Reframing English language pedagogy:
A practitioner inquiry in a Vietnamese university

Nha Tran Nguyen

(Nguyễn Nhã Trân)

Bachelor of Arts (English Linguistics and Literature)
University of Social Sciences and Humanities – HCMC, Vietnam

Master of Arts (TESOL)
University of Social Sciences and Humanities – HCMC, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study is a qualitative practitioner inquiry in which I reframe my understandings and practices as a Vietnamese teacher of English at a university in Vietnam. The study is situated in a globalising world with the global spread of English and resultant pedagogical concerns (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 2006; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). More specifically, it is located amid deliberations regarding pedagogical issues in teaching and learning English in Vietnam (see, e.g., H. H. Pham, 2001, 2006; L. H. Phan et al., 2014; Truong, 2004) and within the context of various educational reforms introduced by the Vietnamese government. The project is in many ways a response to the call for teachers to construct appropriate pedagogies for their teaching contexts (e.g., H. T. M. Nguyen & Bui, 2016; H. H. Pham, 2000; Truong, 2004).

The PhD study commenced as a follow-up to my Master's thesis in which I had recorded my efforts to develop a negotiation-based pedagogy. However, in the course of the PhD project, through my extensive reading of the literature and constant reflection on my earlier teaching and learning experience, the research focus was broadened so that the PhD became a critical and reflexive inquiry in which I sought a deeper understanding of what it means to teach English in my particular cultural and institutional context and to develop my pedagogical practices accordingly.

In the early stages of my PhD candidature, I explored a wide range of literature relating to the knowledge base for teaching English; I was fascinated by the diverse conceptualisations of language, the English language and pedagogy that seemed to be shaping studies in this area. I found the English as an International Language (EIL) paradigm (see, e.g., McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009b; Smith, 1983) with a growing body of associated literature on teaching curriculum (e.g., Alsagoff et al., 2012; Matsuda, 2012b) useful for my development of a pedagogical framework for teaching English in this context. Also, I engaged closely with Gore's (1993) conception of pedagogy, which consists of two components – that is, a social vision for teaching and the instruction to realise this social vision. Following this, I drew on Cummins's (2001, 2009b) notion of transformative pedagogy which builds on a combination of transmission-oriented and social constructivist approaches but expands them by incorporating broader social issues into the mix. With these 'new' understandings, I developed a pedagogical framework for my teaching context, strongly influenced by Cummins's (2001)

framework for developing academic expertise and two approaches listed in Hino's (2010) review for incorporating the EIL paradigm into teaching (i.e., teaching 'about' EIL and exposing students to varieties of English).

For my research design, I drew on two methodological traditions: self-study action research (see Whitehead, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) and autoethnography (see Ellingson & Ellis, 2008; C. Ellis et al., 2011; C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Regarding self-study action research, I implemented the above emerging pedagogical framework into my two classes at my institution in Vietnam from March to July 2014 and reflected on what transpired throughout the process of teaching and learning. The data generated during the fieldwork include: resources and documents that my students and I created and gathered in the process of teaching and learning; audio-recordings of the class sessions I taught; observation notes composed by the two colleagues who observed my classes and audio-recordings of my discussions with them; my students' spoken and written feedback throughout the course; and my own research journal. As regards autoethnography, I reflected on my previous teaching and learning experience, teased out moments of particular significance in relation to the focus of the study, and weaved them into the narrative-based ethnographic accounts of my own and my participants' experiences during the fieldwork. Also, in drawing on autoethnography, I tried to make connections between personal stories and the socio-historical contexts in which my practice was situated.

By critically reflecting on my previous teaching and learning experience and what transpired throughout the teaching course during the five months of fieldwork, and by further engagement with the literature, I was able to reframe the pedagogical framework for teaching in my context. Two important understandings emerged from the data analysis: (i) the need to enhance my earlier framework by incorporating translanguaging as a pedagogical lens (see García & Wei, 2014); and (ii) the value of adopting a dialogic approach to teaching and learning (see, e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; Doecke & Kostogriz, 2008).

Overall, the study shows how valuable knowledge can be generated through dialogic processes of teaching, learning and inquiry (Parr et al., 2013). In telling my PhD story, I wish to highlight the importance of practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) for teachers/practitioners, and to open up further conversations with other teachers and researchers about teaching and learning English in a globalising world.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.
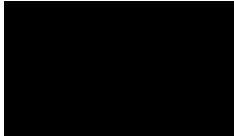
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APEC	:	The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN:		The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUN-QA:		ASEAN University Network for Quality Assurance
BA	:	Bachelor of Arts
CEFR	:	The Common European Framework of Reference
CFG	:	Critical friends group
CLT	:	Communicative Language Teaching
EAL	:	English as an Additional Language
EF	:	The English Faculty
EFL	:	English as a Foreign Language
EIAL	:	English as an International Auxiliary Language
EIL	:	English as an International Language
ELF	:	English as a Lingua Franca
ELT	:	English language teaching
EMI	:	English medium instruction
EMT	:	English as a Mother Tongue
ENL	:	English as a Native Language
ESL	:	English as a Second Language
ESOL	:	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETCF	:	The English Teacher Competency Framework (in Vietnam)
GA	:	General American
GTM	:	Grammar-Translation Method
HCMU:		Ho Chi Minh University
HEI	:	Higher education institution
HERA	:	The Higher Education Reform Agenda (in Vietnam)
IAP	:	Introductory Academic Program
ICT	:	Information and communication technologies
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing System
L1	:	First language
L2	:	Second language
LCA	:	Linguistics of communicative activity
LFE	:	Lingua franca English
PCK	:	Pedagogical content knowledge
RP	:	Received Pronunciation

SLTE   :   Second language teacher education
S-STEP: Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices
S-STTEP: Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices
TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication
VMU   :   Vietnam Metropolitan University (in Ho Chi Minh City)
WE   :   World Englishes
WTO   :   The World Trade Organisation

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1. How the journey started

It was January 2005, before the beginning of the second semester at Ho Chi Minh University[1] (i.e., from mid-February to late April). I was in the very first year of my career as a teacher-academic, teaching English language skills courses at the English Faculty. I remember that a colleague of mine contacted me, asking whether I would like to join her and two other colleagues in participating in a study by a senior colleague in the faculty. That senior colleague/researcher was working on a Master's thesis on the critical friends group (CFG) technique[2] as a model of teacher professional development. The CFG process as planned by the researcher involved the participating teachers observing each other's classes, followed up by a feedback meeting facilitated by the researcher. Although the idea of being observed sounded scary, as a novice teacher who was struggling to learn how to teach I agreed to participate.

During that ten-week semester, I and those three colleagues, who graduated and started teaching the same year as me, took part in three three-week cycles of teaching, observation and reflection. In each cycle, we paired up to observe each other's teaching once. We then all met with the researcher to discuss our comments on each other and share suggestions for improvement. Altogether, each of us was observed three times throughout the semester, with the observational focus, as we agreed, being techniques to motivate our students to learn. It was a short project, and as young inexperienced teachers, we tended to concentrate more on practical teaching skills and strategies. Nevertheless, the experience was a valuable one which gave me an opportunity to work with my colleagues instead of starting the teaching journey in a solitary manner. I was able to receive support and also constructive feedback on the way I taught. As I observed my colleagues, I could also learn from their strengths and weaknesses. What's more, all participating teachers could bring any issues arising from our teaching to the feedback meetings and discuss with one another.

Sadly, after the completion of the project, our CFG disbanded. We were all busy with different tasks and responsibilities including teaching, undertaking postgraduate studies

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[1] All the names of the institutions in this thesis are pseudonyms, in order to protect the identities of the institutions.

[2] See, e.g., Andreu et al. (2003), Bambino (2002), and Franzak (2002).

and attending to administrative duties. After the project had ended, people came to my classes from time to time to observe in various rather informal arrangements. For example, senior colleagues occasionally visited my classroom with the intention of auditing the quality of the young teaching staff; they usually just remained in the room long enough to make responses to the criteria on a set of standardised observation sheets. Some student teachers came during their internship to see what teaching in a classroom was like and to prepare for their own microteaching sessions, where they would be required to 'perform' in front of their supervising teacher educators. Also, some researchers (either my colleagues or someone from outside of the university) came to collect data for their various research projects. It is fair to say that these observations helped a little in my ongoing efforts to improve my teaching.

To develop my teaching practice, I gathered and tried out teaching tips, methods and trends as advocated in teaching materials, scholarly publications, workshops, seminars and conferences, and on the Internet. I learnt from some colleagues' experiences through quick exchanges with them on the shuttle bus between the campuses or during break time between classes. I sometimes asked colleagues to let me observe their teaching. I also asked my students to give me some feedback occasionally throughout and at the end of the courses. As time went by, my confidence grew and my teaching practices developed. However, at times I still thought of the observations and meetings of the type in the CFG process in my first year of teaching, where my colleagues and I observed and discussed the challenges of our everyday practice in a methodical manner and where we all provided support to one another.

Over time I developed my own teaching approaches, drawing on my experiential knowledge, intuitive judgments and a combination of different popular trends introduced into Vietnam at the time including learner-centredness, Communicative Language Teaching, and learner autonomy. However, after the completion of my Master's thesis in 2010, somehow I found myself in a kind of 'crisis'. I felt I knew, for example, how to manage a class. I was able to design communicative tasks/activities to get my students to practise using English. I felt I knew how to adjust my teaching to meet my students' needs. But I still felt there was something missing. I wondered what principles or theories underpinned the eclectic teaching approaches that I developed from an amalgam of methods and techniques. I started to feel less motivated to attend workshops and seminars. I remember asking myself before one particular session, "What else is the speaker going to give me? Another tip? Or another trend?" As a

teacher, I was well aware that rich processes of teaching and learning amounted to more than a 'neat and tidy' ready-made technique or method as introduced by a speaker. I also started to feel uncomfortable with the technicist discourses in many studies that I read at the time, which seemed to view improvement in teaching and learning as reflected in students' test scores. During the time that I was conducting research for my Master's thesis, I was also under pressure to show that kind of evidence to prove the effectiveness of my teaching. And yet as a reflective teacher, I knew very well that rich learning meant more than just improvement in scores. These reflections and feelings seem 'straightforward' now as I am narrating them, with hindsight. The truth is that, actually, I felt confused and lost most of that time.

