language reform goals cannot be achieved. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, the Vietnamese government has shown its great efforts in foreign language education reforms through the implementation of Project 2020. The ultimate purpose is that the Vietnamese future workforce will increase its competitiveness in the global market with their abilities to communicate internationally (P. H. Bui, 2016; Government of Vietnam, 2008; Hoang, 2010, 2016; P. H. H. Le & Yeo, 2016; L. C. Nguyen et al., 2016; T. Nguyen, 2017; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011, 2017). Therefore, the Vietnamese government has spent a huge amount of financial resources up to 9,378 trillion Vietnamese Dong (approximately USD 400 million) to invest into Project 2020 with the hope to achieve that ultimate goal (Ngo, 2021). In 2016, the Minister of the MOET conceded that there was an improbability that they could achieve the ambitious goals of Project 2020 as planned (MOET, 2018b). Once again, the Vietnamese government shows their great determination in reforming the country's foreign language education by extending Project 2020 until 2025 (Government of Vietnam, 2017). As a result, the Vietnamese MOET issued directions about implementing the government's decision to extend the Project until 2025 (MOET, 2018b). This means that more attempts, more financial and human resources will be needed to continue the reforms to achieve the desired outcomes of Project 2020/2025. While the whole Project 2020's foreign language education reform is a big business at macro levels, the implementation of CLT in the national foreign language curricula is one of the areas that Project 2020 covers. Nonetheless, CLT is apparently important to the government as it reflects the government/MOET's intended purpose: to prepare Vietnamese learners today and future workers to be able to communicate in foreign languages, shown through developing learners' communicative competence of CLT. According to Hoang (2016), the MOET's expert teams have completed designing English curriculum innovations and new English textbooks for the reformed curricula. New communicative curriculum with approved textbooks have been implemented and used in all school levels (primary school, junior secondary school, senior high school) nationally. However, research on the implementation of CLT in all levels of education in Vietnam shows that CLT has not been successfully and effectively implemented whether it is at primary, secondary or tertiary education. My research findings strengthen previous research on the failed implementation of CLT in Vietnam, in general, and at the primary English education level, in particular. This failure suggests that Project 2020's goals or the government's ultimate purpose will not be reached

at any time sooner or later if no necessary improvements are in place. Vietnamese ELT will probably navigate in the same direction: CLT only in name and conventional in real practice. That will possibly lead to students' low abilities to conduct real communication in English. After all, a lot of government spending on Project 2020 foreign language education reforms may end up being a great deal of waste (Ngo, 2021). That is why it matters for the government that CLT is not being practised in (primary) English classrooms.

5.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on discussing misconceptions and/or contradictions regarding the failure of CLT implementation in the primary English education in Vietnam. My research findings suggest that this failure has connections with misconceptions and/or contradictions about CLT at all levels: policy, curriculum, pedagogy and individual teacher levels. Vietnamese educational policymakers and authorities have failed to consider the cultural appropriateness of CLT and provide a clear definition of what CLT really means for the Vietnamese context. Also, they have failed to reform the testing and assessment system so that it is more compatible with CLT. Vietnam lacks a consensus about what CLT is and how CLT should be practiced, thus teachers have various understanding and interpretations of CLT in theory as well as in their practices. Besides, Vietnam has also failed to provide appropriate conditions so that teachers can enact their agency to carry out the communicative curriculum in the primary English education. As Liu (2016) stated, a curriculum change does not take place on paper through an official document issuance but through the changes in teachers' daily practices. If the Vietnamese government, the MOET, and local school communities do not provide teachers with sufficient and necessary conditions to change their daily practices, curriculum innovations will always be in name only. If there is not a dramatic change in the whole educational system regarding ELT, "CLT can actually only dance on a traditional stage to a traditional audience" (Sun & Cheng, 2002, p. 76). What should be done about the situation? The following chapter will give recommendations about the issue and wrap up the research report.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Overview

This PhD research project has explored from a socio-cultural perspective how primary English teachers understood and implemented CLT in their classroom practices following mandated primary English education through the Vietnamese government's Project 2020. Phase One of the research targeted all public primary school English teachers in a whole school district in the Mekong Delta region. This was narrowed down to eight teacher participants in Phase Two. By doing that, the research was aimed to receive both (all) teachers' voices in Phase One, and their rich professional experiences based on their representatives in Phase Two. The research has indicated that primary English teachers misunderstood or did not understand CLT theory and practice. Teachers' practices have not changed much since the mandate of primary English following CLT. It also suggests that the mandatory CLT implementation in the Vietnamese primary English education has failed. This chapter concludes my research about how Vietnamese primary English teachers practise CLT in their classrooms by addressing the research questions and the research contribution. Also, based on the research findings, implications and recommendations are drawn for ELT policies and practice in Vietnam. This chapter also points out the limitations of the research and makes suggestions for future studies. Finally, the thesis will conclude with commentary about what I have learned and gained professionally from conducting this research.

6.2. Addressing the research question

As introduced in Chapter 1 – the Introduction, detailed in Chapter 3 - the Research Methodology, and summarised in Chapter 5, this research was aimed to explore how Vietnamese primary English teachers implemented CLT implementation in their practices through their use of communication-oriented activities (or communicative activities) in their classrooms by answering the central research question: *How do Vietnamese primary English teachers understand CLT from a socio-cultural perspective?*

The research findings revealed that teachers misunderstood or did not understand CLT theory and practice. All rounds of data collection reinforced that there were misconceptions and contradictions in teachers' activity systems regarding the research matters. Teachers' practices have not changed much since the introduction of the MOET's mandatory primary

English communicative curriculum. In other words, CLT was not generally being practised in Vietnamese primary English classrooms as mandated due to Vietnamese socio-cultural factors. The answer to the central research question above was illustrated in the following major findings of the research:

Firstly, teachers' pedagogies were still traditional. Communication-oriented activities (or communicative activities), which are a very typical characteristic of CLT pedagogies, were absent in the teachers' observed classrooms. The teachers mainly followed textbook-driven practices, in which they covered the exact textbooks' contents and order of activities.

Secondly, teachers' traditional pedagogies were conducted with their excessive use of typical features or techniques of the Audiolingual Method, the PPP Model, and the Grammar-Translation Method.

Thirdly, teachers' current conventional and traditional pedagogies as observed in the research were informed from their incorrect or incomplete understanding of CLT theory and practice, their insufficient expert training of CLT, and other socio-cultural contextual constraints to the CLT implementation.

Fourthly, Vietnamese primary English teachers faced several dilemmas and challenges in their practices, including conceptual constraints (the socio-cultural context of Vietnam, the ways teachers conceptualised CLT), classroom level constraints (teachers' insufficient abilities, students' abilities and needs, difficulties coming from ELT policies, lack of facilities and resources for English teaching and learning), and societal-institutional constraints (EFL language environment, testing and assessment culture). Still, there was some hope for change in the implementation of primary English communicative curriculum as teachers expressed their favour of CLT against traditional pedagogies. Also, teachers had a desire to exercise their agentic power to act towards fulfilling the curriculum change. This hope sets some opportunities for the future if proper changes and/or adjustments will be made. Gradual changes need to be made in assisting primary English teachers. Help and support for primary English teachers are needed, together with significant changes in the educational system regarding ELT, in order for teachers to actually implement communication-oriented language teaching. The kinds of help and support teachers need consist of, but not limited to, creating conditions so that they can enact their teacher agency, providing them with sufficient expert training about CLT if they are to teach following this approach, and empathy from educational

authorities and school communities about their work in insufficient conditions. Regarding the need to have significant changes in ELT in the educational system, some changes include adjusting the testing and assessment system to make it more compatible with CLT, giving sufficient time allocation for the English subject in the whole primary education curricula, and improving facilities and resources for teaching and learning at schools.

6.3. Limitations of the research

While the research is significant in making several contributions, there are some unavoidable limitations in conducting this research.

One limitation of the research is its generalisability. My research has provided insights into Vietnamese primary English teachers' implementation of CLT in their practices through the mandated primary English curriculum in one school district in Vietnam. My research asked the *What*, *How*, and *Why*, therefore I decided to follow a qualitative paradigm to conduct the research. Although the qualitative research allowed me to explore deeply participants' perspectives, experience and stories, the findings of this research by no means reflect the whole population of primary English teachers in the Mekong Delta region or in Vietnam. As a result, the findings have limited generalisability to other educational contexts. However, people may find the findings applicable to their contexts with similar contextual characteristics. It is helpful to acknowledge that generalisability was not intended when this research was proposed. Instead, I wanted to deeply explore the research matters and obtain rich data from participants. I tried to reduce the limitations of qualitative research (e.g., few participants due to large amount of data) by targeting the whole primary English teachers in one school district in Phase 1 to increase data density. In Phase 2, I attempted to select (voluntary) participants with an intention that they would best represent their whole school district. All of the attempts were to assist the trustworthiness of the findings.

A second limitation of the research also involves qualitative research limitations. That is the possible bias in qualitative research. This limitation was due to a fact that I as a researcher involved myself in data collection, analysis and meaning interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Therefore, my research findings would only be viewed under ideas, beliefs and experience that my research participants and I held.

A third research limitation is that I did not involve all stakeholders in the conversations to have all involved voices heard. If the MOET, DOETs, school leaders, parents, and even (children) students were invited to participate, a more thorough understanding of the situation from all perspectives could have been obtained. However, the constrained time and the scope of the research would make such inclusions not feasible.

All of the research limitations provide suggestions for further research, which will be detailed later in section 10.7 of this chapter.

6.4. The research contribution

It is hoped this research has made contributions to the implementation of CLT in Asian and Vietnamese EFL contexts in several ways.

Firstly, this research aims to contribute to the literature about the implementation of CLT in the post-method era in Asian EFL contexts, in general, and in the context of Vietnam, in particular. The research findings add more knowledge to the general picture of implementing CLT in Vietnam (primary English education), specifically in the under-researched Vietnamese Mekong Delta region, following the government foreign language education reforms through Project 2020. The research has been strengthened by previous studies which state that a Western teaching approach like CLT is difficult and constrained to be implemented in Asian socio-cultural contexts. Confirming this, this research suggests that the copy and paste model of a teaching approach does not work contextually in ELT. Copying a Western-based progressive teaching approach and pasting it in a non-Western context such as Vietnam has showed to fail again. This also strengthens the view from Guthrie (2011) that we should attempt to make educational improvements through incremental changes in our own teaching style rather than trying to change it into another style.

Secondly, this research aims to contribute to ELT in Vietnam by providing policymakers with more evidence about what is going on in English classrooms to inform their decisions. The research findings inform Vietnamese educational policymakers that the current policy to mandate the CLT implementation in the primary English education has been ineffective nor successful. Such a top-down policy did not receive full support from school communities as they were not consulted nor involved in the process of policy-making. In addition, such a policy was issued without sufficient considerations of its feasibility in the Vietnamese socio-cultural

context. Also, the literature review and research findings inform policymakers that there may be other ways that are more appropriate and feasible to achieve the government's goals in ELT reforms, and CLT is not the only solution. In fact, the research suggests that a pure version of CLT may not be the solution for Vietnamese ELT, and we should have a reimagining of an effective ELT approach in the context of Vietnam. ELT reforms need to have negotiations and compromises with Vietnamese educational traditions to 'bargain' and achieve a more appropriate and feasible ecological approach to ELT.

Finally, this research is also hoped to make pedagogical contributions in teachers' professional development. The research findings inform educational authorities that professional development through in-service teacher training has not been very effective in assisting teachers to act towards the government's desired goals in primary English education. Besides, the research also informs professional development planners that primary English teachers currently have misunderstanding about CLT theory and practice. It suggests that professional training needs to target to tackle the issue to assist teachers' pedagogical improvements.

6.5. Implications

This research project explored how primary English teachers have changed in their practices since the mandate of the primary English education following CLT in Vietnam through the government's Project 2020. The research findings indicate that primary English teachers' practices have not changed much as CLT is generally not being practised. In light of the research major findings, the following implications are offered.

The research implies that a top-down policy in curriculum innovations does not work well as it does not involve all stakeholders in the policy-making process. As such a policy which is made without consulting local school communities' needs and expectations, is out of touch with the lived reality. Policymaking should be informed with an understanding of the reality of stakeholders, and policymakers should evaluate if a certain policy is feasible to be implemented effectively.

A second implication from the research is that a pure CLT curriculum cannot work well in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam without significant changes in the culturally embedded educational traditions. While such changes are difficult, it is helpful to

acknowledge that efforts to convert a formalistic teaching and learning style into a progressive style often fail in revelatory cultures, to which Vietnam belongs. Vietnam could consider making changes in embedded educational traditions to make teaching and learning better instead of following the copy and paste model to install a Western progressive model into our culture of learning and expect it will work well.

Finally, another implication from the research is who can have strong influence on a curriculum change. While teachers are considered agents of change, they have no agentic power. Currently, those who have direct influence on teachers, such as local BOET and school leaders, will be able to shape teachers' practices. The findings from this research imply that while the government and the MOET are top level authorities, their directions seem to be less powerful than teachers' direct leaders. Teachers take direct orders and directions from their school and DOETs' leaders. Even with local DOETs, teachers will usually listen to DOETs' academic inspectors and not the top DOETs' leaders as those officials directly observe and assess their teaching. This implies that to prepare for a certain curriculum innovation, aiming to build teacher capacity is not enough. Educational leaders should also take into considerations that those who have direct influence on teachers may inhibit the innovation to take place if they misunderstand, misinterpret, resist, or are not qualified enough to conduct the innovation judgments.

6.6. Recommendations for practice

This section will present the research recommendations for practice. The recommendations mainly focus upon measures to adjust ELT pedagogies in Vietnam to make them more appropriate, feasible and effective in the Vietnamese socio-cultural context.

6.6.1. Recommendations for educational policymakers and authorities

As discussed, the Vietnamese government has attempted to reform foreign language teaching, in general, and ELT, in particular, in Vietnam. Such attempts have been implemented to help today's Vietnamese learners today and future workforce to be able to communicate internationally, and thus increase Vietnam's competitiveness in the global market. The government's attempts in educational reforms have been carried out in Project 2020, through which English is now a mandatory learning area starting from Year 3 at the primary education, and CLT is required to develop students' communicative competence. However, the literature

about the implementation of CLT in Vietnam together with my research findings show that (primary) English teachers are not practising CLT in their classrooms, and that CLT is constrained to be effectively implemented in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam. In Chapter 8, I discussed that there have been misconceptions about CLT (implementation) in the mandate of primary English following CLT at the levels of policy, curriculum, pedagogy and individual teachers. This section focuses on recommendations for Vietnamese educational policymakers in ELT. The recommendations surround the issue whether CLT should continue to be the pathway for Vietnamese ELT to achieve the desired goals. Accordingly, two possibilities are envisioned to go forward: (1) dropping it all together and adopting a CLT spirit, or (2) setting to improve CLT in the Vietnamese context in the long run.

6.6.1.1. Option 1. Dropping it altogether and adopting a CLT spirit towards communication-oriented language teaching

In Vietnamese primary English classrooms, CLT is generally not being practised. When it is, it is constrained and difficult (if not impossible for the time being) to be implemented. Therefore, it is necessary that CLT as the pathway in Vietnamese ELT curricula, in general, and primary English curriculum, in particular, should be re-considered. In fact, what is learned from the literature and this research suggests that CLT is not the only option as “the best practice”, “the way to go”, “the way to teach” and “the remedy” to ELT in the world (L. H. Phan & Le, 2013, pp. 221-222). To assist in the implementation of CLT, Vietnam should consider adopting the CLT spirit (H. H. Pham, 2007), which gradually prepares and provides conditions for communication-oriented language teaching (COLT) (Littlewood, 2011, 2013, 2014) with teachers’ context-sensitive pedagogies to be practised in Vietnamese ELT. Such a pathway for ELT can be gradually carried out through two stages: (1) an initial stage of compromise between an innovative approach and traditional pedagogies, and (2) an integrated stage to build and develop communication-oriented language teaching, COLT.