Also, in the year 2010, my faculty in Ho Chi Minh University started to assign me to teach third-year and fourth-year students who chose English Linguistics - English Language Teaching as their specialist stream in order to become an English teacher after graduation[3]. The courses assigned to me were 'Approaches to Language Teaching' (which aimed to provide students with fundamental understandings of mainstream approaches and methods in language teaching such as the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, and Communicative Language Teaching), and 'Language Testing' (which aimed to familiarise students with some approaches and techniques for language testing and have them practise designing test items for their classes in the future). While teaching, I tried hard to raise my students' awareness that teaching and learning involved more than simply adopting or adapting one or more method/approach. I also tried to help my students see that testing was not sufficient to show the educational influence in learning. Hard as I tried, I felt that I was not able to prepare them to deal with the complexities of teaching English. This added to the 'crisis' that I was experiencing.

In early 2012, I started my PhD in Australia, hoping to find answers to some of my wonderings about teaching.

1.2. Why practitioner inquiry

In the narrative above, I recount a period in my earliest years as a teacher in Ho Chi Minh University. I have begun in this way both in order to show what motivated me to undertake this PhD study on how to develop my practices as an English teacher in a

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[3] More details about the curriculum at my faculty are provided in Section 2.3.2 of Chapter 2.

Vietnamese university and also to model some of the ways in which I will be using reflexive narrative writing as a mode and medium of inquiry for this PhD study. The study is a reflexive narrative-based account of my journey in which I drew on practitioner inquiry practices to reframe my understandings and conceptualise (and reconceptualise) a pedagogical framework for teaching in my particular context. Before looking further into the above narrative, I provide a brief review of practitioner inquiry – the overarching methodology of my study and also an important dimension in knowledge for teaching, particularly teaching English in today's globalising world. I then revisit the above narrative and tease out the personal principles and theoretical underpinning for this research. Finally, I provide a glimpse into the historical context of the study, which gave me another strong incentive to carry out this project.

1.2.1. Practitioner inquiry

Practitioner inquiry is proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) as an umbrella term to encompass multiple traditions of research which challenge the dualisms of knowing/acting, research/practice and researcher/practitioner. In educational settings, the term 'practitioners' usually includes (first and foremost) teachers, teacher educators, and school or university administrators. Although practitioner inquiry is enacted in many different ways across the world, one constant throughout all of this diversity is a focus on inquiring into and questioning the relevance of the traditional knowledge of teaching, often propounded by researchers locating outside of the sites where teachers are practising. Practitioner inquiry studies view knowledge as grounded in practice – that means knowledge is socially constructed and put into use by the practitioners in the local contexts. This conceptualisation highlights the role of practitioners as researchers and generators of knowledge, not just implementers of others' knowledge. Practitioner inquiry is, therefore, a framework for transforming teaching, learning and schooling, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) argue. Practitioners, particularly teachers, are encouraged to construct and shape their own theories of practice by inquiring into their own work and situating it in the discussions of larger social, cultural, and political issues (G. L. Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

In the field of English language teaching (ELT) in the past two or three decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the value of teacher-generated knowledge and the need for teachers to undertake different forms of practitioner inquiry to contribute to the knowledge base for teaching (see, e.g., Burns, 2010; D. Freeman, 1998; Johnson, 2006,

2009; Lockhart & Richards, 1994). In part, the deliberations of teacher knowledge in the field are connected with concerns over the concept of 'methods' of teaching (see, e.g., Allwright, 1991; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2006b, 2006c; Pennycook, 1989; Stern, 1985). One common critique of this concept has been that a focus on teaching methods has resulted in a narrow search for best practice or a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching (see, e.g., Stern, 1985). According to critics, this has led to a tendency to ignore other factors which exert significant impact on the process and outcome of teaching and learning such as learner perceptions, teacher beliefs, and the complex mix of social, cultural, political and economic contexts in which the teaching is located (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006c).

Another important reason for the discontent about the concept is the concern over the potential ideological bias embedded in each 'method'. According to Pennycook (1989), as knowledge is socially constructed, so-called methods carry with them the interests of particular (privileged) individuals and groups or, in other words, their particular ways of viewing the world. This results in unequal power relationships between those who *conceptualise* methods and practitioners as *users* of methods. Pennycook is particularly concerned about the hierarchical divisions between male academics and female teachers and between the West and other parts of the world where a number of 'methods' have been imported from the West. Speaking of the theorist/practitioner dichotomy, Kumaravadivelu (2006c) comments that while it results in a marginalising view of teachers as consumers of the methods constructed by theorists, in reality no single method can ensure the success of any language teaching enterprise and thus teachers invariably combine knowledge of various methods with their experience and intuition in their day-to-day teaching.

In fact, over these past decades, there has been a growing dissatisfaction over the concept of 'method'. In 1994, Kumaravadivelu argued that we had entered what he called a *postmethod condition*. In this postmethod era, he suggested that scholars were attempting to develop alternatives to methods, rather than alternative methods. What is prominent from some more recent 'postmethod' research is the acknowledgement and encouragement of teacher knowledge and teacher research (see, e.g., Allwright, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2006c). As Kumaravadivelu (2006c) stresses, "[a]ny actual postmethod pedagogy has to be constructed by the classroom teacher" (p. 213). Given debates about the 'native'/'non-native' teachers of language and the influx of Western knowledge-based methods into countries such as in South Asia, Southeast Asia, South

America and elsewhere, Canagarajah (1999) highlights the need for a pedagogy that encourages agency on the part of 'non-native' teachers to think critically and construct their own context-sensitive pedagogic alternatives.

1.2.2. Personal motivation for the study

When reflecting on my initial motivations for conducting this PhD project, I came to realise that part of my previous teaching experience (presented at the opening of this chapter) related to some key issues discussed in the literature on teacher knowledge, and this contributed to my appreciation of the importance of practitioner inquiry. My previous experience had shown clearly that there was no one 'best method' for all teaching contexts. As a teacher, I drew on multiple methods and techniques and my pedagogic intuition in order to handle the challenges of everyday teaching. However, as can be seen in my narrative above, this eclectic method had its own shortcomings. I found the reason for my confusion at the time well expressed by Stern (1992) when he said "the eclectic position […] offers no criteria according to which we can determine which is the best theory, nor does it provide any principles by which to include or exclude features which form part of existing theories or practices" (p. 11). My experience prior to my PhD study showed that "the choice is left to the individual's intuitive judgment and is, therefore, too broad and too vague to be satisfactory as a theory in its own right" (p. 11).

This PhD study started as a continuation of my attempt to explore a negotiation-based approach[4] in my Master's thesis. My initial plan had been to investigate what transpired when I negotiated with my students about what to teach and how they would like to learn. I wanted to look into the rich learning and teaching processes rather than merely paying attention to the students' 'performance' in the target language, as it was supposedly captured in their test scores. With hindsight, however, I realised that deep inside I wanted to explore the principles underpinning my eclectic teaching method. It was this deep concern regarding my pedagogical practices that, together with my engagement with a wide range of literature and my ongoing reflection on my earlier teaching experiences, led to the broadening of the research focus in my PhD study from a narrow interest in a set of pedagogical practices (i.e., negotiation-based practices) to the concern over what it means to teach English in my context. This helped shape what became a thorough investigation into the knowledge base for teaching English and my

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[4] See, e.g., Breen & Littlejohn (2000), Nunan (1999), and Tudor (1996).

development of a pedagogical framework for teaching in my particular university context. (I present and discuss these issues in Chapter 3.)

The above narrative account of my earlier experience as a teacher educator also shows my frustration over the failure of a methods-based teacher education programme to raise students' awareness of the wide gap between the so-called 'methods' as advocated by some pedagogical theorists and teachers' complex work in the classroom (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006c). It failed to develop in prospective teachers, as I now understand (i.e., as a result of my work in this PhD project), the ability to develop "a principled eclectic method", or their own theories of practice, for their particular teaching contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c, p. 169).

Despite the shortcomings of my eclectic approach to teaching in my earliest years as a teacher, the process of developing the approach prompted me to appreciate the value of practitioner inquiry for teachers who seriously seek to improve their practice. I have shown in the narrative how I had generated knowledge (though limited at that time) from interactions (in the broadest sense of the word) with my colleagues, my students, and texts of different types (including teaching materials, published scholarly work and ideas from conferences and workshops). Particularly, the experience with the CFG group in the very first year of my teaching career demonstrates how knowledge was dialogically generated through conversations with my colleagues (see, e.g., Parr, Bellis, & Bulfin, 2013). It was these personal/professional experiences that urged me to draw on practitioner inquiry in this PhD research and focus on how to develop my understandings and practices as an English teacher.

Although the initial motivation for my study was in a way self-focused, I have indicated so far its implications for teachers of English in other similar settings. This became more apparent as I engaged with the literature on the contexts in which my study is situated. The brief review of literature that I present below helps to explain why.

1.2.3. Brief historical context for the research

As a result of British and American colonisation, increased global flows of cultures, people and practices, and the development of information and communication technologies in this globalisation era, English has become the dominant language used in political, economic, academic and social transactions all over the world (Crystal, 1997, 2003). This global spread has significantly changed the sociolinguistic landscape

of English, making it a heterogeneous language with diverse forms, uses and users (Canaragarajah, 2006a; Jenkins, 2014). Accordingly, scholars have called for new perspectives on researching, teaching and learning English that challenge the traditional view which focuses on the so-called 'native' speaker as the standard (see, e.g., McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009b; Smith, 1983). In this context, many have highlighted the role of teachers, particularly 'non-native' English speaking teachers, in constructing contextually appropriate pedagogies for their own practice settings (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Llurda, 2005; McKay, 2002).

In Vietnam, since the implementation of the *Đổi Mới* (Economic Renovation) policy in 1986, English has become the dominant foreign language taught inside and outside of the national education system (Do, 2006; V. V. Hoang, 2010; T. T. H. Phan, 2009). As a language widely used for international communications, English is now considered essential for Vietnamese people's employment and studies, and for the economic development and global integration of the country. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Vietnamese government has invested heavily in English language education to improve the Vietnamese people's English capacity. The most recent and ambitious attempt is the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* (also known as *Project 2020*), in which English is highlighted as the principal language (see Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a, 2008b). One central focus in the project is the enhancement of the quality of primary and secondary in-service English teachers and pre-service English teachers in terms of English proficiency as well as pedagogical understandings and practices. One noteworthy point in *Project 2020* is the emphasis on teachers' professional development and lifelong learning. Teachers are encouraged to constantly develop their practices and contribute to the exchange of ideas within and across teaching communities through collaboration, teamwork, researching and publishing (see Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, 2012b).

Scholars researching into English teaching and learning in Vietnam have also underlined the important role of teachers in developing pedagogical practices appropriate for the Vietnamese contexts (see, e.g., G. Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; V. C. Le, 2000, 2004; Truong, 2004). There have been studies that point to teachers' roles as change agents in educational reforms (e.g., H. T. M. Nguyen & Bui, 2016), and other studies that suggest different professional development activities, which help them realise their potential as change agents (e.g., H. T. M. Nguyen, 2017; Vo & Nguyen, 2010).

Situated in these international and national contexts, this PhD project hopes to contribute, through my own reflexive story, to the discussions on practitioner inquiry as a framework for teachers to transform their pedagogical practices and generate knowledge for their professional community and the literature in the field.

1.3. Research questions

I have noted earlier that my research focus shifted during the course of the project as my understanding grew. Initially, I planned in my PhD study to build upon my Master's thesis, where I had investigated how negotiation-based practices work in an English language teaching class in Vietnam. I was interested to explore, for example, how these practices might enrich classroom discourse, how they might help to enhance students' communicative competence and autonomy, and what difficulties I as teacher and my students may experience during the process of negotiating.

As the project proceeded, particularly into the second year of my PhD candidature, I became more critically engaged with specialists in my research community (through my personal communication with researchers in the field and my extended reading, and as I continued to reflect on my previous teaching and learning experiences in light of the issues discussed in the field). I developed a deeper understanding of the different conceptualisations of the English language as a result of its global spread. I became aware of the need, especially in Vietnam, to rethink pedagogical practices in order to teach in this English as an international language context. I also better understood the importance of self study (in particular) and practitioner inquiry (in general) for teachers, especially Vietnamese teachers of English, in this changing context.

All of these prompted a change in the direction and scope of my study. I started to broaden my focus by asking what pedagogies can engage learners and improve ELT. I began to consider how my research as a self study would contribute to knowledge of effective teaching and learning practices in ELT. Eventually, I began to 'wonder' (aware of the philosophical traditions implied by this term) what it means to teach English and how this kind of philosophical wondering could contribute to improving my practice.

Late in the second year of my PhD study I decided to change the initial research questions, which had been solely focused on negotiation-based practices. The following primary research question emerged and guided my study:

How can I develop my practices as an English language teacher in a Vietnamese university?

This broad question offered space for my understandings and practices to evolve as I worked to learn what it means to be an English teacher at my teaching site in Vietnam. To manage the scope of the question, I provisionally divided it into three sub-questions as follows:

1. What is the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam?

2. What is a potential pedagogical framework for teaching English in my own tertiary context and how has the development of this framework helped to shape my knowledge building as a practitioner?

3. How do the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and my own personal history mediate the development of my practices?

To answer these questions in this practitioner inquiry project, I drew on the following methodological concepts: self-study action research (see Whitehead, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) and autoethnography (see Ellingson & Ellis, 2008; C. Ellis, Adam, & Bochner, 2011; C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Given my positionality as teacher-researcher, I also drew on reflexivity as a dimension of methodology (see Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Luttrell 2010c) to help me navigate the complex interplay among the personal, methodological, theoretical, ethical, social and political elements during the process of knowledge generation, including the process of writing the thesis itself.

In the course of constructing a pedagogy for the action research, I engaged with different bodies of literature to understand the multifarious social, cultural and historical factors mediating my work and the knowledge base essential for teaching English in Vietnam. A pedagogical framework emerged with the new understandings and was implemented in my classes at my institution from March to July 2014. The data generated during this fieldwork included the texts and resources that my students and I created and gathered during the process of teaching and learning, the audio-recordings

of the class sessions, the observation notes composed by the two colleagues who observed my classes and the audio-recordings of the discussions with them, my students' spoken and written feedback throughout the course, and my own research journal. By constantly and critically reflecting on what transpired during the course, the comments, suggestions as well as questions from my colleagues and students, the contextual factors mediating the practice and my own personal history, I sought to gain further insights into the complexities of teaching in my context and was able to reframe my understandings and pedagogical practices.

1.4. Significance of the study

My explanation of why I drew on practitioner inquiry for this PhD project in Section 1.2 of this chapter has revealed the importance of studies of this type, in which teachers/practitioners can generate knowledge for their particular practice sites and at the same time contribute to the literature in the field. Associated with English becoming the primary foreign language in Vietnam, there has been an increasing number of studies into how to improve the teaching and learning of English. However, to my knowledge, most studies focus on only particular methods/approaches/strategies of teaching (e.g., Dang, 2012; Ngo, 2011; G. V. Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2011; Trinh, 2005). Many of these studies were conducted with teachers as the participants for the researchers to collect data from. There has been little research in which the teachers are also the researchers who reflexively look at their own understandings and practices and reframe their teaching in light of the social cultural political contexts in which they are operating. I hope my story in this PhD study will inspire other teachers, particularly Vietnamese teachers of English, to reflexively and critically inquire into their own practices and share their stories in order to open up and sustain dialogues about what it means to teach English in today's globalising world. I also hope the knowledge that I have generated in the course of this project can contribute to the literature in the field.

1.5. Organisation of the thesis

In this introductory chapter of the thesis, I have provided the rationale for undertaking this research and situating it in the tradition of practitioner inquiry. To do so, I have presented a brief autobiographical narrative, some key issues in the deliberations regarding teacher knowledge and teacher research, and a brief historical perspective on

the context in which my work is located. I have also laid out the research questions, the research methods that I drew on for my data generation, and the significance of the study.

Part Two of the thesis, the Literature Review, consists of two chapters. In Chapter 2, I examine in detail the contextual factors that mediate the development of my pedagogical understandings and practices. The first section in the chapter explores aspects of what is often called 'globalisation' and some impacts on the economy and education of countries around the world. It also looks at the global spread of English and some resultant key issues as discussed in the literature in the field. The second section describes the historical, cultural and policy contexts in Vietnam, focusing particularly on the period after 1986 with the emergence of English as the major foreign language in the country. In the last section, I set out the educational philosophy, vision and missions at the university where I teach, which is also the research site of this PhD project.

Chapter 3 looks at a range of debates that help frame my inquiry into the knowledge base for teaching English in my context and my development of a pedagogical framework for the self-study action research in the project. The first section explores different conceptualisations of teaching knowledge in the fields of general education and English language education and as conceptualised in *Project 2020* by the Vietnamese government. As a result of the discussions in the first section, I then review the relevant literature related to the conceptions of language, the English language and pedagogy. Critical deliberations about these key concepts provide a basis for me to develop an initial pedagogical framework, drawing on Cummins's framework for developing academic expertise and an English as an International Language paradigm.

There are also two chapters constituting Part Three of the thesis, which I have given the overall title 'Methodology'. Chapter 4 provides a closer look at my research design. I first explain the rationale for situating my project in the social constructionist paradigm and framing it as a qualitative study. I then elaborate on practitioner inquiry as the methodology, explaining how I draw on elements of self-study action research and autoethnography, and making a case for the importance of reflexivity in my research. In Chapter 5, I introduce my academic and student participants and detail (and provide a rationale for) how the data were generated in my project. Finally, I discuss the ethical

issues, and present how I analysed and interpreted the data in order to answer the research questions.

The discussions of the data are divided into three chapters (Part Four). Chapter 6 presents an account of how I came to better understand the role of the Vietnamese language in my English classroom as a result of adapting Cummins's framework, and to appreciate the importance of translanguaging as a pedagogical lens for teaching English in my context. Chapter 7 focuses on my journey to gain insights into the potential of the English as an International Language pedagogy that I draw on for my project. In Chapter 8, I reconceptualise my pedagogical framework and reflect back on my whole journey of reframing my pedagogical understandings and practices.

Chapter 9 (Part Five) concludes the thesis by summarising the whole project, acknowledging the limitations of the study and offering some recommendations. It closes with my thoughts about the road ahead for me as a practitioner inquirer.

PART TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2: Context of the Study

This chapter presents and discusses the historical, social and policy contexts of the study. First, it looks at the international setting with a focus on aspects of globalisation, the current status of the English language in international settings and a range of debates in the English language teaching profession around the world. It then explores the historical, cultural and policy contexts in Vietnam and their impacts on the country's English language education and tertiary education. Finally, the chapter looks at some features of the institutional context (i.e., Ho Chi Minh University and its English Faculty) including its vision, missions, educational philosophy, and the curricular programme within which the English language skills subject in my study is located. The historical, cultural and policy contexts presented and discussed in this chapter help explain my motivation for reframing my understandings and practices of teaching English through this study. They also contribute to explaining the selection of pedagogies that I used in the rethinking of my teaching practice (which I go on to discuss in Chapter 3).