Firstly, there could be an initial stage for the compromise between an innovative approach and traditional pedagogies in ELT to take place in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam. Such a compromise is necessary and “unavoidable” since traditional language pedagogies still prevail in many parts of the world (Brown & Lee, 2015; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Sun & Cheng, 2002, p. 76). Also, when refining CLT principles, Brandl (2008) elaborated that CLT trends today set a reconciliation with traditional

approaches by compromising and keeping their aspects that are still valued. Similarly, Spada (2007) argued that CLT did not intend to exclude form, but it was intended to “*include communication*” (pp. 275-276). The literature review suggests that there is a need for negotiation between CLT and traditional pedagogies in EFL contexts rather than eliminating traditional pedagogies and replacing them with CLT. Such a negotiation certainly involves a consideration of context and culture of learning (Bax, 2003; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Discussing an integration of context into a communicative curriculum in Chinese EFL, Sun and Cheng (2002) stated that there needs to be a compromise of a language teaching innovation like CLT with traditional pedagogies in China based on the three facts. First, traditional perceptions of education still exist which view language learning as a process of delivering knowledge rather than of developing communicative abilities. Second, it is very difficult to provide students with sufficient and authentic opportunities to practise English with limited resources, e.g. language input and teaching materials. Third, it is difficult to implement CLT with a lack of qualified teachers for CLT and also students are still too used to traditional learning strategies. Sun and Cheng (2002) argued that the main objective of any language program is to satisfy the students’ needs, detailing that preparing for future jobs and passing formal examinations to graduate are some of most importance. Based on the needs analysis, they carried out a compromise by developing a communicative curriculum/syllabus at a Chinese college with two components: conventional English with traditional pedagogies (5-6 hours/week) and oral English with CLT elements (2 hours/week). The students in their study were required to enrol in both English courses. Their college had an advantage that they had both Chinese (English) and expatriate teachers. The conventional English classes were taught by Chinese English teachers with a focus on reading and writing while the Oral English classes were taught by expatriate teachers focusing on listening and speaking. The school gave expatriate teachers freedom to conduct their classes by not intervening in their teaching. Sun and Cheng (2002) reported that students enjoyed the Oral English classes so much that they engaged in talking with their expatriate teachers most of the time, even outside class times. Students also shared that they had a sense of security with Chinese teachers as they could learn important things for their exams. The curriculum was effective in the way that it met students’ needs to both prepare for their exams and develop their communicative abilities.

With the three facts detailed above about the situation of Chinese EFL by Sun and Cheng (2002), Vietnam may see they also reflect well to the situation of Vietnamese ELT, and thus a combination of both traditional and communicative English classes in the curriculum may work better for Vietnam. Interestingly enough, one teacher in my research, Minh, raised his hope that he could have an “experiment period” (his own words) when he could teach freely towards communicative goals without using required textbooks. Minh was not the only one with the hope of a free space in his teaching. In fact, most teachers in my research were young with strong aspirations to teach towards communication. They may have a good action plan if they are handed some freedom and agentic power to teach towards communication. Now that I have had a deep understanding of my research participants, I can picture that they may make a difference in their teaching given that they have agentic power. Among the eight teachers, Minh hoped to have an experiment period a week, and Hoang wanted to be creative in his teaching communicatively. It suggests that Minh and Hoang may be in the lead towards communication-oriented language teaching. Next to the lead team is Thanh, Hong, Anh, and Diem, who may act well in the recommended added communicative classes. Thanh and Anh expressed that they would teach differently if they were free from mandatory textbooks. Hong would like to select and prepare his own teaching materials, and Diem admitted that students could not communicate at the time with the conventional teaching. The remaining are Quy and Phuong. Although Quy had a great deal of misunderstanding about communicative pedagogies, she was young, enthusiastic and had strong aspirations. More proper professional development may help Quy advance in her teaching effectively. Finally, Phuong was all satisfied with her teaching and did not expect to change anything. However, similar to Quy, she had enthusiasm and love for teaching. Training sessions on communication-oriented language teaching may change her views about effective teaching towards communication. In a nutshell, if there is something like what Minh called “experiment periods”, those enthusiastic teachers may act well in both conventional and “experiment” classes. By including “experiment periods” in the curriculum, teachers can still teach as they usually do, and they can also apply their expertise or abilities to best help both themselves and their students get used to the innovative component of the communicative curriculum. This proposed initial stage for Vietnamese ELT is actually what Littlewood (2014) envisioned for ELT. He raised the question “Where do we go from here?” after analysing the current

situation of CLT/TBLT in the post-method era and detailing four options for language teachers including:

- (1) Adopting CLT “as faithfully as possible” as directed by the local educational policy; or
- (2) Retaining CLT as a reference framework and adapting it appropriately to suit specific contexts (based on teachers’ interpretations of CLT in their contexts); or
- (3) Retaining traditional pedagogies as the framework and adding CLT elements into their teaching; or
- (4) Following communication-oriented language teaching, COLT, by breaking free altogether from concepts such as traditional or CLT (teachers’ individual pedagogies).

The proposed combined curriculum is similar to the third option from Littlewood (2014). The traditional pedagogies will function as the framework, and the “experiment periods” will function as added component for communication. By doing this, teachers can satisfy the current expectations from their school communities, and also can expand their practices towards communication. From what the teachers in my research shared about their English class schedules at their schools, the schools chose to follow two different English schedule allocations: some schools with four periods of English per week (35 minutes/period) while some schools just allocated two per week. To be fair for all students and teachers, provincial DOETs should apply the same time allocation for English in their local communities as required in the national primary English curriculum that (MOET, 2010). If the time allowance is then four periods per week, the proportion to be divided should be 2-2 or 3-1 for conventional English and communicative/oral English respectively.

Secondly, after some certain time of implementing the combined curriculum, an integrated stage to build and develop communication-oriented language teaching, COLT, should follow to orient more towards the government’s desired goals in developing students’ communicative abilities. COLT is the fourth option that Littlewood (2014) detailed. As reviewed in the literature, COLT breaks free from concepts such as traditional pedagogies and CLT. COLT contains both the CLT spirit (H. H. Pham, 2007) and the sensitivity for context (Littlewood, 2013). In COLT, teachers follow their personal communication-oriented and

context-sensitive pedagogies with guiding lights from two frameworks: the communicative continuum and the engagement continuum (Littlewood, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018) (details in Chapter 2). COLT appears to be a more suitable choice for Vietnamese EFL context because it can guarantee teachers' sense of security when they can teach using traditional pedagogies (for non-communicative learning activities) and gradually expand their practices towards communication-oriented practices (for more communicative learning activities). With teachers' expansion towards communication, COLT also ensures the goal to develop students' communicative abilities. At the same time, COLT also includes considerations for context in teachers' pedagogies. This context consideration is not as extreme as the proposal of the Context Approach (Bax, 2003), which is considered to deskill teachers with good expertise in teaching methodologies (Harmer, 2003). Instead, the teachers who are "empowered, educated, and encouraged" (Bax, 2003, p. 284) will know how to "bargain" (Harmer, 2003, pp. 292-293) in their practices to meet the needs and expectations of all involved: the government, the MOET, and their school communities. Gradually and eventually, the goal is that teachers need to arrive at communication-oriented practices where they can teach whatever appropriate to guide their students to the destination – communication.

6.6.1.2. Option 2: "It must be CLT"

While option 1 above appears to be a more suitable choice for the Vietnamese ELT pathway, if Vietnam still insists that CLT must be the choice, then there are several things educational policymakers and authorities should address to provide conditions for actual CLT pedagogies to take place. The recommendations are made based on the points of discussion in the previous chapter.

Firstly, the MOET need to clearly define and detail what CLT means in the Vietnamese context. Such a definition and detailing is similar to Littlewood's second option above about a contextualised CLT practice (Littlewood, 2014). In addition, this contextualised CLT pedagogy should also be in line with the socio-cultural factors of Vietnam to avoid possible cultural conflicts with educational traditions.

Secondly, the MOET also needs to make revolutionary changes in the testing and assessment system in ELT. The changes are needed to make testing and assessment compatible with a communicative curriculum. Those policy changes need to be enforced effectively so that they can really create backwash effects in teachers' classroom daily

practices. To make the changes more feasible, policies about teachers' workload should be in place to facilitate and support teachers in alternative assessment forms. There are a few questions we need to address such as: Can we make sure that a score of 9 or 10 in English is actually some student's real communicative competence? Do we want to see students' real communicative competence, or do we still want to see students' high scores in tests and exams as good teaching quality?

Thirdly, there needs to be sufficient CLT expert training for (primary) English teachers to help minimise misconceptions about CLT pedagogies as the research findings suggest that teachers did not have sufficient and proper CLT training. Also, as a teacher in my research suggested, experts in CLT are needed to demonstrate how CLT teaching looks like in real classes, not just vague theoretical training workshops.

Fourthly, teachers need to be empowered not only through capacity building, but also through providing them with conditions so that they can exercise their reactive or positive agency. As teachers function as agents of change, school communities, especially DOETs and their academic inspectors, need to first understand what CLT is and then allow flexibility or spaces for teachers' creativity and innovation in their practices.

Finally, sufficient teaching facilities and resources need to be provided and existing ones improved. Teachers are not be able to teach well in poor environmental conditions and neither can students learn well in them. At least in my class observations, squeezing too many students together in small classrooms made them too difficult to move around. That will limit students' interactions in class.

In summary, this section has made implications for educational policymakers and authorities about the CLT implementation in Vietnam based on my research findings. The research implies that it may be more effective for Vietnamese ELT if a pathway towards communication is made through two stages of (1) implementing a combined curriculum (traditional pedagogies combined with communicative/oral components), and (2) building and developing communication-oriented language teaching, COLT. If Vietnam still chooses CLT as a must, they need to improve and provide adequate conditions for CLT to thrive.

6.6.2. 6.6.2. Recommendations for educational authorities - DOETs'/BOETs' and academic inspectors

This section will focus on implications for educational authorities, specifically local DOETs, BOETs and school leaders. While teachers function as agents of change in implementing a curriculum innovation issued by the MOET, local DOETs, BOETs and school leaders are not any less important. In fact, they play even more important roles as they interpret policies and give directions to act to teachers. As introduced in the Introduction chapter, provincial and district DOETs are the intermediaries between the MOET (policies) and (primary) schoolteachers. In the scope of this research, a policy from the MOET will be sent to the provincial DOET, where they interpret MOET's policies and issue directions to district DOETs in their province. Once again, district DOETs, after receiving directions from provincial DOETs, will send directions to carry out policies to primary schools in their district. School administration boards will then meet with their teachers and direct them to take actions (M. D. Le et al., 2021, pp. 205-206). My research findings indicated that the provincial DOET and especially district DOETs, academic inspectors and school leaders are very important in the way that they can influence and shape the ways teachers will teach.

For the local DOETs/BOETs, there should be consistencies between leaders' directions and their academic inspectors in curriculum innovations. A usual process is that DOETs make interpretations and give directions for how an educational ELT policy to be implemented. They then will send their instructions to local BOETs where interpretations and directions and their levels are made to send to schools in their districts. They then will send academic inspectors to schools to inspect to make sure that their policy directions are carried out correctly. Teachers' voices from my research findings show that academic inspections are where inconsistency issues arise. DOETs'/BOETs' leaders, at meetings with teachers at general assemblies at the beginning of an academic year, encourage primary English teachers to be creative and innovative in their pedagogies to carry out MOET's curriculum innovations. Meanwhile, their inspectors may often have imposed their pedagogical expertise, beliefs and practice on teachers whom they inspect. If teachers teach in a way that is different from inspectors' beliefs, those teachers may be judged as "wrong" (as teacher Hoang said). This implies that DOETs/BOETs leaders need to transfer their messages to their own academic inspectors exactly as what they have talked with teachers. By doing that, inconsistencies and

misunderstanding may be reduced. In addition, they need to nominate those officials with profound ELT knowledge, expertise and experience as well as appropriate flexibility to be academic inspectors. A. Johnson (2017) stated that teaching is a science, an art and a craft. As a science, there are practices and strategies that educational research (or SLA research) has showed that they are effective in facilitating learning. As an art, a teacher must know and select the best ways or strategies to act, to attract and engage students into learning. As a craft, teachers must possess a set of skills that they have gained through their experience. In my view and also from scholars and authors in ELT, English teachers need to be creative to create a learning environment that is friendly, relaxing and effective to engage students to learn effectively. Harmer (2001) stated that nothing in language teaching is black and white. Informed, educated and empowered teachers will know what is best to do to help their students learn well. Similarly, A. Johnson (2017) viewed teaching as a complicated and multi-dimensional endeavour. Therefore, academic inspectors cannot impose their pedagogical beliefs on teachers and judge them based on those beliefs. If teaching is viewed as an art, teachers should not be expected to function as a programmed machine to follow a step-by-step practice. DOETs' leaders may have mastered this idea and they encourage teachers to be creative and innovative. However, academic inspectors may not know that they have unconsciously turned teachers into "teaching machines". Therefore, DOETs should take actions to ensure that their policies and directions are well-enforced by both teachers and academic inspectors.

6.6.3. Recommendations for teacher education and professional development

In the framework of language-in-education policy and planning goals by Kaplan and Baldauf Jr (2005), policymakers need to address the personnel policy, which is "Where do teachers come from and how are they trained?" (p. 1014). With the current situation of teacher resource (Chapter 1) and the course of life, teacher training is a very critical issue to assist the success of an innovative ELT curriculum such as the Vietnamese national primary English education program. This section gives recommendations for English teacher training in Vietnam regarding pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher professional development.

6.6.3.1. Pre-service teacher training

In targeting to achieve the Vietnamese government's desired goals to develop Vietnamese learners' and future workers' communicative abilities across countries in the long run sustainably, pre-service teacher training should be placed at an important position. Pre-service teacher training should be aimed to prepare upcoming generations of well-informed and well-trained English teachers with strong aspirations to teach towards communication. In order to do so, two important things need to be considered: (1) reviewing available English teacher training programs, and (2) training future English teachers in line with curriculum change requirements.

Firstly, reviewing available English teacher training programs in Vietnam to make suitable adjustments where necessary is needed. Such a review and adjustments should be carried out with considerations of the government desired goals in foreign language education reforms. Within the scope of my research, this section is not intended to go deeply into English teacher training courses at training institutions (universities) in Vietnam with reference sources. Instead, I make recommendations based on the best of my knowledge and experience as a former pre-service English teacher (i.e. students) and later as a participating teacher trainer (i.e. teacher) at my university. My observation is that with current teacher training schemes and the influence of contextual factors, future English teachers may probably teach as the teachers in my research taught in their observed classes. It means that future English teachers will continue the path that current teachers are teaching today.

In a four-year English teacher training package, students study many modules, in which there are some professional components focusing specifically on teaching English. In those components, pre-service teachers usually:

- Study English teaching methodologies (covering methods and approaches in ELT);
- Conduct micro teaching practice (e.g., teaching vocabulary, teaching a grammatical structure, teaching the four language skills) with students practicing teaching in small groups or as whole class activities with their teachers' supervision and comments;
- Conduct in-class observations (go to real schools to observe how English is being taught in real classes);

- Conduct teaching practicum as an important component for graduation (go to schools to teach English for a few weeks' time while being observed, supervised and scored by the schools' English teachers in charge).

An issue arising here is that pre-service teachers may shape how they will teach when they envision the future, and then reshape how they will teach after conducting in-class observations and teaching practicum components. When I was still at my university as a teacher, my students – after coming back from teaching practicum sessions – usually shared that they were ‘hit by the reality’ that some school English teachers expected them to teach differently. At those teaching practicum units, school English teachers were in a superior position, and the pre-service teacher students usually chose to comply to get good comments and scores from them. This situation is similar to the primary English teachers' stories about the relationships between them and academic inspectors. Just like that, we may envision that ELT in Vietnam may continue to make very little progress towards communicative goals. Jin and Cortazzi (2011) noticed that a traditional approach often prevail as teachers who have been taught through some method before tend to continue using it in their teaching practices later. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2014) stated that teachers' beliefs are usually formed through their schooling as students while they observe their teachers who teach them. There is a very probable situation that pre-service teachers will be influenced and will reshape how they should teach in real classes as they become English teachers. The MOET and teacher training institutions should address the issue if current teacher training schemes will be part of the cycle that will repeat ELT realities again and again.

Secondly, training contents aligned with communication-oriented language teaching is another important thing for educational leaders to consider. If recommendations about the ELT pathway for Vietnam above are considered to be suitable, pre-service teacher training courses should be incorporated with communicative components for the proposed combined curriculum, and with immersing teacher students in familiarising with one established approach – COLT. Regarding the communicative components, pre-service teachers should be trained so that they have appropriate understanding of communicative activities and how to organise communicative activities in the extended communicative components of the curriculum suitably in the Vietnamese context. Teacher training courses should reflect the combined curriculum to train pre-service teachers with preparing them to teach

conventionally in the main part of the curriculum and teach communicatively in the added component of the combined curriculum. Also, they should be trained how to integrate the conventional ELT with communicative elements together to act gradually towards the COLT. By doing that, future teachers may be well-equipped with teaching both ways to satisfy the needs of their school communities and also to be able to teach towards the COLT. Sometime in the future when ELT in Vietnam is well-prepared and is provided with sufficient adequate conditions for teaching towards communication, it will be the time that well-trained English teachers will actually teach following the COLT.

6.6.3.2. In-service teacher professional development

Concurrently with pre-service English teacher training, in-service teacher professional development should be conducted appropriately so that current English teachers and new graduate teachers will have similar knowledge and skills in carrying out ELT changes and progress. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, suggested in the Literature review, and also evidenced in my research findings, in-service (primary) English teachers have misconceptions and understanding about CLT, in general, and communicative activities, in particular. To prepare them for the pathway of Vietnamese ELT, they should be given sufficient professional training aligned with the proposed combined curriculum. It means that they should be prepared so that they can add communicative elements into their current practices. They should also be trained with how to gradually integrate their conventional practices with the communicative elements into the COLT. Professional development sessions can be provided to them through two proposed stages of ELT above for the long run. At the first stage, the focus of the training should be about communicative activities and how to organise them in the classroom. This kind of training is to assist them to act in the “experiment periods” where they can teach without being worried about being judged as “wrong” or worried about their students’ exams. At the second stage, they should be trained about integrating their current practices with communicative elements to achieve the COLT. In other words, they should be trained as the pre-service teacher training above about immersing with the COLT. By doing that, somewhere in the future, old and new generations of English teachers will meet one another on the same page of ELT practices. At that time, Vietnam can advance the COLT given that sufficient conditions are in place.

6.6.3.3. Authentic learning for both current and future English teachers in Vietnam

As Marden (2008) stated that a common limitation of learning any foreign languages is the lack of “direct experience of engaging in meaningful, authentic communication with native speakers of the target language” (p. 165). This is justified in my research findings in which teachers openly voiced their opinions about the matter. Hoang expressed that he had problems in communicating with foreigners (or native English speakers). Anh said that she and other teachers could not picture what real communication outside the classroom looked like. Diem wished if her school could occasionally hold sessions where foreign or native English speakers are invited to her school so that teachers and students can engage in communication with people from other countries. The initiative from Marden (2008) may help improve the situation for both current and future English teachers in Vietnam through what she called “travel project” for “online community of learners” (p. 165). This idea is about organising an online learning community as L2 learners do not have opportunities to travel to the target country to learn its language. This online community consists of L2 learners and native speakers of the L2, and thus can facilitate collaborative and cooperative authentic interactions aligned with socio-cultural views of language learning. Promising stable outcomes of this model of learning were confirmed again in a later study by Marden and Herrington (2020). Vietnam may consider this model of learning for both pre-service and in-service teachers’ regular learning to build their professional capacities. This can be seen as one of solutions to help with lack of L2 authentic input in EFL contexts. If Vietnamese English teachers participate in this model of learning regularly, it may be beneficial for them to improve their understanding of target cultures, L2 proficiency, L2 pronunciation, and especially authentic interactions with native speakers of the L2.

In summary, teacher training is a very critical issue of ELT in Vietnam. The recommendations for teacher training are based on an assumption that educational policymakers and authorities will support a pathway from combined ELT curriculum in the first stage and then COLT curriculum as recommended in the above section. With the support and assistance from educational leaders at different levels to create adequate conditions for ELT towards COLT, (primary) English teachers will be the ones who are empowered, educated and well-trained to thrive in their professional practices, and gradually the COLT may become what is “conventional” today.

6.7. Suggestions for future research

In order to gain a better and more complete understanding of the issue of Vietnamese (primary) English teachers in relation with CLT implementation within the mandated implementation of (primary) English education following CLT in Vietnam as well as to seek for more effective ways in ELT in Vietnam, further research can be made in the following suggestions.

There may be research conducted into how educational authorities view and address the current situation of mandated CLT implementation in the primary English education in Vietnam. Such research can be done by interviewing MOET's, DOETs', and schools' leaders to hear their say in this ELT conversation. As they are the ones who can strongly affect policy and implementation, their voices may be valuable in tackling ELT problems.

Other research can look into the relationships among English teachers, parents, and students in the primary English education. Primary students are the ones who receive the primary English education. Parents are the ones who expect their children to learn well and thus expect teachers to teach well to achieve their expectations. As CLT and even COLT will eventually need alternative assessment forms, interviewing parents and students may shed the light into some more issues of the current testing and exam culture. We may probably learn something more to complete our understanding of the situation and find immediate measures to help improve it.

Intervention research would be helpful in paving the way for more effective ELT at the primary education level. Based on the recommendations above, there may be two intervention studies related to two proposed stages for ELT in Vietnam. The first intervention research can study the effects of a combined curriculum, in which one or two "experiment periods" are added into current English class schedules. In these extended periods, teachers should be free from textbooks, syllabus distribution schedules, or any intervention from administration (e.g., academic inspections). Teachers are free to apply communicative elements, or what they think best to assist students' communicative abilities. The second intervention research can plan how to apply COLT in (primary) English classrooms in which an integration of both traditional and communication-oriented learning activities is applied. The intervention research should evaluate how feasible and/or effective the approach is to primary ELT in Vietnam.

6.8. Concluding comments – reflections of my personal learning and teaching experience

Whilst completing this PhD research project, I have also been looking back at the journey that has led me from an English learner to an English teacher, then a Project 2020's primary English teacher trainer, and currently a PhD research student studying how primary English teachers have changed in their practices as mandated through the Project. I realise that I have learned a lot in conducting this research project. I reflect back on the journey and figure out that doing the research has gradually changed my understanding about ELT in Vietnam and also myself.

Being a researcher, reflecting on my experience as an English learner over three decades ago, I see that students today are learning English at schools both differently and similarly to how I learned in the past. The difference between how we learn is that Vietnamese students now learn English through different means than I did. I started learning English at Year 6 when my teacher explicitly taught us how to put the verb forms *be* (i.e., am, is are) with the pronouns (i.e., I, we, you, they, he, she, it) in the simple present tense. We learned what that tense was used for. We wrote lists of vocabulary and translated back and forth between English and Vietnamese. We certainly did most exercises successfully and got good scores. At Year 7, I learned the simple past tense and did the same things in class. One day, after my class completed doing simple past tense exercises, I asked my English teacher: "*Thưa cô, em muốn nói em đã ăn tối rồi thì nói như thế nào trong tiếng Anh?*" [Teacher, how should I say if I want to mean that I already ate dinner?] The teacher stared at me for a few seconds and said: "*Tới giờ mà còn hỏi câu đó sao?*" [Until now you still want to ask that question?] I felt ashamed at the time that my friends looked at me as *stupid*. At that time, I just wanted to vanish into thin air. That question and that feeling have been with me every time I look back at my English learning experience. Now I have figured out that my teacher assumed that we should have understood the *meaning* of the simple past tense and applied it accordingly. However, I can see it now that we actually mastered the *form* of the simple past tense while we did not really understand its *meaning* in communication. I went from Year 6 to Year 12 learning English like that. Today, I see that Vietnamese students learn English at schools through different activities. They play games. They have some more fun. They work in pairs and groups more. Nonetheless, I can see that the means are different, the focuses are similar.

After all, we have been all directed towards *learning English vocabulary and grammar*. My first concluding remark is that after decades, I can conclude that ELT at schools in Vietnam has both changed a lot (the means) and changed very little (the focus) at the same time.

Being a teacher of English and then participating in being a primary English teacher trainer in Project 2020, I have also shared both similarities and differences with the teachers in my research. I taught English at a university after graduating. At our university, we had English majors and non-English majors. While English-major students learned English differently (i.e., classes were divided into separate skills, grammar, professional components), non-English-major students learned general English very similarly to how school students learned it. At the early time of 2000s, my colleagues and I learned of the term ‘*dạy giao tiếp*’ [teaching communication] (CLT) as a new wind blowing into our ELT world. We thought it was about teaching English listening and speaking skills. While we usually went with the flow at university about how we taught, in our teaching at private classes where people took to learn how to communicate in English, we focused on teaching listening and speaking. When Project 2020 was introduced around 2010, my university together with some others (18 training institutions) partnered with Project 2020 to carry out the professional training (or re-training) to school English teachers (primary English teachers and later junior high school English teachers). For primary English, we, university English teachers, were gathered at a training institution and were trained about how to teach primary English with the new curriculum. After that, we conducted training sessions for primary English teachers (both at my university and at other locations prepared by local DOETs) in many provinces in the Mekong Delta. At that time, I strongly believed that the teachers themselves would decide the success of Project 2020’s primary English communicative curriculum. For some moments, I believed I could have inspired my primary English teacher trainees with the spirit of change to prepare our students for a better future through our English teaching and learning. However, later on, several teachers shared that they would like to change, but it would be difficult in their contexts. One teacher told me, “if only my school principal had also participated in this training so she knows how we should teach English to children. She observes our classes and rules out that we need to use Vietnamese to teach English. Just like when we teach (about) a pencil, students must learn the word *pencil* in English and they know in Vietnamese, it is *cây viết chì*.” I knew at the time that context was important, but I did not fully understand how important it is as I conduct

my PhD research now. My second concluding remark is that without this research, I would continue to have vague understanding about 'teaching communication' or CLT like the primary English teachers in my research. Also, I realise that context can constrain and also can definitely shape our teaching practices.

When conducting this PhD research project, I have gradually changed as I review the literature and the findings gradually unfold the situation. What I have learned from conducting this research will benefit me in several ways. Firstly, as a teacher and teacher trainer at my university, I now know more clearly the meaning of *meaning* in my teaching. Where applicable and feasible in my English classes, I will learn to include *meaning* in my practice. With pre-service English teachers, I believe I can clarify more clearly about CLT and COLT, and probably inspire them to gradually practise towards the COLT. Secondly, as a researcher, this research has inspired me to continue to explore, investigate, and experiment further the research matters surrounding CLT and COLT. I believe my other scholar colleagues and I will make our contributions to improve ELT in our own settings as well as to the whole Vietnamese ELT.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, S., & Rao, C. (2012). Does it work? Implementing communicative language teaching approach in EFL context. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(12), 28-35.
- 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.
- Ahmadian, M. J. (2016). Task-based language teaching and learning. *The Language Learning Journal*, 44(4), 377-380.
- Ahmadian, M. J. (2020). Explicit and implicit instruction of refusal strategies: Does working memory capacity play a role? *Language Teaching Research*, 24(2), 163-188.
- Ahmadian, M. J., & Mayo, M. d. P. G. (2018). Introduction: Recent Trends in Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning. In M. J. Ahmadian & M. d. P. G. Mayo (Eds.), *Recent Perspectives on Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1-8): De Gruyter Mouton.
- Al-Mutairi, M. A. (2020). Kachru's Three Concentric Circles Model of English Language: An Overview of Criticism & the Place of Kuwait in It. *English Language Teaching*, 13(1), 85-88.
- Alam, M. (2016). Challenges in implementing CLT at secondary schools in rural Bangladesh. *IJUC Studies*, 13.
- Allen, P., Fröhlich, M., & Spada, N. (1983). The Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching: An Observation Scheme. ERIC
- Bahumaid, S. A. (2012). The Communicative Approach in EFL Contexts Revisited. *International journal of social science and humanity*, 2(6), 446.
- Barabadi, E., & Razmjoo, S. A. (2016). The Emergence of Various Contradictions in Iranian High School English Education under the New CLT-Based Curriculum. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 35(3), 41-64.
- Bax, S. (2003). The end of CLT: A context approach to language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 57, 278-287. doi:10.1093/elt/57.3.278
- Brandl, K. (2008). *Communicative Language Teaching in Action: Putting Principles to Work*: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Bright, D., & Phan, L. H. (2011). White' native-English-speaking teachers of English in Vietnam: Negotiations of identity and the politics of English language teaching. In L. Zhang, R. Rubdy, & L. Alsagoff (Eds.), *Asian Englishes: Changing perspectives in a globalised world*. Singapore: Pearson Education.

- Brislin, R. W. (1970). Back-Translation for Cross-Cultural Research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1(3), 185-216. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/135910457000100301>
- Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (4th ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Bui, P. H. (2016). Evaluation of an in-service training program for primary school teachers of English in Vietnam. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 6(4), 96-103.
- Bui, T. T. N., & Nguyen, H. T. M. (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). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- 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.
- Butler, Y. G. (2017). Communicative and Task-Based Language Teaching in the Asia-Pacific Region. In N. V. Deussen-Scholl & S. May (Eds.), *Second and Foreign Language Education: Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (pp. 327-339): Springer International Publishing AG.
- Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. *Language and communication*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Cao, T. H. P., Ta, T. B., & Hoang, H. C. (2016). National policies for teaching English in Vietnamese educational contexts: A discussion of policies. *THAITESOL JOURNAL*, 29(2), 1-17.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1997). Direct approaches in L2 instruction: a turning point in communicative language teaching? *Tesol Quarterly*, 31(1), 141-152.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Copland, F., Garton, S., & Burns, A. (2014). Challenges in Teaching English to Young Learners: Global Perspectives and Local Realities. *Tesol Quarterly*, 48(4), 738-762.
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1996). Cultures of Learning: Language Classrooms in China. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom* (pp. 169-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*: Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.)*: Sage Publications.
- Dang, T. T. (2010). Learner Autonomy in EFL Studies in Vietnam: A Discussion from Sociocultural Perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 3-9.
- Do, H. T. (2006a). *The role of English in Vietnam's foreign language policy: A brief history*. Paper presented at the the Annual EA Education Conference. Retrieved from <http://www.englishaustralia.com.au>.
- Do, H. T. (2006b). *The role of English in Vietnam's foreign language policy: A brief history*. Paper presented at the 19th Annual EA Education Conference.
- Do, N., Tan, T., & Phung, D. (2017). Cải thiện chất lượng Giáo dục - Đào tạo vùng đồng bằng Sông Cửu Long [Improving the quality of education in the Mekong Delta]. Retrieved from <http://nhandan.com.vn/xahoi/item/33605202-cai-thien-chat-luong-giao-duc-dao-tao-vung-dong-bang-song-cuu-long.html>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2013). Communicative Language Teaching in the twenty-first century: The Principled Communicative Approach. In J. Arnold & T. Murphy (Eds.), *Meaningful Action: Earl Stevick's influence on language teaching* (pp. 161-171). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doughty, C. J., & Long, M. H. (2003). Optimal psycholinguistic environments for distance foreign language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(3), 50-80.
- Dudzik, D. L., & Nguyen, T. N. Q. (2015). Vietnam: Building English competency in preparation for ASEAN 2015. In R. Stroupe & K. Kimura (Eds.), *ASEAN integration and the role of English language teaching* (pp. 41-71): LEiA.
- Duong, Q. T. (2014). Chín mươi triệu con cháu Lạc Hồng và khát vọng hóa Rồng [90 million people and the desire of the Dragon]. *Gia Đình & Xã Hội [Family & Society]*. Retrieved from <http://giadinh.net.vn/dan-so/chin-muoi-trieu-con-chau-lac-hong-va-khat-vong-hoa-rong-20140116104925256.htm>
- Ellis, G. (1994). *The Appropriateness of the Communicative Approach in Vietnam: An Interview Study in Intercultural Communication*. (Master). La Trobe University,
- Ellis, G. (1996). How culturally appropriate is the communicative approach? *ELT journal*, 50(3), 213-218.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition (2nd ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Finney, D. (2002). The ELT Curriculum: A flexible Model for a Changing World. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Garcez, A., Duarte, R., & Eisenberg, Z. (2011). Production and analysis of video recordings in qualitative research. *Educ. Pesqui.*, 37(2), 249-261. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1517-97022011000200003>
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2007). Input, interaction, and output in second language acquisition. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 175-199). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2012). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications*. The United States of America: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Government of Vietnam. (2008). *Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg 30 September, 2008 on the Approval of the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020"*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- Government of Vietnam. (2016). *decision 1981/QĐ-TTg: The framework of Vietnamese national educational system*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- Government of Vietnam. (2017). *Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg 22 December 2017 on the Approval to modify and amend the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2017-2025"*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- Government Website. (2018). General Information about Vietnam. Retrieved from <http://chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/NuocCHXHCNVietNam/ThongTinTongHop/dantoc>
- Grassick, L. (2019a). Risk, uncertainty, and vulnerability: Primary teachers' emotional experiences of English language policy implementation. In V. C. Le, T. T. M. Nguyen, H. T. M. Nguyen, & R. Barnard (Eds.), *Building Teacher Capacity in English Language Teaching in Vietnam* (pp. 44-61): Routledge.
- Grassick, L. (2019b). Supporting the development of primary in-service teacher educators. *ELT Journal*, 73(4), 428-437.
- Gray, J. (2017). *RES6101 Research Preparation: Methods of Research*. Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Guthrie, G. (2011). *The Progressive Education Fallacy in Developing Countries: In favour of Formalism*: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Halliday, M. (1975). *Learning how to mean: Explorations in the development of language*. London: Edward Arnold.