2.1. International context

2.1.1. Globalisation

The concept of globalisation has become a buzzword in academic and non-academic communities alike over the past two decades. It has been used as a way to describe and understand the dramatic changes in many aspects of the contemporary world including technological, cultural, political and socio-economic dimensions. Despite (or because of) its popularity in common parlance, the notion 'globalisation' has become "a slippery term" which is interpreted differently by different people at different times (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 1). According to Dodds (2008), from his review of a representative sample of articles in higher education and education journals, there are mainly two groups of conceptualisations of globalisation: the first relates globalisation with "global flows" of people, capital, information and culture; and the second refers to globalisation as "particular policy trends", especially "market mechanisms" (p. 506). According to the first group, the increased cross-national *flows* or movements of people, goods and thoughts, and the developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) with new forms of interconnectivity and interdependence have led to

changes in social relations, economic activities and local cultures around the world (see also Rizvi, 2007). The second group (i.e., global '*trends*') often relate globalisation to "the extension of market-based principles to govern formerly public services" (Dodds, 2008, p. 508). In this respect, one frequently discussed issue in the field of education is the marketisation of higher education. While the 'global flows' conceptualisation is more relevant to my study, as will be seen in the discussion of the status of the English language and the debates in the English language teaching field (Section 2.1.2), the 'global trends' approach helps understand some economic and educational changes in the national context of my study (i.e., the Vietnamese context) after the implementation of the Open Door policy in 1986 (Section 2.2).

In his review, Dodds (2008) also identifies four main impacts of globalisation – that is, globalisation leading to: (1) a concentration of linguistic and economic power; (2) increased competition between higher education institutions (HEIs); (3) HEIs being involved in the maintenance and development of national competitive advantage; and (4) changes in the nature of information and access to it. The first impact relates to "the power imbalance between central and peripheral nations, institutions and languages" (Dodds, 2008, p. 510). In the discussion of this impact, one can see other concepts, which are often equated with globalisation, such as *universalisation* (i.e., "homogenization with worldwide cultural, economic, legal and political convergence"), *Westernisation* or even *Americanisation* (i.e., "a particular type of universalization", with the convergence towards a Western or even American model), and even *imperialism* (i.e., when Westernization involves "violent impositions") (Scholte, 2002, pp. 11-12). Imperialism has been much discussed in relation to the English language and its effects on indigenous languages, as can be seen in the next section, since it has become the dominant language of global communication (Crystal, 1997, 2003; Graddol, 1997).

The second and third impacts concern the conception of globalisation-as-marketisation. One often discussed dimension of globalisation is neoliberalism, which is characterised by easing of trade restrictions, deregulation, privatisation and competition (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Rizvi, 2007). In higher education, with this neoliberalism as a mode of regulation, competition is regarded as a way to push HEIs to increase the quality of the educational offerings. In addition, under pressure of neoliberal policies, knowledge becomes a new, and important, form of capital. Thus, the global economy has transitioned into what is called the "knowledge economy", with an emphasis on

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investment in human capital (Olssen & Peters, 2005). As a producer of knowledge and the workforce for the global economy, the university has become "a major player in the global market and in information-based capitalism" (Delanty, 2001, p. 150) (see also Dodds, 2008).

The last impact of globalisation involves the developments in the field and uses of ICT. In fact, advances in technology and science in general have been perceived as one of the key drivers of globalisation (Olssen & Peters, 2005). The advancement of different means of communication and travel has brought people from different parts of the world closer, creating (in optimal circumstances) enhanced interconnectivity in the world. Among the technological advances, the Internet is considered to be "the most distinctive feature" of globalisation (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 4). This global electronic communication has the potential to enable easy and quick contact among individuals, and private and public organisations, bringing about economic and cultural changes. Thus, it can enable 'information flows', with knowledge or information being "more readily turned into saleable commodities, and more widely and rapidly available, often at lower cost" (Marginson, 1999, pp. 21-2). However, it should be noted that the rapid development of ICT and ICT mediated practices has not guaranteed benefits for all. Kellner (2010), for example, points to the possible use of the Internet for enabling the easy dissemination of extremist political views and promoting particular political agendas.

In short, "globalisation" has been used as a term to capture multiple social, cultural, political, educational and communicational changes in the contemporary world. As can be seen in the brief review above, some changes could be considered as positive and some undesirable. Two aspects that have often been mentioned in the discussions of globalisation are the development of ICT and the increased cross-national mobility of people, ideas, and goods. Closely associated with these aspects is the global expansion of English as a language for international communication. Global flows (aided by ICT) have contributed to changes in the status and the sociolinguistic landscape of the English language, resulting in a reconsideration of perspectives, approaches and goals in teaching and learning English; and these issues are presented and discussed in the following section.

2.1.2. The global spread of the English language

The global spread of English has been enhanced by a number of geo-historical and socio-cultural factors (Crystal, 1997, 2003). One dimension of this is what some have called 'historical expansion', which started with European pioneers' travel to the Americas, Asia, and the Antipodes. This was then followed by British and American colonising of other areas including Africa and the South Pacific up to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the peak being the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Britain became the leading colonial nation. Accompanying this colonialist expansion was the spread of English, which in some colonised countries became an official language. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Britain was widely regarded as the leader of the Industrial Revolution; this prompted the learning of the English language in colonised countries in the hope that this would help individuals and organisations gain access to the knowledge of technological and scientific advance. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, with the emergence of the United States of America (the USA) as a leading economic power in the world, economic developments on a global scale, and the advancement of new technologies, English became increasingly prominent in numerous aspects of the society, including the media, transport and communications. As the globalisation era advances, with the increased global human mobility, the emergence of international organisations, and the development of the Internet, English has become the dominant medium of international communication in political, economic, academic and social transactions.

Indeed, English has been accorded some kind of special status in most countries across the world (Crystal, 2012). It is understood to be a first language by the majority of people in the USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and a few other territories, as an administrative language in over seventy countries such as Nigeria, India and Singapore, and as a foreign language (and in most of the cases as the dominant foreign language) in over one hundred countries (mainly in Europe, Asia, North Africa and Latin America). In 2002, McKay was already stating that the total number of users of English in the world, including those with some familiarity with the language, was inestimable. According to Crystal's (2012) recent estimation, approximately one third of the world's population can interact "to a useful level in English" (p. 155).

Some authors have attempted to capture the spread of English diagrammatically. Kachru's (1985, 1989, 1990) proposal of the three concentric circles and Crystal's (1997, 2003) adapted model based on Kachru's depictions seem to have been the most influential so far (see Figure 2.1):
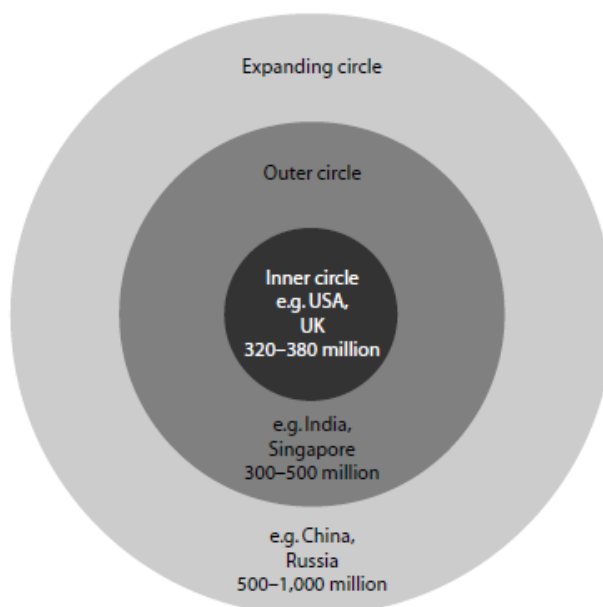
Figure 2.1 – Crystal's (2003) adaptation of Kachru's categorisation of countries in which English is used

Thirty years ago, Kachru's (1985) classification attempted to explain the way English had spread and been acquired, and the roles that he saw English playing in these countries at that time. The inner circle included Britain and countries to which, Kachru argued, English speakers migrated and in which English was thus seen as the primary language. In the decades since Kachru's categories were first published, these have mostly been referred to as 'native' English-speaking countries. The outer circle was presented as consisting of multilingual countries where English had spread as a result of the colonisation by English-speaking countries and where it had since become (somewhat officially) a second language. The expanding circle of the model represented nations where English had been recognised as a language for international communication and thus widely taught as a foreign language. Kachru also referred to the inner, outer, and expanding circles as "norm-providing", "norm-developing", and "norm-dependent" respectively.

Although Kachru's representation provides a convenient framework for thinking about different kinds of English use, it fails to reflect the complex reality of the usage, users

and sociolinguistics of the language in today's globalising world. Even in the late 1990s, researchers were already appreciating that the number of people using English in the outer and expanding circles was tremendously increasing (see, e.g., Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997). Graddol (1997) observed with some prescience that people in the outer and expanding circles would eventually determine the global future of English. Ten years ago, Graddol noticed that nearly eighty per cent of communication in English took place between speakers from these two circles (see Graddol, 2006). More recently, Crystal (2012) confirmed "a major shift taking place in the centre of gravity of the language" (p. 155); he believed the number of the so-called native speakers was only around one quarter of that of the so-called non-native speakers compared with the 1960s when the former were believed to account for the majority of English speakers. Moreover, there has been a change in the status of English in some countries in these circles (Graddol, 1997; Jenkins, 2014). According to Jenkins (2014), in the outer circle, there are more and more bilinguals speaking English at home and not just for institutional purposes, and thus there are children acquiring English as their first language in those settings (e.g., Singapore and Nigeria). At the same time, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, approximately twenty countries in the so-called expanding circle are in the process of shifting to the outer circle, as English is increasingly used for intranational communication (e.g., the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries). In addition, today there are many speakers of English who grow up bilingual or multilingual and it is hard to distinguish which language in their repertoire as their first, second or third language. A further complication to Kachru's model involves the notion of 'native' English speakers. There is often an assumption that so-called native English speakers are more competent than non-native English speakers, whereas studies have suggested that some of the former have more limited vocabulary and lower grammatical competence compared with some of the latter.

The sociolinguistic reality of the English language is getting increasingly complicated. More and more new 'Englishes' are emerging. Besides varieties in the outer circle countries, expanding circle nations are developing their own norms; thus Kachru's label of 'norm dependent' for these countries needs reconsideration (Canagarajah, 2006a). Moreover, while enabling transnational flows in the globalisation, English has also been shaped by these flows. As a medium of communication in transnational settings, English has come into close contact with other languages and this "fluid interaction" has resulted in a lot of "mixing and hybridity" in English (Canagarajah, 2006b, p. 17). To

highlight this new geopolitical relationship between languages, Canagarajah (2006b) has coined the term "glottoscapes" to add to Appadurai's (1990) five dimensions of global cultural flow (namely, ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscape, and ideoscapes). All in all, the global spread of the English language has resulted in increased diversity in its forms, uses, and users. It has become a heterogeneous language (Canagarajah, 2006a; Jenkins, 2014). The lines between the three circles in Kachru's representation have become blurred and so has the line between the so-called native speakers and non-native speakers. Thus, the central status traditionally given to the inner circle and the peripheral status of the other two circles have been seriously questioned by many authors (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006a; Graddol, 1997; Jenkins, 2014; McKay, 2002).

In light of this global spread of English, some scholars have concluded that English has become a global or international language. According to Crystal (1997), English has achieved a genuinely global status because it has developed "a special role that is recognized in every country" (p. 2). More importantly, as it is a global language, "no one can claim sole ownership" (p. 130). Long before Crystal, Smith (1976/1983) already expressed discontent over the terms frequently used in English language education, namely EFL (English as a Foreign Language), ESL (English as a Second Language), and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) as the cover term for EFL and ESL. For Smith, in 1976, these terms no longer reflected the patterns of usage of English around the world. He argued that, since English was frequently used as an international language for communication among people of different nations, and an auxiliary language, besides the first language, for internal communication among nationals of a country, it had become "a language of the world" (Smith, 1976/1983, p. 39). It belonged to any user of English. One did not need to become more "western" in order to use English well; nor did one become more "western" if they could use English effectively. Smith proposed the term, 'English as an International Auxiliary Language' (EIAL) instead of ESL or EFL. In two later articles (1978 and 1981), Smith places more emphasis on the role of English as an international language than English as an auxiliary, or intranational, language, and highlights the "shift from a native-speaker dominated to *any*-speaker oriented attitude toward English" (Smith, 1981/1983, p. 8, original emphasis).

The role of English as a vehicle for cross-national flows in globalisation is undeniable. However, some scholars have raised concerns about the global spread of English.

Among them, Phillipson (1992) has been one of the most vocal. A quarter of a century ago, he criticised the global dominance of English and referred to it as *English linguistic imperialism*, saying, "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (p. 47). He labelled English linguistic imperialism as a type of *linguicism*, which he explained referred to "ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (p. 47). From this he condemned the expansionist ideology underlying the English language teaching theory which advocated, and often still advocates, teaching English monolingually by 'native' speakers and teaching English as early as possible and as intensively as possible.

In line with Phillipson, Pennycook (1994) criticised the dominant discourse of English as an international language which viewed the spread of English as natural, neutral and beneficial. He cautioned against being caught up in a discussion between "a conservative view on standards" and "a more liberal pluralist concept of variety" (p. 11), and drew attention to the social, cultural and political implications of the global spread of English. He believed an understanding of these implications would prompt teachers of English to reconceptualise their role in this global context. Pennycook summarised a number of cultural and political impacts of the expansion of English which had been raised by concerned scholars at that time:

> [English's] widespread use threatens other languages; it has become the language of power and prestige in many countries, thus acting as a crucial gatekeeper to social and economic progress; its use in particular domains, especially professional, may exacerbate different power relationships and may render these domains more inaccessible to many people; its position in the world gives it a role also as an international gatekeeper, regulating the international flow of people; it is closely linked to national and increasingly non-national forms of culture and knowledge that are dominant in the world; and it is also bound up with aspects of global relations, such as the spread of capitalism, development aid and the dominance particularly of North American media. (p. 13)

To highlight the cultural politics of English as an international language, Pennycook proposed the concept of the worldliness of English, which referred to "the material existence of English in the world, its spread around the world, its worldly character as a result of being so widely used in the world, and its position not only as reflective but also as constitutive of worldly affairs" (p. 36). Just as the global spread of English implied social, cultural and ideological embeddedness, English language teaching practices should, as he argued, also be regarded as cultural practices, for they advocated certain forms of culture and knowledge. English language teaching practices, underpinned by Western ideologies, promoted the view of Western practices as "developed, modern, efficient or scientific" as opposed to local teaching practices as "backward, traditional, inefficient or unscientific" (p. 159). Thus, English and English language teaching were often associated with the ethnocentric notions of development, modernisation, capitalism, and democracy. With the view that language and language teaching practices were not culturally neutral, Pennycook criticised the normality of current beliefs in the English language teaching field including monolingualism, native-speakerism, communicative competence, trivialisation of content, humanistic language teaching, and student-centred education. Most importantly, while acknowledging the significance of Phillipson's work in exploring *English linguistic imperialism* and highlighting the cultural politics of English and English teaching himself, Pennycook did not adopt Phillipson's deterministic position. As can be seen in his definition of the worldliness of English, Pennycook described language as "as much constitutive as reflective of social reality"; in other words, it is "as much a *site* as it is a *means* for struggle" (p. 267, original emphasis). By exploring "writing back" (i.e., postcolonial writing in English), Pennycook pointed to the appropriation of English for divergent ends. From this observation, which reflected the agency of users of English, he proceeded to emphasise the agency of teachers of English by suggesting 'teaching back' – that is, teaching from a point of view of the worldliness of English. Teaching from a natural, neutral and beneficial view of English as an international language was "just teaching the language" – that is, teaching with a belief that there were "firmly established shared meanings" which students needed to learn to be able to communicate in international settings (p. 293). Teaching back, or teaching English critically, was "to understand that possible meanings occur within the cultural politics of the local context as well as within a more global context" (p. 293). As he put it, "in some senses, then, the English language classroom, along with other sites of cultural production and

political opposition, could become a key site for the renewal of both local and global forms of culture and knowledge" (p. 326).

This first section of the chapter has situated the study within a variety of international contexts and discourses, including aspects of globalisation, the current status of the English language and some issues regarding English language teaching. This is intended to help understand the standpoint of this study with respect to the emergence of English as the dominant foreign language in Vietnam, and ethical and pedagogical concerns raised in English language education in the country, which are presented and discussed in the next section. Furthermore, the discussion on globalisation is intended to help explain some educational reforms, particularly at the tertiary level, in Vietnam after the implementation of the Open Door policy in 1986.

2.2. National context

2.2.1. Overview of Vietnam's linguistic history

According to Denham (1992), "as with most countries, Vietnam's linguistic history reflects its political history" (p. 61). Over four thousand years, Vietnam has witnessed numerous foreign interventions and the consequent imposition of foreign languages as the national or official language for the country. This has profoundly impacted the Vietnamese people's language attitudes and the government's language education policy in contemporary Vietnam. This section presents an overview of Vietnam's linguistic history, with the year 1986 proposed as a critical point, marking a new period in the national development and the emergence of English as the dominant foreign language in the country.

Languages in Vietnam before 1986

The longest foreign intervention in Vietnam's history was the domination by China for one thousand years until the tenth century. During this time Chinese with its *Hán*[5] script was used as the official language (National Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2007), leaving an indelible linguistic and cultural imprint on the Vietnamese language (Denham, 1992). While the Vietnamese spoken language appeared long before the Chinese invasion, the first form of Vietnamese written language, called *Chữ Nôm*, was

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[5] In this thesis, the Vietnamese words are italicised. The English translation, if necessary, is put in brackets.

only created around the ninth century and widely used in Vietnamese literature from the thirteenth century (National Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2007). *Chữ Nôm* was an adaptation of the Chinese characters to represent the tones in the Vietnamese language (L. H. Phan, Vu, & Bao, 2014). Despite the creation of *Chữ Nôm*, Chinese continued to be used in the education system under most Vietnamese feudal dynasties (T. T. H. Phan, 2009; L. H. Phan et al., 2014). However, being created in such a way that it was unintelligible to the Chinese, *Chữ Nôm* was considered to be "a symbol of national identity" (Do, 2006, p. 2), showing the Vietnamese people's desire to break away from the cultural, linguistic and political domination of the Chinese invaders.

The second writing system of the Vietnamese language, and also the system used by the Vietnamese people today, called *Quốc Ngữ* (Vietnamese), was devised in the seventeenth century by European missionaries who came to Vietnam to spread Christianity (National Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2007). This is a coding system using Romanised alphabet to record the Vietnamese phonetic system. During the French colonisation from 1958 to 1945, French was the official language. Although Vietnamese and Chinese were also used in some schools and classes, French was required in official examinations in education and indispensable for social mobility (Do, 2006).