- Hamid, M. O., & Nguyen, H. T. M. (2016). Globalization, English Language Policy, and Teacher Agency: Focus on Asia. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 15(1), 26-43.
- Hang, T. N. M. (2017). Contextual Factors Affecting the Implementatin of Communicative Language Teaching in Vietnam. *EFL Journal*, 2(2), 103-113.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. London/New York: Longman.
- 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: Longman.
- Hesse-Biber, D. S. N., & Johnson, R. B. (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*. The United States of America: Oxford University Press.
- Ho, S. A. (2018). Giáo dục Đồng Bằng Sông Cửu Long chậm hơn ... 42 năm so với cả nước. Retrieved from <https://thanhnien.vn/giao-duc/giao-duc-dbscl-cham-hon42-nam-so-voi-ca-nuoc-960337.html>
- Hoa, N. T. M., & Tuan, N. Q. (2007). Teaching English in primary schools in Vietnam: An overview. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 8(2), 162-173. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2167/cilp106.0>
- Hoang, V. V. (2010). The Current Situation and Issues of the Teaching English in Vietnam. *Ritsumikan Studies in Language and Culture*, 22(1), 7-12.
- Hoang, V. V. (2012). Biên Soạn Sách Giáo Khoa Tiếng Anh Tiểu Học: Tiếp cận Theo Chủ Đề [Primary English Textbook Development: A Theme-based Approach]. *Ngôn Ngữ [Language]*, 8, 3-13.
- Hoang, V. V. (2015a). The Development of the 10-Year English Textbook Series for Vietnamese School under the National Foreign Language 2020 Project: A Cross-Cultural Collaborative Experience. *VNU Journal of Science: Foreign Studies*, 31(3), 1-17.
- Hoang, V. V. (2016). Renovation in Curriculum Design and Textbook Development: An Effective Solution to Improving the Quality of English Teaching in Vietnamese Schools in the Context of Integration and Globalization. *VNU Journal of Science: Education Research*, 32(4), 9-20.
- Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of intercultural relations*, 10(3), 301-320.
- Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). *A History of English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hussein, S. (2018). *Factors affecting the implementation of communicative language teaching in Libyan secondary schools*. Sheffield Hallam University,

- Hymes, D. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In JB Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics. Selected Readings. Harmondsworth*, 269-293.
- Jenkins, G. (2020). Teacher agency: The effects of active and passive responses to curriculum change. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 47(1), 167-181.
- Jin, L., & Cortazzi, M. (2011). Re-Evaluating Traditional Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Learning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (Vol. II, pp. 558-575). New York and London: Routledge.
- Johnson, A. (2017). *Teaching strategies for all teachers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Johnson, K. E. (2006). The Sociocultural Turn and Its Challenges for Second Language Teacher Education. *Tesol Quarterly*, 40(1), 235-257.
- Kachru, B. (1985). Standard, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the Outer Circle. In R. Quirk & H. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. (1992). *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Kachru, Y. (2011). World Englishes: Contexts and Relevance for Language Education. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 155-172). New York: Routledge.
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2005). Language-in-education policy and planning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 1013-1034). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Khoa, A. V. (2008). Imperialism of communicative language teaching and possible resistance against it from teachers in Vietnam as an English foreign languages context. *NVU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages*, 24, 167-174.
- Khuong, T. B. D. (2017). *An Investigation Of The English T estigation Of An English Teaching Programme At Primary School In In Vietnam In Relation To Implementing A Curriculum Innovation* (EdD thesis). University of Wollongong, Australia.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2014). World Englishes. In C. Leung & B. V. Street (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to English Studies*: Routledge.
- Krashen, S. D. (1984). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.
- Lam, T. L. H., & Albright, J. (2018). Vietnamese foreign language policy in higher education: A barometer to social changes. In J. Albright (Ed.), *English Tertiary Education in Vietnam* (pp. 1-15): Routledge.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 2-26): Oxford University Press.

- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Le, H. P. T. (2020). *Storytelling and Teaching English to Young Learners: A Vietnamese case study*. (PhD Thesis). Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Le, M. D. (2018). *English primary teacher agency: a case of Vietnam*. (PhD Thesis). University of New South Wales, Australia.
- Le, M. D., Nguyen, H. T. M., & Burns, A. (2021). English primary teacher agency in implementing teaching methods in response to language policy reform: A Vietnamese case study. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 22(1-2), 199-224.
- Le, P. H. H. (2004). *A socio-cultural analysis of learning English in unassisted and assisted peer groups at university in Vietnam*. (PhD thesis). Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Le, P. H. H., & Yeo, M. (2016). Evaluating In-Service Training of Primary English Teachers: A Case Study in Central Vietnam. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 18(1), 34-51.
- Le, V. C. (2001). Language and Vietnamese Pedagogical Contexts. *Teacher's Edition*, 7, 34-40.
- Le, V. C. (2007). A historical review of English language education in Vietnam. In Y. H. C. B. Spolsky (Ed.), *English Education in Asia: History and Policies* (pp. 168-180). South Korea: Asia TEFL.
- Le, V. C. (2011). *FORM- FOCUSED INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAMESE TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES*. (PhD Thesis). The University of Waikato, New Zealand.
- Le, V. C. (2015). English language education innovation for the Vietnamese secondary school: The Project 2020 In B. Spolsky & K. Sung (Eds.), *Secondary school English in Asia: From policy to practice* (pp. 182-200). New York: Routledge.
- Le, V. C. (2019). Exploring teacher learning in mandatory in-service training courses. In V. C. Le, T. T. M. Nguyen, H. T. M. Nguyen, & R. Barnard (Eds.), *Building Teacher Capacity in English Language Teaching in Vietnam: Research, Policy and Practice* (1st ed.): Routledge.
- Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors: A Vietnamese case study. *Prospect Journal Collection*, 24(2), 20-33. Retrieved from Macquarie University Research Online at <https://www.researchonline.mq.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/mq:36539>
- Le, V. C., & Do, T. M. C. (2012). Teacher preparation for primary school English education: A case of Vietnam. In B. Spolsky & Y. Moon (Eds), *Primary school English language education in Asia* (pp. 106-128). New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, M., & McCook, F. (2002). Cultures of teaching: Voices from Vietnam. *ELT Journal*, 56(2), 146-153.

- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned (4th ed.)-Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching*. Cambridge: 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. II, pp. 541-557). New York: Routledge.
- Littlewood, W. (2013). Developing a Context-Sensitive Pedagogy for Communication-Oriented Language Teaching. *ENGLISH TEACHING*, 68(3), 3-25.
- Littlewood, W. (2014). Communication-oriented language teaching: Where are we now? Where do we go from here? *Language teaching*, 47(3), 349-362.
- Littlewood, W. (2018). Developing a Personal Approach to Teaching Language for Communication. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(4), 1222 -1229.
- Liu, W. (2016). The changing pedagogical discourses in China: the case of the foreign language curriculum change and its controversies. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 15(1), 74-90.
- Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction, and second-language acquisition. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences*, 379(1), 259-278.
- Long, M. H. (1983). Linguistic and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 5(2), 177-193.
- Maftoon, P., & Esfandiari, L. T. (2013). World Englishes and Linguistic Imperialism: Implications in ELT. *The International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 3(1), 35-44.
- Marden, M. P. (2008). *The travel project: designing and implementing an online community of learners using design based research*. Paper presented at the Emerging Technologies Conference, University of Wollongong, Australia.
- Marden, M. P., & Herrington, J. (2020). Design principles for integrating authentic activities in an online community of foreign language learners. *Issues in Educational Research*, 30(2), 635-654.
- McGuirk, P. M., & O'Neill, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Using questionnaires in qualitative human geography*. In I. Hay (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (pp. 246-273). Don Mills, Canada: Oxford University Press.

- McKay, S. L. (2011). English as an International Lingua Franca Pedagogy. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 122-139). New York Routledge.
- Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology (3rd ed.): Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. CA: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- MOET. (2010). *Chương trình Tiếng Anh tiểu học [Curriculum of English language education for primary schools]*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- MOET. (2018a). *Chương trình môn tiếng Anh (ban hành kèm thông tư số 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT về ban hành chương trình giáo dục phổ thông - [English education curriculum (issued together with Joint Circular No 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT on the promulgation of the general educational curriculum)]*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- MOET. (2018b). *Decision 2658/QĐ-BGDĐT 23 July 2018 on the plan to implement the the Project "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2017-2025"*. Hanoi, Vietnam
- Moon, J. (2005). *Investigating the teaching of English at Primary Level in Vietnam: A summary report*. Paper presented at the The teaching English Language at Primary Level Conference, Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Moon, J. (Ed.) (2009). *The teacher factor in early foreign language learning programmes: The case of Vietnam*. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), *The age factor and early language learning* (pp. 311–336). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Morse, J. M. (2000). Determining Sample Size. *Qualitative Health Research - Sage Publications*, 10(1), 3-5.
- Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS*. London: Sage.
- Musthafa, B. (2015). Communicative language teaching in Indonesia: Issues of theoretical assumptions and challenges in the classroom practice. *Teflin Journal*, 12(2), 184-193.
- Mutohhar, PatchareeScheb-Buener, Muangjanburi, K., & Rujirungrot, N. (2016). *Sociocultural theory: Insight and Appropriateness*. Paper presented at the The 7th Hatyai National and International Conference, Hatyai University, Thailand.
- Namgung, W., Moate, J., & Ruohotie-Lyhty, M. (2020). Investigating the professional agency of secondary school English teachers in South Korea. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 5(1), 1-17.
- Ngo, X. M. (2021). Vietnam's trillion-dong attempt to reform English education: A laudable reform or a costly failure? *English Today*, 37(2), 115-119.

- Ngoc, K. M., & Iwashita, N. (2012). A comparison of learners' and teachers' attitudes toward communicative language teaching at two universities in Vietnam. *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL*, 7.
- Nguyen, C. D. (2018). The construction of age-appropriate pedagogies for young learners of English in primary schools. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1-14. doi:10.1080/09571736.2018.1451912
- Nguyen, H. T. A. (2007). Pilot intensive program in Ho Chi Minh City: A program that meets the needs of society. In L. Grassick (Ed.), *Primary innovations regional seminar: A collection of papers* (pp. 113-116). Hanoi: British Council.
- Nguyen, L. C., 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. doi:10.1080/14664208.2016.1089629
- Nguyen, N. T. (2017). Thirty Years of English Language and English Education in Vietnam: Current reflections on English as the most important foreign language in Vietnam, and key issues for English education in the Vietnamese context. *English Today*, 33(1), 33-35.
- Nguyen, T. (2017). *Vietnam's National Foreign Language 2020 Project after 9 Years: A Difficult Stage*. Paper presented at the The Asian Conference on Education and International Development (ACEID2017), Japan.
- Nguyen, T. H. (2002). Vietnam: Cultural background for ESL/EFL teachers. *The Review of Vietnamese Studies*, 2(1), 1-6.
- Nguyen, T. H. A. (2002). Cultural effects on learning and teaching English in Vietnam. *LANGUAGE TEACHER-KYOTO-JALT-*, 26(1), 2-6.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2011). Primary English language education policy in Vietnam: insights from implementation. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 225-249. doi:10.1080/14664208.2011.597048
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2017). *Models of mentoring in language teacher education*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Nguyen, T. M. H., & Nguyen, Q. T. (2007). Teaching English in primary schools in Vietnam: An overview. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 8(2), 162-173.
- Nguyen, T. N. M. (2016). *The cultural appropriateness of communicative language teaching: a case study of the EFL program implementation at a Vietnamese tertiary institution*. (Doctoral). Western Sydney University,
- Nguyen, T. N. Q. (2018). A study on the validity of VSTEP writing tests for the sake of regional and international integration. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(4), 115-128.

- Nguyen, T. P. L., & Phung, N. T. (2015). Innovation in English Language Education in Vietnam for ASEAN 2015 Integration: Current Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, Investments, and Solutions. In R. Stroupe & K. Kimura (Eds.), (pp. 104-120): LEiA.
- Nguyen, T. P. T. (2018). An investigation into the content validity of a Vietnamese standardized test of English proficiency (VSTEP. 3-5) reading test. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(4), 129-143.
- Nguyen, T. T. T. (2012). English language policies for Vietnamese primary schools and issues of implementations in rural settings. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 9(4), 115-134.
- Nguyen, V. L. (2010). Computer Mediated Collaborative Learning within a Communicative Language Teaching Approach: A Sociocultural Perspective. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 12(1), 202-233.
- Nunan, D. (2013). *Learner-centered English language education: The selected works of David Nunan*. New York: Routledge.
- Panofsky, C. (2003). The relations of learning and student social class. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. S. Ageyev, & S. M. Miller (Eds.), *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context* (pp. 411-431). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Paskins, Z., Sanders, T., Croft, P. R., & Hassell, A. B. (2017). Exploring the Added Value of Video-Stimulated Recall in Researching the Primary Care Doctor–Patient Consultation: A Process Evaluation. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-11.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an International Language*: Routledge.
- Pham, A. H. (2004). *Vietnamese tone: a new analysis*: Routledge.
- Pham, H. H. (2005). "Imported" communicative language teaching: Implications for local teachers. Paper presented at the English Teaching Forum.
- Pham, H. H. (2007). Communicative Language Teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal*, 61(3), 193-201.
- Pham, V. B. (2010). TÌM HIỂU ĐẶC ĐIỂM DÂN CƯ VÀ TÂM LÝ NGƯỜI DÂN ĐỒNG BẰNG SÔNG CỬU LONG NHẪM THỰC HIỆN CÓ HIỆU QUẢ CHIẾN LƯỢC ĐẠI ĐOÀN KẾT DÂN TỘC. *Can Tho University Science Journal*, 13, 11-19.
- Phan, L. H., & Le, T. L. (2013). Living the Tensions: Moral Dilemmas in English Language Teaching. In T. Seddon & J. S. Levin (Eds.), *World Yearbook of Education 2013 Educators, Professionalism and Politics: Global Transitions, National Spaces and Professional Projects* (pp. 220-235): Routledge.
- Phan, N. T. (2015). *Approaches to curriculum development in Vietnamese higher education: A case study*. (PhD Thesis). Queensland University of Technology, Australia.
- Phan, N. T. T. (2018). Effective EFL Instruction in the Vietnamese Context: From Beliefs to Actual Classroom Practices. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(3), 403-418.