Quốc Ngữ (Vietnamese) became the national and official language in 1945, when the country gained independence from France (Do, 2006). However, during the return of the French and the Vietnamese people's resistance from 1945 to 1954, French was the official language in French-led areas and Vietnamese in Vietnam-controlled regions. In the latter, as Vietnam received military support from the People's Republic of China, Chinese became the principal foreign language taught alongside Vietnamese (Wright, 2002). With the defeat of the French and the Geneva Accord, Vietnam was divided into two regions, with the North administered by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the South by the Republic of Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, or American War, from 1955 to 1975, North Vietnam was supported by socialist countries, especially the former Soviet Union, and South Vietnam by capitalist countries, particularly the USA. As a result, Russian became the major foreign language in the North and English in the South (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; V. V. Hoang, 2010).

With the end of the Vietnam War, the two regions were reunified in 1975 and the country has since been known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Because of the aid

and trade embargoes enforced by the USA and as a consequence of Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia in 1978, the country became isolated from the capitalist West and the Southeast Asian neighbouring countries (Wright, 2002). Also, the relationship between Vietnam and China turned sour after a border war in 1979. Thus, from 1975 to 1985 Vietnam received support mainly from the communist bloc led by the former Soviet Union. Russian was, in this period, promoted as the major foreign language in the education system (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; V. V. Hoang, 2010; T. T. H. Phan, 2009). Although English and French were still taught, the targets set for them were much lower than that for Russian. According to V. V. Hoang (2010), the then government stated that "70% of the school pupils would study Russian; 20%, English and 10%, French" (p. 8). Despite the still high demands of families for and commercial interest in English among the populace in the south (Denham, 1992), there was discrimination against the language in the foreign language policy due to the then government's "anti-foreign, especially anti-American" attitudes (Do, 2006, p. 6). However, the situation became completely different when the country entered a period of substantial economic reform in 1986.

The re-emergence of the English language after 1986

The isolation from the capitalist West and the Southeast Asian neighbouring countries, and the Vietnamese government's limited diplomatic relations after 1975 as presented above led to economic stagnation and slow development in the country for a decade. In 1986, the Vietnamese Communist Party, the leading political party in Vietnam, decided to implement a new policy known as *Đổi Mới* (Economic Renovation), shifting from the Soviet-styled central planning economy to a socialist-oriented market mechanism (Do, 2006). With the Open Door policy, Vietnam aimed to develop political, economic and cultural relations with almost all countries and territories around the world. In addition, the economic sanctions imposed by the USA were lifted in 1994, and since then the relations between these two countries have been normalised. Foreign investment and aid started to flow into Vietnam, especially from the West. The number of English-speaking business people and visitors coming to Vietnam therefore increased (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006). In the meantime, with the collapse of the communist bloc in the late 1980s, the aid that Vietnam received from the bloc was discontinued and the number of experts and tourists from these countries also decreased (Denham, 1992). Moreover, Vietnam has joined some important organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1995, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in

November 1998, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2006; and English is the language for communication in these organisations. As a result of these political, social and economic changes, the position of English as a foreign language has changed; it has become the lingua franca for international communications in social and business activities as well as in political arenas. Back in 1992, Denham already observed that "in metropolitan Vietnam, English is now used between Vietnamese and Vietnamese; between Vietnamese and English-speaking foreigners and between foreigners and foreigners" (p. 62). "The last two categories include," he elaborated, "native speakers of English as well as those for whom it is an international language" (p. 62). For so many Vietnamese people, English has become "a passport to a better job" (V. V. Hoang, 2010, p. 9), just as it has become "the passport for Vietnam to join the world after many years of neglect" (T. T. H. Phan, 2009, p. 183).

Publicly and officially, English has recently taken over from Russian as the principal foreign language taught in Vietnam. It is now taught both inside and outside the formal education system (V. V. Hoang, 2010). The formal education system consists of general education level[6] and tertiary level. At the general education level, English is a required subject at both lower and upper secondary school levels and an elective subject at primary level (Grades 3-5). At the tertiary level, English is offered both as a discipline and a subject. As a discipline, English is the major in bachelor, master's and doctoral degree programmes, and students graduating from these programmes may work as, for instance, teachers of English, researchers in English linguistics, and translators and/or interpreters. The Bachelor programme offered to the English majors in my faculty as will be presented in Section 2.3.2 is an example of this. As a subject, English is one of the five foreign languages[7] that non-English majors can choose to study. Among the five foreign languages (i.e., English, Russian, Chinese, French and German), English is chosen by the majority of students. According to Hoang et al. (2008), "around 94% undergraduates and 92% graduates are studying English as a subject" (as in V. V. Hoang, 2010, p. 12).

Outside the formal education system, English language schools and centres of all kinds have mushroomed since 1986 to meet the needs of different types of learners. There are

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[6] Vietnamese general education consists of three levels with twelve grades: primary level (Grades 1-5 for children aged 6-11); lower secondary level (Grades 6-9 for children aged 11-15); and upper secondary level (Grades 10-12 for students aged 15-18).
[7] A certificate in a foreign language is one of the requirements for non-English major students to graduate from a bachelor degree programme, and to enrol in and graduate from a Vietnamese postgraduate programme.

private centres, foreign and joint venture language schools, language centres of universities, professional associations and government agencies, and private English-medium schools mainly for children from wealthy families, to name but a few (V. V. Hoang, 2010). There are also some teaching and testing syndicates which provide English courses and international English tests such as the British Council, the American Apollo, the Cambridge International Examinations, and IDP.

In short, since the implementation of the *Đổi Mới* policy in 1986, the country has witnessed the booming of English as the major foreign language and the rapid expansion of the business of English training. For the Vietnamese people, English is now essential for their employment and study in the country as well as overseas. For the nation, it is widely regarded as "a very important tool in national development, cooperation and globalisation" (Do, 2006, p. 9).

In the preceding paragraphs, I have presented a brief overview of Vietnam's linguistic history. The country has undergone different challenging stages, which have resulted in the rise and fall of different languages. Today, Vietnamese is the national language. It is the first language of the Kinh people, who make up eighty-seven per cent of the Vietnamese population, and the second language of fifty-four ethnic minority groups, who account for thirteen per cent of the population (L. H. Phan et al., 2014). Besides encouraging the maintenance of about one hundred minority languages (Dinh, 2010, as in L. H. Phan et al., 2014), the Vietnamese government intends the teaching and learning of the Vietnamese language as a way to enhance national harmony (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, as in L. H. Phan et al., 2014). In addition, because of the demands resulting from the process of integration and globalisation after the Open Door policy, there is a variety of foreign languages taught throughout the country, with English, French, Russian, German and Chinese being the most popular in the formal education system. Among them, English is "the number 1 foreign language" (V. V. Hoang, 2010, p. 17), which receives the most investment from the government and the society.

With its linguistic history as presented above, the Vietnamese government and people are now perceived by scholars to be fairly open to foreign languages but at the same time acutely aware of the importance of promoting the national language and preserving the cultural identity. Throughout Vietnam's history, most foreign languages have left a linguistic and cultural influence on the formation of the contemporary Vietnamese

language and culture (T. T. H. Phan, 2009). Thus, although most of them are the languages of colonists or invaders, most Vietnamese are now willing to learn them and use them to their own advantage (Do, 2006; T. T. H. Phan, 2009). This tolerance and appreciation have been much demonstrated in the case of the English language, especially in this context of globalisation. However, while embracing multiculturalism, the Vietnamese are also concerned about maintaining their national identity, particularly through strengthening the national language, as demonstrated partly in this section and can be seen in the next section which presents and discusses the English language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

2.2.2. English language education in Vietnam

As the pre-eminent foreign language in the country since 1986, the English language has received much attention from the Vietnamese government and different groups in the Vietnamese society, as has been demonstrated in the previous section. This section first looks at a range of pedagogical issues in the teaching and learning of English in the Vietnamese context that have been raised by concerned scholars. It then presents and discusses the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*, which is regarded as a determined attempt by the Vietnamese government to reform foreign language education, and which has provoked much discussion and debate in the society and in the academic community.

Pedagogical issues

As in English language education across the world, different Western-based methods and approaches have been adopted and adapted in Vietnam. However, despite the Vietnamese government's efforts to encourage the study of English and English teachers' attempts to apply various methods and approaches, Vietnamese learners' English proficiency is still far below the level desired by policy makers and educators. The growing concern over Vietnamese learners' ability to use English, particularly in oral communication, can be seen in many Vietnamese newspaper articles (see, e.g., H. Thanh, December 6, 2008; Dung & Phuong, October 20, 2011; Viet, March 27, 2013). Besides pedagogical issues related to the teaching methods per se (which will be discussed later in the section) and practical constraints such as large class sizes and the lack of necessary facilities and materials (Butler, 2011; V. C. Le, 2000; H. H. Pham,

2000; Truong, 2004), the ineffectiveness of the English language teaching in Vietnam is often attributed to the so-called 'traditional' teaching in the Vietnamese education.

'Traditional' pedagogical practices in Vietnam are often claimed to be influenced by Confucianism (see, e.g., V. C. Le, 2000, 2004, 2015; L. V. Nguyen, 2010; K. D. Nguyen & Mcinnis, 2002; H. H. Pham, 2000), which was incorporated into the Vietnamese culture under the Chinese domination. One of the distinguishing features of Confucian teaching is the respect for teachers in the society, as evidenced in the hierarchy of *Vua-Sư-Phụ* (King-Teacher-Father). A teacher is expected to be not only "an expert scholar" but also "the moral [model]" for students to learn from (K. D. Nguyen & Mcinnis, 2002, p. 152). On the one hand, this can have a positive impact on the education of morals, teachers' motivation to improve themselves, and students' motivation to learn from the models; on the other hand, this vertical relationship is said to promote a passive learning style in which knowledge is *transferred* from the teacher to the students (see K. D. Nguyen & Mcinnis, 2002). Another feature of Confucianism is the emphasis on the mastery of knowledge of the classics and thus the foundation of examinations on these classics (Crites, 2005). It is this book-focused and exam-oriented learning that is claimed to lead to the tendency for rote learning and repetition and thus the neglect of more sophisticated skills in teaching (see L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004)[8].