- Phan, Q. N. (2017). *Professional Learning Communities: Learning Sites for Primary School English Language Teachers in Vietnam*. (PhD Thesis). University of Technology Sydney,
- Phan, T. V. A. (2020). *Questioning in English as a Foreign Language University Classes*. (PhD thesis). University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1998). Globalizing English: Are Linguistic Human Rights an Alternative to Linguistic Imperialism? *Language Sciences*, 20(1), 101-112.
- Phillipson, R. (2009). Disciplines of English and disciplining by English. *Asian EFL Journal*, 11(4), 8-30.
- Phothongsunan, S. (2020). Teachers' Conceptions of the CLT Approach in English Language Education. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(4), 121-127.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). Teacher agency: What is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (Eds.), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Bottom Up* (pp. 134-148). London: Routledge.
- Priestley, M., Edwards, R., & Priestley, A. (2012). Teacher Agency in Curriculum Making: Agents of Change and Spaces for Manoeuvre. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 42(2), 191-214.
- Puteh-Behak, F., Darmi, R., & Mohamed, Y. (2015). Implementation of a Western-based Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Malaysia: A socio-cultural Perspective. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 15(1), 1-22.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. New York: Cambridge University 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). Syllabus Design and Instructional Materials. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (3rd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rogers, S. R. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (3rd ed.)*: Cambridge University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Sang, G. (2020). Teacher Agency. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education* (pp. 1-5). Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Savignon, S. J. (2018). Communicative Competence. In J. I. Lontas, M. DelliCarpini, & H. Nassasji (Eds.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching, 8 Volume Set*: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Savignon, S. J. (Ed.) (2002). *Communicative Language Teaching: Linguistic Theory to Classroom Practice*: Yale University Press.
- Silcock, P. (2002). *New progressivism*: Routledge.
- Spada, N. (2007). Communicative Language Teaching: Current Status and Future Prospects. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 271-288). Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Sullivan, P. (2000). Playfulness as mediation in communicative language teaching in a Vietnamese classroom. In J. P. PLantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 115-131). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sun, G., & Cheng, L. (2002). From Context to Curriculum: A Case Study of Communicative Language Teaching in China. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(2), 67-86.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. M. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in Output and the Cognitive Processes They Generate: A Step Towards Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(3), 371-391. doi:10.1093/applin/16.3.371
- 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.
- Tajeddin, Z., & Pakzadian, M. (2020). Representation of inner, outer and expanding circle varieties and cultures in global ELT textbooks. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 5(10), 1-15. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00089-9>
- Thamarana, S. (2015). A Critical Overview of Communicative Language Teaching. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, 5, 90-100.
- Thanh-Pham, T. H. (2011). Issues to consider when implementing student-centred learning practices at Asian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(5), 519-528. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2011.605226

- The Institute for Vietnamese Culture and Education. (2018). Vietnam - A multi-people, multi-cultural country. Retrieved from <http://www.ivce.org/magazinedetail.php?magazinedetailid=MD00000021>
- Thorne, S. L. (2005). Epistemology, politics, and ethics in Sociocultural Theory. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(3), 393-409.
- Tootkaboni, A. A. (2019). Teachers' beliefs and practices towards communicative language teaching in the expanding circle. *Revista signos: estudios de lingüística*, 52(100), 265-289.
- Trinh, T. T. H., & Mai, T. L. (2018). Current challenges in the teaching of tertiary English in Vietnam. In J. Albright (Ed.), *English Tertiary Education in Vietnam* (pp. 40-53): Routledge.
- Tyupa, S. (2011). A Theoretical Framework for Back-Translation as a Quality Assessment Tool. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 7, 35-46. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/53121361.pdf>
- Vaezi, S., & Abbaspour, E. (2014). Implementing CLT in the Iranian Context: "Reality" versus Theory. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1905-1911.
- Vu, M. T., & Pham, T. T. T. (2014). Training of trainers for primary English teachers in Viet Nam: Stakeholder evaluation. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 11(4), 89-108.
- Wahyuni, D. (2012). The Research Design Maze: Understanding Paradigms, Cases, Methods and Methodologies. *Journal of applied management accounting research*, 10(1), 69-80.
- Wei, L., Lin, H.-H., & Litton, F. (2018). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL Context in Asia. *Asian Culture and History*, 10(2), 1-9.
- Whitehead, G. E. (2017). Teachers' Voices: Obstacles to Communicative Language Teaching in South Korea. *Asian EFL Journal*, 19(4), 5-31.
- Zuengler, J., & Miller, E. R. (2006). Cognitive and Sociocultural Perspectives: Two Parallel SLA Worlds? *Tesol Quarterly*, 40(1), 35-58.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A INVITATION LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS – PHASE 1 (English version)

Edith Cowan University



INVITATION EMAIL/LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Participating in the research project:

MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Tran Thi Hien and I am currently a PhD student at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. I am presently undertaking a study to investigate how primary English teachers in Vietnam are teaching primary English following the Communicative approach. My aim is to find ways to assist primary English teachers to improve their teaching practices.

My study will be divided into two phases. In phase 1, I will be collecting information about participants' teaching practices from the questionnaire and inviting some teachers to participate in phase 2. Phase 2 of the study will include in-class observations and interviews with teachers before and after the observations.

This email sent to you relates to phase 1 of the research project. It is my intention to administer a questionnaire to all potential primary English teachers in your school district. Therefore, I would like to inform you and English teachers in your school about my research project.

What does participation in the research project involve?

Participation in the research project will involve Vietnamese primary English teachers in a 20-30-minute online questionnaire, carried out at a time and place convenient to them during the data collection phase, which takes place in June 2019.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Before teachers answer the questionnaire, they are asked to provide their consent to take part. If they change their mind, they will be able to withdraw their participation during the first week of July 2019. After that

time, their data will be included in the research. However, it will only be possible to withdraw their data if they include their contact details at the completion of the questionnaire to help me identify their data when needed. To withdraw, they just need to email me, and I will pick out their data. All contributions they have made to the research will be removed and destroyed. This decision will not affect their relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Collected data will be stored securely in either locked cabinets or a password protected computer in my office at ECU () and can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding any paper-based data and erasing electronic data.

The data is maintained confidential at all times. Nobody can recognise the teachers' identity because it will be coded by me. If they want to withdraw from the research, they just need to email me and let me know. I will identify their data and destroy it.

The data, including answers to an online questionnaire, will only be used for this research. The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis, possible journal articles and conference presentations. If teachers request, I will email them a research summary once it is done.

What are the potential benefits of this research?

It is expected that the findings from the study will contribute to the existing knowledge about teaching English following CLT at primary education in Vietnam. Although there may not be any immediate direct benefits to the participants at this stage, participating in the research project will give them the opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices. Their responses may also help inform policy makers about teaching primary English in Vietnam.

Are there any risks associated with participation?

There are no foreseen risks of participating in this research.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss this research, please contact me via email . You can also contact my supervisors:

Dr. Christine Cunningham

School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do teachers participate if they are interested?

If teachers have had all questions about the research answered to their satisfaction, and are willing to participate, they can follow the link at the end of this email to access the questionnaire. They should acknowledge their consent to take part by answering the first question on the questionnaire.

I hope you can help introduce my research project to your English teachers by forwarding this email to them. If they are willing to participate, they can follow the following link to access the questionnaire.

[REDACTED]

Regards,

Tran, Thi Hien
PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University

[REDACTED]

Edith Cowan University



THƯ MỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP TRONG MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Kính gửi thầy/cô,

Tôi tên là Trần Thị Hiền, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh tại trường Đại học Edith Cowan, Tây Úc. Tôi hiện đang thực hiện một nghiên cứu tìm hiểu về cách thức các giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học ở Việt Nam giảng dạy tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp. Mục tiêu nghiên cứu của tôi là tìm ra phương pháp để hỗ trợ các giáo viên dạy tốt hơn.

Đề tài nghiên cứu của tôi được chia làm 02 giai đoạn. Ở giai đoạn 1, tôi sẽ thu thập những thông tin về cách thức giáo viên giảng dạy trên lớp qua bảng câu hỏi. Trong giai đoạn này tôi cũng sẽ mời các giáo viên tiếp tục tham gia giai đoạn 2. Giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu bao gồm quan sát lớp học, phỏng vấn các giáo viên trước và sau quan sát lớp học.

Thư này gửi đến thầy/cô liên quan đến giai đoạn 1 của nghiên cứu. Dự định của tôi là tiến hành mời tất cả các giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh tiểu học ở thành phố Cao Lãnh tham gia khảo sát qua việc trả lời bảng câu hỏi. Vì vậy tôi muốn gửi đến thầy/cô và tất cả các giáo viên tiếng Anh trong trường những thông tin về nghiên cứu này.

Các giáo viên sẽ làm gì khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này?

Các giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học sẽ được mời tham gia trả lời một bảng câu hỏi online. Giáo viên có thể thực hiện trả lời bảng câu hỏi vào thời gian và địa điểm thuận tiện đối với họ trong giai đoạn thu thập số liệu diễn ra trong tháng 6/2019.

Mức độ tự nguyện và việc rút lui khỏi dự án nghiên cứu sẽ như thế nào?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Trước khi giáo viên tham gia trả lời bảng câu hỏi, họ sẽ được yêu cầu xác nhận đồng ý tự nguyện tham gia. Nếu giáo viên thay đổi ý định của mình, họ có thể ngừng tham gia. Họ chỉ cần email tôi và cho tôi biết

trong tuần đầu tiên của tháng 7/2019. Sau thời gian đó, những câu trả lời của họ sẽ được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu. Tuy nhiên, tôi chỉ có thể tìm và lọc ra dữ liệu của những giáo viên muốn ngừng tham gia nếu họ có để lại thông tin liên lạc ở cuối bảng câu hỏi. Nếu muốn ngừng tham gia, giáo viên chỉ cần email cho tôi biết. Tất cả những đóng góp của họ cho nghiên cứu sẽ được lọc ra và hủy bỏ. Quyết định dừng tham gia của bạn sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của bạn và tôi hoặc trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Thông tin đã được thu thập sẽ được xử lý như thế nào; quyền riêng tư và bảo mật thông tin được đảm bảo ra sao?

Thông tin thu được từ những người tham gia nghiên cứu sẽ được lưu giữ một cách an toàn trong tủ khóa hoặc các máy tính có hệ thống bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu trong phòng làm việc của tôi tại ECU (). Chỉ có tôi và những giáo viên hướng dẫn tôi có thể truy cập thông tin này. Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ tối thiểu 7 năm và sẽ được hủy bỏ sau đó. Việc hủy bỏ được thực hiện bằng cách cắt bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu ghi trên giấy và xóa những dữ liệu điện tử.

Dữ liệu sẽ luôn luôn được bảo mật. Không ai có thể xác định được danh tính của các giáo viên tham gia trong nghiên cứu này bởi vì tất cả các dữ liệu thu được sẽ được tôi mã hóa. Nếu giáo viên muốn ngừng tham gia nghiên cứu, họ chỉ cần email cho tôi. Tôi sẽ truy xuất và hủy bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu của họ.

Thông tin trả lời cho bảng câu hỏi online sẽ được sử dụng chủ yếu cho nghiên cứu này. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của tôi trong, các bài báo khoa học và báo cáo hội thảo. Một bản tóm tắt những kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được thực hiện khi kết thúc đề tài. Nếu thầy/cô hay các giáo viên yêu cầu, tôi sẽ email cho mọi người một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi hoàn thành.

Những ích lợi tiềm năng của nghiên cứu này là gì?

Theo dự kiến, những kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp cho khối kiến thức hiện có trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học, theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam. Mặc dù không có một lợi ích trực tiếp nào đối với những người tham gia khảo sát ở giai đoạn này, những câu trả lời của họ có thể giúp thông tin cho các nhà hoạch định chính sách về giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam.

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này có những rủi ro hay bất trắc gì không?

Chưa có bất trắc gì có thể xác định liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Nghiên cứu này có được cho phép thực hiện không?

Nghiên cứu này đã được sự đồng ý của Hội đồng đạo đức nghiên cứu liên quan đến con người của trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Tôi có thể liên hệ với ai nếu tôi muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này?

Nếu thầy/cô hay các giáo viên muốn tham gia có câu hỏi gì liên quan đến nghiên cứu, xin vui lòng liên hệ tôi hoặc các giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi qua email hoặc điện thoại. Thông tin liên hệ của tôi qua email là [REDACTED]. Hoặc các giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Nghiên cứu này đã được sự chấp thuận cho thực hiện bởi Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Đại học Edith Cowan. Nếu thầy/cô hay giáo viên nào muốn trao đổi với bên thứ ba, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Ủy ban Đạo đức Nghiên cứu,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Nếu muốn tham gia vào nghiên cứu thì giáo viên phải làm gì?

Nếu các giáo viên đã hiểu rõ về nghiên cứu và sẵn sàng tham gia, họ có thể theo đường link bên dưới để truy cập vào bảng câu hỏi. Họ sẽ xác nhận đồng ý tham gia bằng cách trả lời câu hỏi đầu tiên của trong bảng câu hỏi.

Tôi hy vọng quý thầy/cô có thể giúp giới thiệu về nghiên cứu của tôi cho các giáo viên tiếng Anh trong trường bằng cách gửi email này đến cho họ.

Giáo viên tham gia xin vui lòng theo link này để truy cập bảng câu [REDACTED]

Xin trân trọng cảm ơn.

Trần Thị Hiền
Nghiên cứu sinh
Edith Cowan University
[REDACTED]

INVITATION LETTER TO TEACHERS AND PROJECT INFORMATION

Participating in the research project:

MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Tran Thi Hien, currently a PhD student at Edith Cowan University in Australia. I am conducting a study as part of requirements for my course about teaching English at the primary education level following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Vietnam. The Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University has approved the study.

As you have participated in the first stage of my research, I am seeking voluntary participants for this second stage of my study. The participants are the primary English teachers who already participated in answering the online survey in the first stage and agree to take part in the second stage.

The aim of my research is to find out how primary English teachers in Vietnam teach English following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and find ways to help them improve their teaching. I would like to invite you to participate in Phase 2 of my research project and therefore would like to provide you with the project information.

What does participation in Phase 2 of the research project involve?

In phase 2 of the research project, a group of primary English teachers will be invited to take part. This participation will involve:

- In-class observations where I will visit one of their classes
- An individual interview with me before the class observation
- An individual interview with me after the class observation.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind before data

is fully collected, everything will stop there. If data has been collected, you will be able to withdraw your participation one week after the day all of your data has been collected. After that time, your data will be included in the research. Before data collection, you are asked to provide your consent to take part. To withdraw, you just need to contact me by phone or email, and I will pick out your data. All contributions you have made to the research will be removed and destroyed. This decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

Is privacy and confidentiality assured, and what will happen to the information collected?

Participation is strictly confidential, and participants' privacy will be maintained at all times. Nobody can recognise your identity as well as your school's because I will use pseudonyms to refer to your case and your school.

Collected data will be stored securely in a password protected computer in my office at ECU [REDACTED] and can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding any paper-based data and erasing electronic data.

The data, including classroom video, pre-observation interview and post-observation interview, will only be used for this research. The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis, possible journal articles and conference presentations. If you request, I will email you a research summary once it is done.

Are there any risks associated with participation?

There are no foreseen risks of participating in this research. Participants may only experience some discomfort or inconvenience as there is a researcher observing and filming their class teaching. The possible discomfort or inconvenience may also be because teachers must arrange time for the class observations and interviews. If you and your school principal agree, I can visit some of your English classes so we can get along and you may feel more confident for me to officially collect data. Also, you and I can discuss and arrange to place the camera at a place that is the least obtrusive to you.

Is there any compensation or reimbursement for participation in this research project?

As this is not a funded research project, there is no compensation or reimbursement for you to participate in this project.

What are the potential benefits of this research?

It is expected that the findings from the study will contribute to the existing knowledge about teaching English following CLT at primary education in Vietnam. Although there may not be any immediate direct benefits to the participants at this stage, participating in the research project will give you the opportunities to reflect on and discuss your teaching practices. Your participation may also help inform policy makers about teaching primary

English in Vietnam.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss this research, please contact me via email [REDACTED]. You can also contact my supervisors:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the research answered to your satisfaction, and are willing to participate, please acknowledge your consent by signing the consent form and return it to me.

Regards,

Tran, Thi Hien
PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University

[REDACTED]

THƯ MỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP TRONG MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiên sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Các bạn đồng nghiệp thân mến,

Tôi tên là Trần Thị Hiền, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh ở trường đại học Edith Cowan của Úc. Theo yêu cầu của khóa học, tôi hiện đang thực hiện một nghiên cứu về việc dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp (CLT) ở Việt Nam. Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Edith Cowan đã phê duyệt cho tôi thực hiện đề tài này.

Như bạn đã tham gia trả lời khảo sát ở giai đoạn 1 của bài nghiên cứu, tôi đang tìm kiếm những giáo viên tình nguyện tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của đề tài. Người tham gia hợp lệ là những giáo viên đã tham gia trả lời phiếu khảo sát online trong giai đoạn 1 của nghiên cứu và đồng ý tham gia tiếp ở giai đoạn 2.

Mục đích nghiên cứu của tôi là tìm hiểu về việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp và tìm cách hỗ trợ cho các giáo viên giảng dạy tốt hơn. Tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu và vì vậy tôi muốn bạn đọc kỹ những thông tin về nghiên cứu này.

Việc tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu này bao gồm những gì?

Trong giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu, một nhóm các giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học sẽ được mời tham gia. Việc tham gia bao gồm:

- Dự giờ lớp học: Tôi sẽ dự giờ một lớp học tiếng Anh của bạn
- Một phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và bạn trước khi dự giờ
- Một phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và bạn sau khi dự giờ

Mức độ tự nguyện và việc rút lui khỏi dự án nghiên cứu sẽ như thế nào?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Nếu bạn thay đổi ý định tham gia trước khi số liệu thu thập xong, mọi việc sẽ kết thúc ở đó. Nếu việc thu thập số liệu đã hoàn tất, bạn vẫn có thể rút lui khỏi nghiên cứu trong thời gian 01 tuần kể từ ngày việc thu thập số liệu về bạn hoàn tất. Sau thời gian này, những thông tin về bạn sẽ được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu. Việc thu thập số liệu chỉ bắt đầu sau khi bạn đã ký tên đồng ý tự nguyện tham gia. Nếu bạn

muốn ngừng tham gia, bạn chỉ cần email hay gọi điện cho tôi. Tất cả những đóng góp của bạn cho nghiên cứu sẽ được lọc ra và hủy bỏ. Quyết định dừng tham gia của bạn sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của bạn và tôi hoặc trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Thông tin đã được thu thập sẽ được xử lý như thế nào; quyền riêng tư và bảo mật thông tin được đảm bảo ra sao?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu của bạn sẽ được bảo mật nghiêm ngặt và quyền riêng tư của người tham gia sẽ luôn luôn được duy trì. Không ai có thể xác định được danh tính của bạn trong nghiên cứu này vì tôi sẽ dùng tên khác để thay thế cho bạn và trường của bạn.

Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ một cách an toàn trong tủ khóa hoặc các máy tính có hệ thống bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu trong phòng làm việc của tôi tại ECU [REDACTED]. Chỉ có tôi và những giáo viên hướng dẫn tôi có thể truy cập thông tin này. Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ tối thiểu 7 năm và sẽ được hủy bỏ sau đó. Việc hủy bỏ được thực hiện bằng cách cắt bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu ghi trên giấy và xóa những dữ liệu điện tử.

Những dữ liệu về dự giờ lớp học, phỏng vấn giáo viên trước và sau dự giờ sẽ chỉ được sử dụng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của tôi, các bài báo hay hội thảo khoa học. Nếu bạn yêu cầu, tôi sẽ email cho bạn một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi hoàn thành.

Việc tham gia nghiên cứu có những rủi ro gì không?

Chưa có rủi ro gì có thể xác định liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Các giáo viên tham gia có thể chỉ cảm thấy hơi bất tiện khi có người ngồi quan sát lớp học và quay video, phải thu xếp thời gian cho việc dự giờ và phỏng vấn. Nếu bạn và Ban Giám Hiệu trường bạn đồng ý, tôi có thể dự giờ một số tiết dạy của bạn để chúng ta hiểu nhau hơn và bạn cũng có thể cảm thấy tự tin hơn khi tôi chính thức thu thập số liệu. Ngoài ra, tôi và bạn cũng có thể thảo luận để đặt camera trong lớp sao cho ít làm bạn phân tâm nhất.

Người tham gia có được thù lao gì không?

Vì đây là một đề tài nghiên cứu không có nguồn tài trợ nên các giáo viên tham gia sẽ không có những thù lao về vật chất.

Những ích lợi tiềm năng của nghiên cứu này là gì?

Theo dự kiến, những kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp cho khối kiến thức hiện có trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học, theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam. Mặc dù không có một lợi ích trực tiếp nào đối với những người tham gia khảo sát ở giai đoạn này, việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu giúp bạn có những cơ hội suy tưởng và thảo luận về cách thức tổ chức dạy học của mình. Việc tham gia của bạn cũng có thể giúp thông tin cho các nhà hoạch định chính sách về giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam.

Đề tài này có được phép thực hiện không?

Đề tài nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Đại học Edith Cowan phê duyệt cho thực hiện.

Tôi có thể liên hệ với ai nếu tôi muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này?

Nếu bạn muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với tôi qua địa chỉ gửi thư: 52A Camboon Rd, Morley, WA 6062; qua điện thoại số: [REDACTED] hoặc qua email: [h\[REDACTED\]](mailto:h[REDACTED]) Hoặc bạn có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Nếu bạn muốn nói chuyện với một bên thứ ba về việc thực hiện nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Làm thế nào để tôi tham gia vào nghiên cứu?

Nếu bạn đã hỏi rõ và hài lòng với tất cả những điều muốn biết về nghiên cứu và sẵn sàng tham gia, xin hãy cho biết bạn đồng ý bằng cách bằng cách ký tên vào thư đồng ý tham gia và gửi lại cho tôi.

Trân trọng,

Trần Thị Hiền
PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University
[REDACTED]

INFORMATION LETTER AND OBSERVATION PERMISSION

Participating in the research project:

MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Tran Thi Hien, currently a PhD student at Edith Cowan University in Australia. I am conducting a study as part of requirements for my course about teaching English at the primary education level following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Vietnam. The Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University has approved the study.

The aim of my research is to find out how primary English teachers in Vietnam teach English following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and find ways to help them improve their teaching practices. As you have known in my previous email about phase 1 of my research project, I am now inviting participants to take part in phase 2 of the project. I would like to ask for your permission to allow me to conduct data collection (in-class observation) at your school. Therefore, I would like to provide more information about participating in Phase 2 of my research project.

What does participation in Phase 2 of the research project involve?

In phase 2 of the research project, a group of primary English teachers will be invited to take part. This participation will involve:

- In-class observations where I will visit one of their classes
- An individual interview with me before the in-class observation
- An individual interview with me after the in-class observation.

The in-class observation will be conducted between August and September 2019 and will be video-recorded. I will visit one English class at your school following the class schedule of the observed teacher. The observation will last during the scheduled time (it can be one-period class meeting or two-period class meeting from 35 – 70 minutes depending on the official timetable). The interviews before and after class observations will be conducted at a time and place mutually convenient for both me and the observed teacher.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind before data is collected, everything will stop there. If data has been collected, you will be able to withdraw your school's participation one week after the day of in-class observation at your school. After that time, the data of the English teacher from your school will be included in the research. Before data collection, you are asked to provide your consent to allow for class observation to take place at your school. To withdraw, you just need to contact me by phone or email, and I will pick out the data collected at your school. All contributions the teacher from your school has made to the research will be removed and destroyed. This decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

Is privacy and confidentiality assured, and what will happen to the information collected?

Participation is strictly confidential, and participants' privacy and that of the school will be maintained at all times. Nobody can recognise the identity of your school or the teacher from your school because I will use pseudonyms to refer to your school and the observed teacher.

Collected data will be stored securely in a password protected computer in my office at ECU () and can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding any paper-based data and erasing electronic data.

The data, including classroom video, pre-observation interview and post-observation interview, will only be used for this research. The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis, possible journal articles and conference presentations. If you request, I will email you a research summary once it is done.

Are there any risks associated with participation?

There are no foreseen risks of participating in this research. Participants may only experience some discomfort as there is a researcher observing and filming their class teaching. If you and the observed teacher agree, I can visit some of the teacher's English classes so we can get along and he/she can feel more confident for me to officially collect data. Also, the teacher and I will discuss and arrange to place the camera at a place that is the least obtrusive.

Regarding the children in the observed class, their parents or guardians will be informed, and I will get consent from them for their children to be potentially appear in the classroom videos. If a child or parent objects to being filmed, the child will be re-arranged to sit at a place in the classroom where the camera will not capture their learning scenes.

Is there any compensation or reimbursement for participation in this research project?

As this is not a funded research project, there is no compensation or reimbursement for participation in this project.

What are the potential benefits of this research?

It is expected that the findings from the study will contribute to the existing knowledge about teaching English following CLT at primary education in Vietnam. Although there may not be any immediate direct benefits to the schools and observed teachers at this stage, participating in the research project will give the observed teachers the opportunities to reflect on and discuss their teaching practices. The participation of schools and the observed teachers may also help inform policy makers about teaching primary English in Vietnam.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss this research, please contact me via email [REDACTED]. You can also contact my supervisors:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Team,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness for my school to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the research answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for your school to participate, please acknowledge your consent by signing the consent form and return it to me.

Regards,

Hien Tran

PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University



THƯ XIN PHÉP DỰ GIỜ LỚP HỌC

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP TRONG MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiên sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Kính gửi: Ban Giám Hiệu trường

Tôi tên là Trần Thị Hiền, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh ở trường đại học Edith Cowan của Úc. Theo yêu cầu của khóa học, tôi hiện đang thực hiện một nghiên cứu về việc dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp (CLT) ở Việt Nam. Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Edith Cowan đã phê duyệt cho tôi thực hiện đề tài này.

Mục đích nghiên cứu của tôi là tìm hiểu về việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp và tìm cách hỗ trợ cho các giáo viên giảng dạy tốt hơn. Tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu và vì vậy tôi muốn bạn đọc kỹ những thông tin về nghiên cứu này. Như thầy/cô đã biết trong email trước ở giai đoạn 1, tôi hiện đang tìm kiếm các giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu. Tôi viết thư này để xin phép thầy/cô cho phép tôi được tiến hành dự giờ môn tiếng Anh tại trường của thầy/cô. Vì vậy, tôi xin cung cấp thông tin về giai đoạn 2 của đề tài nghiên cứu như sau:

Việc tham gia vào giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu này bao gồm những gì?

Trong giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu, một nhóm các giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học sẽ được mời tham gia. Việc tham gia bao gồm:

- Dự giờ lớp học: Tôi sẽ dự giờ một lớp học tiếng Anh của giáo viên
- Một phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và giáo viên trước khi dự giờ
- Một phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và giáo viên sau khi dự giờ

Việc dự giờ lớp học sẽ được thực hiện từ trong thời gian từ tháng 08 – 09/2019 và sẽ được quay video. Tôi sẽ dự giờ 01 lớp học tiếng Anh ở trường của thầy cô theo thời khóa biểu của giáo viên. Việc dự giờ sẽ kéo dài theo thời gian của buổi học (1 tiết hoặc 2 tiết, từ 35 – 70 phút tùy theo lịch chính thức của nhà trường). Việc phỏng vấn sẽ được thực hiện theo thời gian và đại diện thuận lợi cho cả giáo viên và b3n thân tôi.

Mức độ tự nguyện và việc rút lui khỏi dự án nghiên cứu sẽ như thế nào?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Nếu thầy/cô thay đổi ý định tham gia trước khi số liệu thu thập xong, mọi việc sẽ kết thúc ở đó. Nếu việc thu thập số liệu đã hoàn tất, thầy/cô vẫn có thể yêu cầu rút lui khỏi nghiên cứu trong thời gian 01 tuần kể từ ngày việc thu thập số liệu ở trường thầy/cô hoàn tất. Sau thời gian này, những thông tin thu thập tại trường thầy/cô sẽ được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu. Việc thu thập số liệu chỉ bắt đầu sau khi thầy/cô đã ký tên đồng ý cho tiến hành dự giờ tại trường. Nếu thầy/cô muốn ngừng tham gia, thầy/cô chỉ cần email hay gọi điện cho tôi. Tất cả những đóng góp của giáo viên của trường thầy/cô trong nghiên cứu sẽ được lọc ra và hủy bỏ. Quyết định dừng tham gia của thầy/cô sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của thầy/cô và tôi hoặc trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Thông tin đã được thu thập sẽ được xử lý như thế nào; quyền riêng tư và bảo mật thông tin được đảm bảo ra sao?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu của bạn sẽ được bảo mật nghiêm ngặt và quyền riêng tư của người tham gia và của nhà trường sẽ luôn luôn được duy trì. Không ai có thể xác định được danh tính trường và giáo viên trong trường của thầy/cô trong nghiên cứu này vì tôi sẽ dùng tên khác để thay thế cho trường và giáo viên của trường.

Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ một cách an toàn trong tủ khóa hoặc các máy tính có hệ thống bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu trong phòng làm việc của tôi tại ECU (). Chỉ có tôi và những giáo viên hướng dẫn tôi có thể truy cập thông tin này. Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ tối thiểu 7 năm và sẽ được hủy bỏ sau đó. Việc hủy bỏ được thực hiện bằng cách cắt bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu ghi trên giấy và xóa những dữ liệu điện tử.

Những dữ liệu về dự giờ lớp học, phỏng vấn giáo viên trước và sau dự giờ sẽ chỉ được sử dụng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của tôi, các bài báo hay hội thảo khoa học. Nếu thầy/cô yêu cầu, tôi sẽ email cho thầy/cô một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi hoàn thành.

Việc tham gia nghiên cứu có những rủi ro gì không?

Chưa có rủi ro gì có thể xác định liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Các giáo viên tham gia có thể chỉ cảm thấy hơi bất tiện khi có người ngồi quan sát lớp học và quay video, phải thu xếp thời gian cho việc dự giờ và phỏng vấn. Nếu thầy/cô và giáo viên đồng ý, tôi có thể dự giờ một số tiết dạy của giáo viên để chúng tôi hiểu nhau hơn và giáo viên cũng có thể cảm thấy tự tin hơn khi tôi chính thức thu thập số liệu. Ngoài ra, tôi và giáo viên cũng có thể thảo luận để đặt camera trong lớp sao cho ít làm giáo viên phân tâm nhất.

Đối với các học sinh trong lớp học được dự giờ, cha mẹ hoặc người giám hộ của các em sẽ được cung cấp thông tin và tôi cũng sẽ xin phép họ về việc con em họ có thể xuất hiện trong video lớp học. Nếu có phụ huynh hoặc học sinh không muốn được ghi hình, học sinh đó sẽ được sắp xếp ngồi ở một nơi trong lớp mà camera sẽ không ghi hình nơi ấy.

Việc tham gia có được thù lao gì không?

Vì đây là một đề tài nghiên cứu không có nguồn tài trợ nên các giáo viên và trường tham gia sẽ không có những thù lao về vật chất.

Những ích lợi tiềm năng của nghiên cứu này là gì?

Theo dự kiến, những kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp cho khối kiến thức hiện có trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học, theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam. Mặc dù không có một lợi ích trực tiếp nào đối với những người tham gia ở giai đoạn này, việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu giúp giáo viên có những cơ hội suy tưởng và thảo luận về cách thức tổ chức dạy học của mình. Việc tham gia của giáo viên và nhà trường cũng có thể giúp thông tin cho các nhà hoạch định chính sách về giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam.

Đề tài này có được phép thực hiện không?

Đề tài nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Đại học Edith Cowan phê duyệt cho thực hiện.

Tôi có thể liên hệ với ai nếu tôi muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này?

Nếu thầy/cô muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với tôi qua địa chỉ gửi thư: 52A Camboon Rd, Morley, WA 6062; qua điện thoại số: [REDACTED] hoặc qua email: [REDACTED] Hoặc bạn có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Nếu thầy/cô muốn nói chuyện với một bên thứ ba về việc thực hiện nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Làm thế nào để tôi đồng ý cho trường tôi tham gia vào nghiên cứu?

Nếu thầy/cô đã hỏi rõ và hài lòng với tất cả những điều muốn biết về nghiên cứu và sẵn sàng cho giáo viên trong trường tham gia, xin hãy cho biết thầy/cô đồng ý bằng cách ký tên vào thư đồng ý tham gia và gửi lại cho tôi.

Trân trọng,

Trần Thị Hiền
PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University



APPENDIX 4A. INFORMATION LETTER FOR CHILDREN'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

(English version)

Edith Cowan University



INFORMATION LETTER FOR CHILDREN'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

The research project:

MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

Dear parents/guardians,

My name is Tran Thi Hien, currently a PhD student at Edith Cowan University in Australia. I am conducting a study as part of requirements for my course about teaching English at the primary education level following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Vietnam. The Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University has approved the study.

To find out how primary English teachers in Vietnam teach English following CLT, I will conduct class observations in Vietnam. The observations will only be conducted with the participated teachers' consent and their schools' permissions for me to carry out the observations. The class observations will involve my presence in your child's class, and I will video-record the observation for future analysis. Although my study focuses on the teacher's practices, the video recording may capture some scenes of children learning English. Therefore, I would like to provide information about my research project and to seek your permission for your child to be potentially videotaped during his or her English class.

What does participation in the research project involve?

This participation may involve your child's appearance in the classroom video featuring scenes where he/she is learning English.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you do not agree for your child to appear in the video, during the observation time your child will be seated at a place in class where the camera will not capture his/her learning scenes. This decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher, with your child's school and English teachers as well as Edith Cowan University.

Is privacy and confidentiality assured, and what will happen to the information collected?

Participation is strictly confidential, and participants' privacy will be maintained at all times. Nobody can recognise the identity of your child, his/her school or the English teacher because I will use pseudonyms to refer to the school and the observed teacher. The classroom video will not be disclosed anywhere.

Collected data will be stored securely in a password protected computer in my office at ECU ([REDACTED]) and can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding any paper-based data and erasing electronic data.

The data, including classroom video, will only be used for this research. The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis, possible journal articles and conference presentations. If you are interested to know about the research findings, I will email you a research summary once it is done per your request.

Are there any risks associated with participation?

There are no foreseen risks for your child to participate in this research.

Is there any compensation or reimbursement for participation in this research project?

As this is not a funded research project, there is no compensation or reimbursement for your child's participation in this project.

What are the potential benefits of this research?

It is expected that the findings from the study will contribute to the existing knowledge about teaching English following CLT at primary education in Vietnam. Although there may not be any immediate direct benefits to the schools and observed teachers or children at this stage, the participation of the schools, the teachers and the children may help inform policy makers about teaching primary English in Vietnam to help improve it.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss this research, please contact me via email [REDACTED]. You can also contact my supervisors:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education

Edith Cowan University

Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino

School of Education

Edith Cowan University

Email: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Team,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness for my child to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the research answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for your child to participate, please acknowledge your consent by signing the consent form and return it to me.

Regards,

Hien Tran

PhD Candidate

Edith Cowan University

[REDACTED]

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP TRONG MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Kính gửi quý phụ huynh,

Tôi tên là Trần Thị Hiền, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh ở trường đại học Edith Cowan của Úc. Theo yêu cầu của khóa học, tôi hiện đang thực hiện một nghiên cứu về việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Edith Cowan đã phê duyệt cho tôi thực hiện đề tài này.

Để tìm hiểu giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh tiểu học dạy theo đường hướng giao tiếp (CLT) như thế nào, tôi sẽ tiến hành quan sát lớp học ở Việt Nam. Việc quan sát chỉ diễn ra nếu giáo viên đồng ý, Ban giám Hiệu nhà trường cho phép, các học sinh và phụ huynh hay người giám hộ đồng ý. Để quan sát lớp học, tôi sẽ có mặt trong lớp của giáo viên tham gia để quan sát và ghi hình cho việc phân tích sau này. Mặc dù việc ghi hình tập trung vào việc giáo viên dạy như thế nào, một vài cảnh học sinh đang học cũng có thể được ghi lại nên con của bạn có thể xuất hiện trong video đó. Vì vậy tôi xin cung cấp thông tin về nghiên cứu này và xin phép quý phụ huynh cho phép việc con em mình có thể xuất hiện trong video.

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này bao gồm những gì?

Việc tham gia này đồng nghĩa với việc con em của bạn có thể xuất hiện trong video quay cảnh lớp học tiếng Anh.

Mức độ tự nguyện và việc rút lui khỏi nghiên cứu sẽ như thế nào?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Nếu bạn không muốn cho con em mình xuất hiện trong video, trong giờ quan sát và ghi hình lớp học con em của bạn sẽ được bố trí ngồi vào khu vực trong lớp nơi camera không ghi cảnh học tập của các bé. Quyết định này sẽ không ảnh hưởng mối quan hệ giữa bạn và tôi, giữa bạn và nhà trường cũng như giáo viên và trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Thông tin đã được thu thập sẽ được xử lý như thế nào; quyền riêng tư và bảo mật thông tin được đảm bảo ra sao?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu của bạn sẽ được bảo mật nghiêm ngặt và quyền riêng tư của người tham gia sẽ luôn luôn được duy trì. Không ai có thể xác định được danh tính của con em của bạn, trường và giáo viên trong trường trong nghiên cứu này vì tôi sẽ dùng tên khác để thay thế cho trường và giáo viên của trường. Video chỉ được sử dụng cho mục đích nghiên cứu và sẽ không được công bố ở bất kỳ nơi đâu.

Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ một cách an toàn trong tủ khóa hoặc các máy tính có hệ thống bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu trong phòng làm việc của tôi tại ECU ([REDACTED]). Chỉ có tôi và những giáo viên hướng dẫn tôi có thể truy cập thông tin này. Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ tối thiểu 7 năm và sẽ được hủy bỏ sau đó. Việc hủy bỏ được thực hiện bằng cách cắt bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu ghi trên giấy và xóa những dữ liệu điện tử.

Những dữ liệu về dự giờ và ghi hình lớp học sẽ chỉ được sử dụng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của tôi, các bài báo hay hội thảo khoa học. Nếu bạn có quan tâm về kết quả nghiên cứu và yêu cầu, tôi sẽ email cho bạn một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi hoàn thành.

Việc tham gia nghiên cứu có những rủi ro gì không?

Chưa có rủi ro nào được xác định khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu.

Việc tham gia có được thù lao gì không?

Vì đây là một đề tài nghiên cứu không có nguồn tài trợ nên các giáo viên và trường tham gia sẽ không có những thù lao về vật chất.

Những ích lợi tiềm năng của nghiên cứu này là gì?

Theo dự kiến, những kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp cho khối kiến thức hiện có trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học, theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam. Mặc dù không có một lợi ích trực tiếp nào đối với nhà trường, giáo viên và con em của bạn ở giai đoạn này, việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu giúp giáo viên có những cơ hội suy tưởng và thảo luận về cách thức tổ chức dạy học của mình. Việc tham gia của giáo viên, nhà trường và con em của bạn cũng có thể giúp thông tin cho các nhà hoạch định chính sách về giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam.

Đề tài này có được phép thực hiện không?

Đề tài nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của trường Đại học Edith Cowan phê duyệt cho thực hiện.

Tôi có thể liên hệ với ai nếu tôi muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này?

Nếu thầy/cô muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với tôi qua địa chỉ gửi thư: 52A Camboon Rd, Morley, WA 6062; qua điện thoại số: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] qua email: [REDACTED] Hoặc bạn có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Nếu thầy/cô muốn nói chuyện với một bên thứ ba về việc thực hiện nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Làm thế nào để tôi đồng ý cho con em tôi tham gia vào nghiên cứu?

Nếu bạn đã hỏi rõ và hài lòng với tất cả những điều muốn biết về nghiên cứu và sẵn sàng cho con em trong trường tham gia, xin hãy cho biết bạn đồng ý bằng cách ký tên vào thư đồng ý tham gia và gửi lại cho tôi

Trân trọng cảm ơn quý phụ huynh,

Trần Thị Hiền

PhD Candidate
Edith Cowan University

[REDACTED]

Edith Cowan University



Participating in the research project:

**MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING
AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE**

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

I have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter for Participants, explaining the research project named *Towards Communication-Oriented Language Teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective*. I have read and understood the information provided as well as given the opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction. I also know that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the researcher by email at [REDACTED].

I know that if I have further questions, I can also contact the researcher's supervisors at:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

or if I have concerns or complaints, I can contact ECU Research Ethics Office at:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

I am aware that participation in the research project will involve: (1) the researcher's visit to one of my primary English classes at my school, (2) an individual interview with the researcher

before the in-class observation, and (3) an individual interview with the researcher after the in-class observation. The in-class observation will be video-recorded, and the two interviews will be audio-recorded.

I understand that my information provided to the researcher will be kept confidential and my identity will not be disclosed without my consent. I understand that the information will only be used for this research project: The research findings will be used in the researcher's PhD thesis, academic conferences and journals. If I request, I can receive a summary of the research findings via email.

I know that I can withdraw from the research project before data collection starts or one week after all data have been collected without explanations or consequences.

I therefore freely agree to participate in the research project and show my agreement by signing this consent form.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Contact details:

.....

Edith Cowan University



XÁC NHẬN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Tôi đã được cung cấp đầy đủ thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu “*Hướng đến giảng dạy theo năng lực giao tiếp trong môn tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học: Một góc nhìn từ Việt Nam*”. Tôi đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin được cung cấp. Tôi cũng đã hỏi và hài lòng với những thông tin được cung cấp. Tôi cũng biết rằng nếu tôi cần hỏi thêm về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với người nghiên cứu qua email [REDACTED]

Tôi cũng biết rằng tôi có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của người nghiên cứu qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Hoặc nếu tôi có quan ngại hay khiếu nại gì về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với Ủy ban Đạo đức nghiên cứu của ECU qua địa chỉ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Tôi biết rằng việc đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu bao gồm: (1) người nghiên cứu sẽ dự giờ 1 lớp học môn tiếng Anh tại trường tôi, (2) một cuộc phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và người nghiên cứu trước buổi quan sát lớp học, (3) một cuộc phỏng vấn cá nhân giữa tôi và người nghiên cứu

sau khi quan sát lớp học. Buổi dự giờ lớp học sẽ được ghi hình và hai cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được ghi âm.

Tôi hiểu rằng những thông tin được tôi cung cấp sẽ được bảo mật và danh tính của tôi sẽ không được công bố mà không có sự đồng ý của tôi. Tôi hiểu là những thông tin thu thập sẽ chỉ được dùng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này: Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của người nghiên cứu, các báo cáo, hội thảo khoa học và các bài báo đăng tạp chí.

Tôi biết rằng tôi có thể rút lui khỏi đề tài nghiên cứu mà không cần giải thích và không chịu bất cứ hậu quả nào trước khi người nghiên cứu bắt đầu thu thập số liệu hoặc 1 tuần sau khi số liệu đã được thu về.

Vì vậy tôi tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu này và minh chứng qua việc ký tên vào bản đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu.

Chữ ký:

Họ và tên:

Ngày/tháng/năm:

Thông tin liên hệ:

.....

Edith Cowan University



Participating in the research project:

**MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING
AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE**

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

IN-CLASS OBSERVATION PERMISSION

I have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter explaining the research project named *Towards Communication-Oriented Language Teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective*. I have read and understood the information provided as well as given the opportunity to ask questions to my satisfaction.

I am aware that agreeing for the researcher to do the in-class observation at my school will involve: (1) the researcher's visit to one of my primary English teacher's classes at my school, (2) the researcher's video recording the class observation, (3) the researcher's seeking the teacher's consent prior to the class observation, and (4) the researcher's seeking the children's parents' or guardians' consent prior to the video recording of the classroom.

I understand that the data collected will be kept confidential and the school's and teacher's identities will not be disclosed, and that the researcher will use pseudonyms to refer to the school and the teacher observed. I understand that the information will only be used for this research project: The research findings will be used in the researcher's PhD thesis, academic conferences and journals. If I request, I will receive a summary of the research findings via email.

I know that my school can withdraw from the research project before data collection starts or one week after data has been collected without explanations or consequences.

I know that if I have further questions, I can contact the researcher by email at [REDACTED]. I can also contact the researcher's supervisors at:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino

School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

or if I have concerns or complaints, I can contact ECU Research Ethics Office at:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
[REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

I therefore freely agree for my school to participate in the research project and show my agreement by signing this consent form.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Contact details:

.....

THƯ XÁC NHẬN ĐỒNG Ý CHO DỰ GIỜ LỚP HỌC

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Tôi đã được cung cấp đầy đủ thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu “*Hướng đến giảng dạy theo năng lực giao tiếp trong môn tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học: Một góc nhìn từ Việt Nam*”. Tôi đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin được cung cấp. Tôi cũng đã hỏi và hài lòng với những thông tin được cung cấp.

Tôi biết rằng việc đồng ý cho người nghiên cứu thực hiện dự giờ lớp học bao gồm: (1) người nghiên cứu sẽ dự giờ 1 lớp tiếng Anh tại trường của tôi, (2) người nghiên cứu sẽ quay video lớp học, (3) người nghiên cứu phải nhận được sự đồng ý từ phía giáo viên dạy lớp, và (4) người nghiên cứu phải có được sự đồng ý của phụ huynh học sinh về việc con em của họ có thể xuất hiện trong video lớp học.

Tôi hiểu rằng những thông tin được thu thập sẽ được bảo mật và danh tính của trường và giáo viên tôi sẽ không được công bố mà không có sự đồng ý của trường và giáo viên. Tôi hiểu là những thông tin thu thập sẽ chỉ được dùng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này: Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của người nghiên cứu, các báo cáo, hội thảo khoa học và các bài báo đăng tạp chí

Tôi cũng biết rằng nếu tôi cần hỏi thêm về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với người nghiên cứu qua email [REDACTED].

Tôi cũng biết rằng tôi có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của người nghiên cứu qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Hoặc nếu tôi có quan ngại hay khiếu nại gì về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với Ủy ban Đạo đức nghiên cứu của ECU qua địa chỉ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: ([REDACTED])
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Vì vậy tôi xác nhận cho phép người nghiên cứu dự giờ và ghi hình lớp học tại trường tôi.

Chữ ký:

Họ và tên:

Ngày/tháng/năm:

Thông tin liên hệ:

.....

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS ABOUT VIDEO RECORDING OF THE CLASSROOM

Participating in the research project:

MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE PRIMARY ENGLISH LEVEL: A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

I have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter explaining the research project named *Towards Communication-Oriented Language Teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective*. I have read and understood the information provided as well as given the opportunity to ask questions to my satisfaction.

I am aware that the researcher will do the in-class observation in my child's English class and will video record the observation. Although the researcher will focus on the teacher's practice, the video may capture scenes of children learning English and my child may appear in the video.

I understand that the data collected will be kept confidential and the researcher will not collect my child's identity. I understand that the information will only be used for this research project: The research findings will be used in the researcher's PhD thesis, academic conferences and journals.

I know that if I have further questions, I can contact the researcher by email at [REDACTED]. I can also contact the researcher's supervisors at:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

or if I have concerns or complaints, I can contact ECU Research Ethics Office at:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: ([REDACTED])
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

I have explained the in-class observation and video recording to my child. I therefore freely agree for my child to appear in the video of the classroom.

Signature:

Name:

Child's name:

Date:

(Vietnamese version)

Edith Cowan University



THƯ XÁC NHẬN CỦA PHỤ HUYNH VỀ VIỆC ĐỒNG Ý CHO CON/EM ĐƯỢC GHI HÌNH TRONG LỚP HỌC

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

HƯỚNG ĐẾN GIẢNG DẠY THEO NĂNG LỰC GIAO TIẾP MÔN TIẾNG ANH BẬC TIỂU HỌC: MỘT GÓC NHÌN TỪ VIỆT NAM

Nghiên cứu được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Tôi đã được cung cấp đầy đủ thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu “*Hướng đến giảng dạy theo năng lực giao tiếp trong môn tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học: Một góc nhìn từ Việt Nam*”. Tôi đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin được cung cấp. Tôi cũng đã hỏi và hài lòng với những thông tin được cung cấp.

Tôi hiểu rằng người nghiên cứu sẽ thực hiện dự giờ lớp học môn tiếng Anh của con/em tôi và sẽ ghi hình lớp học. Mặc dù người nghiên cứu sẽ tập trung vào phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên, việc ghi hình có thể ghi một số cảnh các trẻ em học tiếng Anh và con/em của tôi có thể xuất hiện trong video đó.

Tôi hiểu rằng thông tin thu thập sẽ được bảo mật và người nghiên cứu sẽ không thu thập thông tin của học sinh. Tôi hiểu là những thông tin thu thập sẽ chỉ được dùng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này: Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của người nghiên cứu, các báo cáo, hội thảo khoa học và các bài báo đăng tạp chí

Tôi hiểu là những thông tin thu thập sẽ chỉ được dùng cho đề tài nghiên cứu này: Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của người nghiên cứu, các báo cáo, hội thảo khoa học và các bài báo đăng tạp chí.

Tôi cũng biết rằng nếu tôi cần hỏi thêm về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với người nghiên cứu qua email [REDACTED].

Tôi cũng biết rằng tôi có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của người nghiên cứu qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham

School of Education

Edith Cowan University

Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Hoặc nếu tôi có quan ngại hay khiếu nại gì về đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi có thể liên hệ với Ủy ban Đạo đức nghiên cứu của ECU qua địa chỉ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Tôi đã giải thích cho con/em của tôi về việc dự giờ và ghi hình lớp học. Vì vậy tôi xác nhận cho phép hình ảnh của con tôi có thể xuất hiện trong video ghi hình lớp học.

Chữ ký:

Họ và tên:

Ngày/tháng/năm:

Phụ huynh của học sinh:

.....

APPENDIX 8. GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY FOR TRANSLATION CHECKER

Edith Cowan University



Guarantee of Confidentiality

The research project:

Moving towards Communication-Oriented Language Teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

I promise that I will not reveal any details of the materials I check the Vietnamese-English translations for the research project being conducted by Ms. HIEN TRAN, who is undertaking this project for the purposes of a PhD. I recognise that to do so would be in breach of participant confidentiality, and of ethical guidelines for research. Further, I promise to ensure that while data or other materials related to work that I am doing for Ms. HIEN TRAN are in my care, they will be kept in a secure location until they can be returned, and that they will not be accessible to others entering my workplace.

Name: _____

Business name (if applicable): _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____

APPENDIX 9A. THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE (English version)

THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Participating in a survey concerning the study of: *Moving towards communication-oriented language teaching at the primary English level: A Vietnamese perspective*

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University

Dear prospective participants,

My name is Tran Thi Hien, and I am writing to you as a student of the School of Education at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project I am undertaking as part of requirements for an integrated Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate how primary English teachers in Vietnam carry out their teaching practices following the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and find ways to help them overcome challenges in their teaching towards communication-oriented language teaching.

What does participation in the research project involve?

Participation in the research project will involve Vietnamese primary English teachers in a 20-30 minute online questionnaire, carried out at a time and place convenient to you during the data collection phase, which takes place in June 2019.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Before you answer the questionnaire, you are asked to provide your consent to take part. If you change your mind, you will be able to withdraw your participation during the first week of July 2019. After that time, your data will be included in the research. However, it will only be possible to withdraw your data if you include your contact details at the completion of the questionnaire to help me identify your data when needed. To withdraw, you just need to email me, and I will pick out your data. All contributions you have made to the research will be removed and destroyed. This decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Collected data will be stored securely in either locked cabinets or a password

protected computer in my office at ECU () and can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding any paper-based data and erasing electronic data.