This traditional teacher-centred, textbook-focused and exam-oriented way of teaching appears to be compatible with Grammar-Translation Method (GTM); it is often attributed to the prevalence of GTM in English classes in Vietnam (e.g., V. C. Le, 2000, 2004; H. H. Pham, 2000). GTM is viewed as a "synthetic approach" in which different elements of the target language are presented to learners in a linear manner (Butler, 2011, p. 37). A typical GTM approach involves students learning grammar rules and then practising them by writing and translating sentences between the target language and the students' first language. With the primary focus on form, GTM is often critiqued as resulting in passive learning and failing to equip students with oral skills necessary for real-life communication (Butler, 2011; V. C. Le, 2004; H. H. Pham, 2000). As globalisation advances, there is a pressing need to develop Vietnamese learners' ability to use English for international communication in academic, social and

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[8] It should be noted that this passive learning style was certainly not what was originally envisaged by Confucius in his teachings. Authors have pointed to the emphasis on deep learning, reflective thinking, and experience and enquiry in Confucius's educational perspective (see, e.g., Lee, 1996; Zhao & Biesta, 2011). However, the use of Confucius's teachings by feudal rulers for their political purposes had led to misinterpretations of his core philosophy (see Lee, 1996; J. Wang, 2013; V. C. X. Wang & King, 2008).

work activities. This has added to the dissatisfaction over GTM and resulted in a widespread focus on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (and its outgrowth – that is, Task-Based Language Teaching[9]) in Vietnam since the 1990s (Butler, 2011).

CLT places emphasis on meaningful communication as "the means as well as the goal" in teaching (Butler, 2011, p. 37). As such, it fits the Vietnamese people's need to improve communicative competence in this context of rapid expansion of international exchanges. In addition, the introduction of CLT into the English language education in Vietnam coincides with the call for renovation in teaching and learning practices in the formal education system, particularly at the tertiary level. As will be seen in Section 2.2.3 below, a number of policies regarding tertiary education have been introduced by the Vietnamese government in an attempt to modernise the teaching methodologies with an emphasis on active and independent learning and critical thinking. With a focus on language use through communicative activities, CLT is believed to be emphasising the process of learning and the active role of learners in learning; hence, the current popularity of CLT in English language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

The introduction of CLT has, however, not brought about the radical and universally consistent improvement as expected by the government and some stakeholders. In addition to common practical constraints as mentioned above, the implementation of CLT has encountered various challenges such as inadequate training of teachers for using CLT (Butler, 2011), the continued existence of grammar-translation-oriented exams (Butler, 2011), and the prevalence of the 'traditional' ways of teaching and learning (V. C. Le, 2000; L. V. Nguyen, 2010; H. H. Pham, 2000). More importantly, with the fast process of integration and globalisation occurring in the country, the global characteristics of English are increasingly evident in Vietnam (for details, see Truong, 2004). The shift to an English-as-an-international-language setting across the world in general and in Vietnam in particular has led to many ethical and pedagogic concerns for the implementation of CLT in particular and for English language education in Vietnam in general.

One concern relates to the cultural inappropriateness of Western teaching methods, particularly CLT, and the need to develop culturally appropriate pedagogies for English classes in Vietnam. CLT has long been criticised for its imposition of Anglocentric

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[9] Task-Based Language Teaching is often regarded as a derivative of CLT (Nunan, 2004; Savignon, 1991).

culture and Anglocentric goals of communication, which may not be compatible with the local cultures. As Sullivan (2000) analysed, with the emphasis on pair work and particularly group work, CLT implies that the best way to teach and learn a language is to develop a student-centred, interactive class which entails values such as choice, privacy, and equality. These values conflict with the Confucian values of nurture, hierarchy, and mutual obligation of members of a group in a Vietnamese classroom. Therefore, there has been a call for the role of Vietnamese teachers to negotiate a balance between Western and Asian values when adapting methodologies like CLT in their classrooms (e.g., G. Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; V. C. Le, 2000, 2004; Truong, 2004).

In addition to the criticism of Anglo-Saxon based methods and the call for context-sensitive methodologies, there is discussion regarding the cultural appropriateness in ELT materials and the norms for teaching and learning English. According to Truong (2004), most ELT materials currently used in Vietnam are imported from 'native'[10] English-speaking countries. Moreover, most characters in textbooks and resource materials are 'native' English speakers. There may be one or two European 'non-native' English speakers; Asian speakers of English are rare, and where they do exist, they tend to be Japanese, Taiwanese, or Koreans studying or doing business in 'native' English-speaking countries. Thus, the interactions presented in the resource materials do not reflect the reality of the international communication today where most of the participants are 'non-native' English speakers from all over the world. The cultural content in the materials is thus limited to Anglo-Saxon cultures. There have been suggestions regarding teachers' adapting and creating materials to help students know how English is used in Vietnam, making use of resources at hand such as students' life stories, local issues in the local contexts, and local English publications (see, e.g., H. H. Pham, 2001; Truong, 2004). As regards the norms for teaching and learning English, there has been a call to shift from the 'native' speaker-based model of communicative competence suggested by Canale and Swain to successful bilinguals as pedagogic models (see Truong, 2004).

Despite the benefits that the global spread of English brings to individuals and nations, there have been rigorous critiques of its negative impacts on other languages and

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[10] As can be seen in Section 2.1.2, there has been debate around the notions of 'native' and 'non-native' and the dichotomy resulting from the use of these terms. However, since these labels are, for various reasons, still used in the literature and by my research participants, I use them in my thesis but indicate my awareness of the problematic aspects of these terms by putting them in inverted commas.

cultures. Phillipson's (1992) concept of *English linguistic imperialism* as presented in Section 2.1.2 is one example. In Vietnam, this phenomenon can be seen in the spread of the Anglocentric goals, values and worldviews in the case of CLT as presented above. Therefore, there has been a growing trend in non-Western countries to revive and/or maintain ethnic and regional cultures in the face of the spread of English. In Vietnam, the related issues of internationalism and identity have emerged (see, e.g., Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; V. C. Le, 2000, 2004; H. H. Pham, 2001, 2006; L. H. Phan et al., 2014; Truong, 2004). Concerns have been raised regarding the exclusive favour for the English language in the Vietnamese government's foreign language policy (e.g., L. H. Phan et al., 2014). There have also been calls for preserving and enriching Vietnamese learners' national/cultural identity while helping them to achieve the necessary English proficiency for effective international communication (e.g., H. H. Pham, 2001, 2006; Truong, 2004). To do so, it is crucial to capitalise on Vietnamese cultural values in teaching and learning English (Truong, 2004). As V. C. Le keeps emphasising, pedagogic reform does not have to mean "westernisation" (2000, p. 78) or "throwing away all traditional values and practices" (2004, p. 79). Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) refer to this tendency in language pedagogy as 'global thinking, local teaching', which is one translation of the political motto 'think globally, act locally' (see also Berman, 1994). This has presented those involved in English language education in Vietnam, particularly Vietnamese teachers of English, with a complicated challenge.

The National Foreign Languages 2020 Project

Aware of the importance of English to the social economic development in this era of globalisation and integration, the Vietnamese government has made several attempts to improve the quality of English language education in the country since 1986. The most recent and ambitious endeavour is the *Project of Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008-2020* (also known as the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*, *Project 2020* or the *Project* for short). With an allocated budget of US$443 million, *Project 2020* shows the government's commitment to enhance the Vietnamese people's foreign language proficiency in order to improve the competitiveness of the Vietnamese workforce in the global market. It may be useful to note here that English is clearly identified as the main focus in the *Project* (see Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008b; H. Nguyen, October 20, 2011). Nguyen Ngoc Hung, the outgoing executive manager of the *Project*, and Diana Dudzik, who has helped with the development of National English Teachers

Education Curriculum, even called it *Vietnam's National English 2020 Initiatives* (see N. H. Nguyen & Dudzik, 2010).

The overall goals of the *Project* are:

> By 2020 most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their study and work in an integrated, multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage of development for Vietnamese people in the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country. (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008b, p. 1, as translated by N. H. Nguyen, 2013)

To achieve this goal, the government has set out a number of tasks to 'renovate' thoroughly the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system. Overall, there are two groups of tasks: (i) quality-oriented tasks, which include re-designing curricula and textbooks, training and re-training teachers, investing in facilities, and changing assessment methods; and (ii) quantity-oriented tasks, which entail increasing instructional hours and introducing English to earlier grades in schools (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a). Some tasks which are of particular interest to me in my research are standardising assessment of teachers' and students' language proficiency by adopting and adapting the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), standardising teachers' overall competence for teaching by developing an English Teacher Competency Framework, investing in ICT for better and more efficient English language programmes, implementing mandatory English language education from Grade 3, and promoting English as a medium of instruction in selected university programmes such as ICT, Engineering, Tourism and Business. As will be seen throughout this thesis, several issues discussed in the study relate, to a greater or lesser degree, to these foci in *Project 2020*.

Despite this worthy goal and the government's commitment, after the first half of the planned period 2008-2020, the *Project* has not brought about expected improvements in the education system. There remain concerns over the quality of the teaching force and the language proficiency of the English learners (see, e.g., P. Hoang, September 21, 2016; N. H. Nguyen, 2013; Thanh Nien News, July 10, 2013). Moreover, concerns regarding the impact of the introduction of English to earlier grades at school on the

Vietnamese young people's national identity have emerged (L. H. Phan et al., 2014). The increased investment in technology has also been controversial, as it is contended that the government is just paying attention to purchasing expensive equipment without taking into consideration teachers' ability to make use of technology (V. Le, July 4, 2014). Some commentators have highlighted possible negative impacts of unplanned use of technology and the key role of teachers in the integration of ICT into language classrooms (Viet Nam News, July 22, 2014).