The data is maintained confidential at all times. Nobody can recognise your identity because it will be coded by me. If you want to withdraw from the research, you just need to email me and let me know. I will identify your data and destroy it.

The data, including answers to an online questionnaire, will be only be used for this research. The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis, possible journal articles and conference presentations. If you request, I will email you a research summary once it is done.

What are the potential benefits of this research?

It is expected that the findings from the study will contribute to the existing knowledge about teaching English following CLT at primary education in Vietnam. Although there may not be any immediate direct benefits to the participants at this stage, participating in the research project will give you the opportunities to reflect on your teaching practices. Your responses may also help inform policy makers about teaching primary English in Vietnam.

Are there any risks associated with participation?

There are no foreseen risks of participating in this research.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss this research, please contact me via email () or by phone at (). You can also contact my supervisors:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: ()

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education

Edith Cowan University

Email: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the research answered to your satisfaction, and are willing to participate, please acknowledge your consent by answering the first question on the questionnaire of the survey.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Before you proceed to answering the questionnaire, please press screen print key on your laptop or computer to save the project information for your future reference when needed.

PART 1. YOUR CONSENT

1. I have read and understood the project information and I agree to participate in this research.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

PART 2. YOUR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. How do you describe yourself?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Other (please specify):

3. What is your teaching experience?
 - a. 1 – 2 years
 - b. 3 – 5 years
 - c. 5 – 10 years
 - d. 10 – 15 years

- e. 15 – 20 years
 - f. Over 20 years
4. What is your highest earned education qualification?
- a. PhD
 - b. Master
 - c. BA
 - d. Junior BA
 - e. High school
 - f. Others (please specify):
5. What is your degree specialization?
- a. Teaching
 - b. Linguistics
 - c. Others (please specify):
6. What is your training specialisation?
- a. Secondary education
 - b. Primary education
 - c. Early childhood education
7. Have you attended any kind of professional development related to teaching primary English following Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT)?
- a. Yes (please give some information of the training)
.....
 - b. No
8. What is your language proficiency level on the Common European Framework of Language Reference?
- a. A1 (Basic user: Beginner)
 - b. A2 (Basic user: Elementary)
 - c. B1 (Independent user: Intermediate)
 - d. B2 (Independent user: Upper intermediate)
 - e. C1 (Proficient user: Advanced)
 - f. C2 (Proficient user: Expert)
 - g. Others (please specify):
9. What is your current employment status?
- a. Tenure
 - b. Casual
 - c. Fixed term contract

d. Others (please specify)

10. What is your workload per week or month?

11. What is your school location?

- a. City centre
- b. Suburb
- c. Small town
- d. Rural area

PART 3. YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE

12. In your understanding, what is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?

.....

13. Which of these activities do you use in your teaching (please tick all that you use)?

- a. Repetition
- b. Substitution drills
- c. Questions/Answers (within lessons' contents)
- d. Questions/Answers (with some learners' meanings)
- e. Personalised questions/answers
- f. Describing things or situations
- g. Giving and following directions
- h. Drawing pictures with directions from another person
- i. Completing a map with directions from another person
- j. Songs/chants
- k. Language games
- l. Discussions
- m. Interviews
- n. Surveys
- o. Role-play
- p. Project work
- q. Others (please specify)

14. Do you think you use these activities in accordance with your beliefs of CLT?

.....

15. How do you use these activities in your classroom?

.....

16. What difficulties or challenges have you encountered in your teaching?

.....

17. Do you need any support to help improve your teaching and what is it?

.....

PART 4. YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE FURTHER IN THE RESEARCH

In phase 2 of the research project, a group of primary English teachers will be invited to take part. This participation will involve:

- In-class observations where I will visit one of their classes
- An individual interview with me before the class observation.
- An individual interview with me after the class observation.

Should you agree to take part, you will be contacted later. If you do not want to participate further, I would like to thank you for your participation to this point and for your time and interest.

18. Would you like to participate in the second stage of the research?
- a. Yes (please answer question 19)
 - b. No (please skip question 19)

19. How can I contact you for further information? (Please specify how)

.....

THE END

Thank you for helping answer the questionnaire.

BẢNG CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT DÀNH CHO GIÁO VIÊN

Đề tài nghiên cứu:

Hướng đến giảng dạy theo năng lực giao tiếp trong môn tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học:

Một góc nhìn từ Việt Nam

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như một trong những điều kiện của chương trình tiến sĩ của trường Đại học Edith Cowan

Các bạn đồng nghiệp thân mến,

Tôi tên là Trần Thị Hiền, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh ở Khoa Giáo dục, Đại học Edith Cowan, Tây Úc. Tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào một dự án nghiên cứu mà tôi sẽ thực hiện theo quy định của chương trình nghiên cứu sinh mà tôi đang theo học. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là tìm hiểu về việc giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam dạy theo đường hướng giao tiếp (CLT) như thế nào và tìm phương pháp để giúp họ giảng dạy hướng tới mục đích giao tiếp.

Bạn sẽ làm gì khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này?

Các giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học ở các trường công lập ở Việt Nam sẽ được mời tham gia trả lời một bảng câu hỏi online. Bạn có thể thực hiện trả lời bảng câu hỏi vào thời gian và địa điểm thuận tiện cho bạn trong giai đoạn thu thập số liệu diễn ra trong tháng 6/2019.

Mức độ tự nguyện và việc rút lui khỏi dự án nghiên cứu sẽ như thế nào?

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Trước khi bạn trả lời bảng câu hỏi, bạn sẽ được yêu cầu trả lời câu hỏi về việc tự nguyện tham gia. Nếu bạn thay đổi ý định của mình, bạn có thể ngừng tham gia trong tuần đầu tiên của tháng 7/2019. Sau thời gian đó, câu trả lời của bạn sẽ được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu. Tuy nhiên trong trường hợp bạn muốn ngừng tham gia, tôi chỉ có thể tìm và lọc ra câu trả lời của bạn nếu bạn để lại thông tin liên lạc ở cuối bảng câu hỏi. Nếu bạn muốn ngừng tham gia, bạn chỉ cần email tôi và cho tôi biết. Tất cả những đóng góp của bạn cho nghiên cứu sẽ được lọc ra và hủy bỏ. Quyết định dừng tham gia của bạn sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của bạn và tôi hoặc trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Thông tin đã được thu thập sẽ được xử lý như thế nào; quyền riêng tư và bảo mật thông tin được đảm bảo ra sao?

Thông tin thu được từ những người tham gia nghiên cứu sẽ được lưu giữ một cách an toàn trong tủ khóa hoặc các máy tính có hệ thống bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu trong phòng làm việc của tôi tại ECU ([REDACTED]). Chỉ có tôi và những giáo viên hướng dẫn tôi có thể truy cập thông tin này. Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu giữ tối thiểu 7 năm và sẽ được hủy bỏ sau đó. Việc hủy bỏ được thực hiện bằng cách cắt bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu ghi trên giấy và xóa những dữ liệu điện tử.

Dữ liệu sẽ luôn luôn được bảo mật. Không ai có thể xác định dữ liệu của bạn trong nghiên cứu này. Nếu bạn muốn ngừng tham gia nghiên cứu, bạn chỉ cần email cho tôi. Tôi sẽ truy xuất và hủy bỏ tất cả những dữ liệu của bạn.

Thông tin trả lời cho bảng câu hỏi online sẽ được sử dụng chủ yếu cho nghiên cứu này. Kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của tôi trong, các bài báo khoa học và báo cáo hội thảo. Một bản tóm tắt những kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được thực hiện khi kết thúc đề tài. Nếu bạn yêu cầu, tôi sẽ email cho bạn một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi hoàn thành.

Những ích lợi tiềm năng của nghiên cứu này là gì?

Theo dự kiến, những kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp cho khối kiến thức hiện có trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học, theo đường hướng giao tiếp ở Việt Nam. Mặc dù không có một lợi ích trực tiếp nào đối với những người tham gia khảo sát ở giai đoạn này, những câu trả lời của có thể giúp thông tin cho các nhà hoạch định chính sách về giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc tiểu học ở Việt Nam.

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này có những bất trắc gì không?

Chưa có bất trắc gì có thể xác định liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Nghiên cứu này có được cho phép thực hiện không?

Nghiên cứu này đã được sự đồng ý của Hội đồng đạo đức nghiên cứu liên quan đến con người của trường Đại học Edith Cowan.

Tôi có thể liên hệ với ai nếu tôi muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này?

Nếu bạn muốn trao đổi thêm về nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với tôi qua địa chỉ gửi thư: 52A Camboon Rd, Morley, WA 6062; qua điện thoại số: [REDACTED] hoặc qua email: [REDACTED] Hoặc bạn có thể liên hệ với giáo viên hướng dẫn của tôi qua địa chỉ:

Dr. Christine Cunningham
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Dr. Annamaria Paolino
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email: [REDACTED]

Nếu bạn muốn nói chuyện với một bên thứ ba về việc thực hiện nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Research Ethics Office,
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Làm thế nào để tôi tình nguyện tham gia vào nghiên cứu?

Nếu bạn đã hỏi rõ và hài lòng với tất cả những điều muốn biết về nghiên cứu và sẵn sàng tham gia, xin hãy cho biết bạn đồng ý bằng cách trả lời câu hỏi đầu tiên của bài khảo sát.

THÔNG TIN QUAN TRỌNG: Trước khi trả lời khảo sát, xin bạn hãy nhấn phím screen print để lưu lại những thông tin của nghiên cứu nếu bạn cần tham khảo sau này.

PHẦN 1. XÁC ĐỊNH CỦA BẠN VỀ VIỆC ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

1. Tôi đã đọc và hiểu rõ tất cả những thông tin liên quan đến nghiên cứu này và tôi đồng ý tham gia.
 - a. Có
 - b. Không

PHẦN 2. THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN

2. Giới tính của bạn là?
 - e. Nam
 - f. Nữ
 - g. Người thay đổi giới tính
 - h. Khác (xin chỉ rõ):
3. Kinh nghiệm giảng dạy của bạn?
 - g. 1 – 2 năm
 - h. 3 – 5 năm
 - i. 5 – 10 năm
 - j. 10 – 15 năm
 - k. 15 – 20 năm
 - l. Over 20 năm

4. Bằng cấp cao nhất của bạn?
- g. Tiến sĩ
 - h. Thạc sĩ
 - i. Cử nhân
 - j. Cao đẳng
 - k. Trung học
 - l. Khác (Xin ghi rõ):
5. Lĩnh vực chuyên môn của văn bằng của bạn?
- d. Sư phạm
 - e. Ngôn ngữ học
 - f. Khác (Xin ghi rõ):
6. Bạn được đào tạo để giảng dạy cấp học nào?
- d. Giáo dục trung học (gồm THCS và THPT)
 - e. Giáo dục tiểu học
 - f. Giáo dục mầm non
7. Bạn có tham gia khóa đào tạo nào liên quan đến giảng dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học theo đường hướng giao tiếp không?
- c. Có (Xin ghi thông tin về khoá đào tạo)
.....
.....
 - d. Không
8. Xếp loại năng lực ngôn ngữ của bạn trên khung tham chiếu Châu Âu?
- h. A1 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ bậc sơ cấp: mới bắt đầu)
 - i. A2 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ bậc sơ cấp: sơ cấp)
 - j. B1 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ độc lập: sơ trung cấp)
 - k. B2 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ độc lập: trung cấp)
 - l. C1 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ thành thạo: cao cấp)
 - m. C2 (Người sử dụng ngôn ngữ thành thạo: chuyên gia)
 - n. Khác (xin nêu rõ):
9. Tình trạng tuyển dụng của bạn hiện nay?
- e. Biên chế
 - f. Hợp đồng không thời hạn
 - g. Hợp đồng có thời hạn
 - h. Khác (xin nêu rõ)

10. Khối lượng công việc hàng tuần hoặc hàng tháng của bạn?

11. Trường của bạn thuộc khu vực nào?

- e. Trung tâm thành phố
- f. Ngoại ô
- g. Thị trấn nhỏ
- h. Vùng sâu, vùng xa

PHẦN 3. VIỆC GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH CỦA BẠN

12. Theo hiểu biết của bạn, dạy tiếng Anh theo đường hướng giao tiếp (CLT) là gì?

.....

13. Những hoạt động nào dưới đây bạn có sử dụng trong lớp (Xin chọn tất cả những nội dung đúng với trường hợp của bạn)?

- a. Luyện tập theo cách lặp lại
- b. Luyện tập theo cách thay thế từ/cụm từ
- c. Hỏi/đáp (trong phạm vi nội dung bài học)
- d. Hỏi/đáp (kết hợp nội dung trong bài học và thông tin cá nhân)
- e. Hỏi/đáp theo cách thức giao tiếp tự do giữa các cá nhân
- f. Miêu tả vật hay tình huống
- g. Hướng dẫn và thực hiện theo hướng dẫn (ví dụ: chỉ đường)
- h. Vẽ tranh theo hướng dẫn của một người khác
- i. Hoàn thành một bản đồ theo hướng dẫn của người khác
- j. Bài hát/đọc theo nhịp điệu
- k. Trò chơi ngôn ngữ
- l. Thảo luận
- m. Phỏng vấn
- n. Khảo sát
- o. Sắm vai, đóng kịch
- p. Thực hiện dự án học tập
- q. Khác (xin nêu rõ)

14. Bạn có nghĩ bạn sử dụng những hoạt động này phù hợp với giảng dạy theo đường hướng giao tiếp bạn đã trình bày ở trên không?

.....

15. Bạn sử dụng những hoạt động đó trong lớp học như thế nào?

.....

16. Những khó khăn, thách thức gì bạn đang gặp trong giảng dạy?

.....

17. Bạn có cần cần những sự giúp đỡ gì để cải thiện việc giảng dạy của mình không và đó là những gì?

.....

PHẦN 4. TÌNH NGUYỆN THAM GIA VÀO GIAI ĐOẠN KẾ TIẾP CỦA NGHIÊN CỨU

Trong giai đoạn 2 của nghiên cứu, tôi sẽ mời một nhóm các giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu tham gia. Việc tham gia này bao gồm các nội dung:

- Quan sát lớp học: Tôi sẽ thăm một lớp học của họ
- Phỏng vấn cá nhân về việc giảng dạy theo đường hướng giao tiếp trước khi quan sát lớp học
- Phỏng vấn cá nhân về việc giảng dạy theo đường hướng giao tiếp sau khi quan sát lớp học

Nếu bạn đồng ý tham gia, tôi sẽ liên hệ với bạn. Nếu bạn không muốn tham gia, tôi rất cảm ơn về sự quan tâm của bạn và đã dành thời gian để tham gia trả lời bảng khảo sát.

18. Bạn có muốn tham gia vào giai đoạn kế tiếp của nghiên cứu không?

- a. Có (Xin trả lời câu 19)
- b. Không (Xin bỏ câu 19)

19. Tôi có thể liên hệ bạn bằng cách nào (Xin chỉ rõ)?

.....

KẾT THÚC - Cảm ơn bạn đã giúp trả lời bản khảo sát!

APPENDIX 10. CLASS OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

(Adapted from Allen, Frohlich and Spada, 1983; cited in Nunan, 1992)

PART A, CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Activity type: What is the activity type, e.g. drill, role-play?
2. Participant organization: What is the type of interactions in the class: teacher with students, students with students, pair and group work?
3. Content: What is the focus of the activity: forms, functions, discourse, socio-linguistics or other?
4. Student modality: Are students involved in separate skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, or combination of these?
5. Materials: What are the types of material used?

PART B. CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

1. Use of English: To what extent is English used?
2. Information gap: To what extent is the information predictable?
3. Sustained speech: Is discourse extended or restricted to a single word/clause/sentence?
4. Reaction to message: Does the interlocutor react to messages?
5. Discourse: Do learners have opportunities to initiate discourse?
6. Restriction of language form: Does the teacher expect a specific form, or there is no expectation of a particular form?

APPENDIX 11. PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW TOPICS

Topics/questions for discussion:

1. What is CLT (and communicative competence)?
2. How should teaching following CLT be?
3. Are you teaching in accordance with CLT? How are you doing it? Why are you doing it that way?
4. What are your problems in teaching following CLT?
5. What help do you expect to improve your practices if any?

APPENDIX 12. POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW TOPICS

Topics to elicit the interview

1. Did you feel satisfied with your teaching practice that day?
2. Is there anything you want to change regarding teaching that lesson?
3. (Play the video) + Why did you decide to teach this way?
4. Is there anything else you want to talk about your teaching following a CLT curriculum?