In 2012, *Khung năng lực giáo viên tiếng Anh phổ thông* (the English Teacher Competency Framework for teachers of English at primary and secondary schools) was designed and approved by the Ministry of Education and Training (see Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, 2012b) (I present and discuss this in Chapter 3). Also, in 2014, *Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam* (the Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam), which consists of six levels primarily based on the CEFR, was fully developed and approved by the government (see Ministry of Education and Training, 2014). Recently the government asserted its commitment to enhance the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the last stage of the *Project* (i.e., 2016-2020), with a particular focus on assessment and testing (Quynh, October 29, 2016; T. Thanh, October 14, 2016). Specifically, the government is aiming to establish a national centre for testing language proficiency.

Of particular interest to this PhD project are issues related to teaching methodologies. However, in this respect, there currently seems to be little guidance from the government. The few guidelines that can be spotted in the *Project* documents and the involved officials' publications mention only in passing such issues as teaching language as a skill as opposed to the 'traditional' focus on discrete vocabulary and grammar items (N. H. Nguyen, 2013), integrating ICT to promote interactive and collaborative learning and individualised learning (N. H. Nguyen, 2013), focusing on communicative competence and using communicative approaches (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a), maximising the use of the foreign language and minimising the use of Vietnamese in foreign language classrooms (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a), promoting learners' creativity, autonomy and critical thinking skills (N. H. Nguyen, 2013), and teaching cultures of other countries (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a). However, one positive outcome of the *Project* is that it has encouraged universities and interested organisations/institutes to organise workshops, seminars and particularly international

conferences on English language teaching and learning in order to promote cultural and academic exchanges and develop networks among teachers, educators and researchers across the country and with educators and scholars from all over the world. A look at the programmes of some international conferences over the past few years reveals a wide range of topics related to teaching communication in globalisation, critical thinking, ICT in English language teaching and learning, learner autonomy, communicative approaches, and teacher professional development, to name but a few (see, e.g., International Conferences on TESOL[11] organised by SEAMEO Regional Training Centre in Ho Chi Minh City from 2010 to 2015; International VietTESOL Conferences by Hanoi National University of Education in 2014 and 2015). The wide-ranging discussions in recent conferences and the unclear guidelines from the government, together with the discussion of some pedagogical issues among scholars in the preceding section, reflect the complexity of teaching English in present Vietnam. This points to the important role of teachers in developing appropriate pedagogies for their teaching contexts. Indeed, calls for teachers to play a proactive role in developing teaching innovations have been raised since 2000 (see, e.g., H. T. M. Nguyen & Bui, 2016; H. H. Pham, 2000; Truong, 2004). Recently, the Vietnamese government has also built into its English Teacher Competency Framework such issues as life-long learning, professional development, and reflection on the teacher's part in order to emphasise teachers' active role in this changing context (see Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, 2012b).

The section has presented key pedagogical issues in English language teaching in Vietnam and the most recent foreign language education reform. Overall, it shows the changing context in the English language education and the resultant complex pedagogic task facing Vietnamese teachers of English today. The changes in English language education have, in fact, been occurring within the bigger context of reforms in the formal education system in the country. To help build an overall picture of the national context of the study, the next section presents briefly some changes in the country's education landscape with a focus on the tertiary level. This will also help understand the institutional context of the study, which is presented in Section 2.3.

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[11] Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

2.2.3. Tertiary education in Vietnam

As mentioned above, the formal education system in Vietnam consists of the general education level and the tertiary level. Tertiary education comprises undergraduate studies leading to diploma or bachelor degrees, and postgraduate studies leading to master's and doctorate degrees. Teaching and learning at the tertiary level has undergone changes since 1986, when the Vietnamese government decided to implement the Open Door policy with the goal of industrialisation, modernisation and global integration.

With the Open Door policy, Vietnam has developed economic relations with almost all countries and territories around the world and has joined some important organisations such as ASEAN, APEC and WTO as presented above. This has resulted in the need to increase the competitiveness of its professional labour force in the twenty-first century global knowledge society (Harman & Nguyen, 2010) (see my presentation of the impact of globalisation on HEIs around the world in Section 2.1.1). Therefore, in 2005, the Vietnamese government promulgated Decision 112 on building a learning society by encouraging people of all ages to learn how to learn and engage in lifelong learning activities (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005b). Later in the same year, the government promulgated Resolution 14 on the *Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education*[12] *in Vietnam in the Period 2006-2020* (also known as the *Higher Education Reform Agenda* [HERA]) (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a). In terms of teaching and learning, more attention is paid to increasing the element of research in teaching and learning programs, developing a more applied/professional orientation in curricula, upgrading methodologies, and developing teaching staff with high moral and ethical standards, professional expertise and updated teaching methods. Following Decision 112, HERA continues to place emphasis on lifelong learning through promoting learners' initiative and developing their ability to learn how to learn. HERA also sets out plans for universities to shift from 'school-year training'[13] to a 'learning unit (credit) system'[14]. The latter system aims to make learning programmes more responsive to learners' needs, providing them with opportunities to accumulate knowledge in their own paths, change disciplines, or

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[12] The terms "tertiary education" and "higher education" are used interchangeably in the majority of the documents that I have found.

[13] In a 'school-year training system', there is a fixed curriculum for each training programme and students in one class group will study together during the whole award course.

[14] In a 'learning unit (credit) system', coursework is organised into modular units and there are some electives available for students to choose.

transfer to different institutions. In short, the overall aim of renewal in HERA, particularly in terms of training content, methods and processes, is to improve the quality of the higher education system in order to develop a labour force with adaptability, creative thinking, researching competence, professional skills, and capacity to work in a community setting.

The above mentioned reforms have prompted a number of positive changes within the Vietnamese education system. There has been a reconceptualisation of the roles of teacher and students and the relationship between teaching and learning (Harman & Nguyen, 2010). Terms such as *sinh viên* (students) and *giảng dạy* (teaching) have been replaced with *người học* (learners) and *giảng dạy và học tập* (teaching and learning) to encourage a more active and dynamic role on the part of the student and highlight an interconnected relationship between teaching and learning. More active teaching and learning methods have been introduced to encourage students' participation (Harman & Nguyen, 2010). These include group work, problem-based teaching and learning, case-study projects, and research-based teaching and learning.

However, changes are still limited in their uptake across the country and there have been continued complaints about the ineffectiveness of the Vietnamese higher education system. In terms of pedagogical practices, the 'one-way of teaching' tradition still prevails with students' being required to memorise rather than exploring knowledge and with little discussion occurring between teacher and students or among students themselves (Harman & Nguyen, 2010; T. N. Pham, 2010). Consequently, graduates tend to finish their education unequipped with the skills required to effectively participate in the labour market (Hayden & Lam, 2010; P. Nguyen, January 5, 2008; T. N. Pham, 2010). As a result, teaching practice reforms remain on the discussion agenda (Harman & Nguyen, 2010; Hayden & Lam, 2010).

Confronted with the urgent need to develop the education system, the Vietnamese government has recently launched the *Strategies for the Development of Human Resources in Vietnam for the Period 2011-2020* with a larger budget devoted to educational reforms, particularly at the tertiary level, in order to achieve international standards (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011). Once again, the government is putting emphasis on the enhancement of such qualities as self-study capacity, activeness, self-reliance, adaptability, expertise, collaborative spirit, discipline, moral and professional ethics, responsibility and citizenship in future human resources.

Overall, the presentation and discussion of the English language education and the tertiary education has shown remarkable changes in the country in the globalisation era. Generally, the two sections reveal attempts to shift from the 'traditional' way of teaching and learning to active pedagogical practices in order to better prepare the Vietnamese workforce for this globalising world. It was this changing context and the recognition of the important role of teachers in developing appropriate pedagogies for their teaching contexts that motivated me to conduct a study into reframing my understandings and practices of teaching English in order to seek answers to the question: what does it mean to teach English in a tertiary Vietnamese context? To complete the whole picture of the context of this research project, the next section will focus on the research site – that is, my university and faculty.

2.3. Institutional context

2.3.1. Ho Chi Minh University

The fieldwork for this study was conducted at the English Faculty of Ho Chi Minh University (hereafter HCMU)[15], a well-established public university in Ho Chi Minh City in the south of Vietnam. HCMU is an affiliate member of Vietnam Metropolitan University in Ho Chi Minh City (hereafter VMU), one of the two largest and most prestigious public universities[16] in Vietnam. HCMU was officially established in 1957 and has responsibility for training and research in social sciences and humanities. According to the statistics updated on the university website in January 2017, there are twenty-eight faculties and departments, eight hundred and ninety academic and non-academic staff, approximately twenty-two thousand students enrolled in twenty-eight undergraduate programmes, thirty-eight postgraduate programmes and over ten joint programmes in collaboration with international partners. As one of the two biggest institutions in the field of social sciences and humanities in Vietnam, HCMU also has over two hundred international students across the world who come to enrol in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and over five thousand international students enrolled in short-term courses.

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[15] Again, all the names of the institutions in this thesis are pseudonyms.
[16] The other is in Hanoi in the north of Vietnam.

As a member of VMU, HCMU plays an important role in the Vietnamese government's education reforms for the aim of global integration. The vision and missions of HCMU are as follows:

> Vision: As a member of [VMU], [HCMU] is one of the leading international research institutions in social sciences and humanities in Asia.

> Missions: [HCMU] is the centre that provides: high-quality human resources and typical research works on social sciences and humanities; strategic contributions to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country. [HCMU] is the leader in building a liberal academic environment in terms of social sciences and humanities.

<div align="right">(HCMU website)</div>

One theme emerging from HCMU's missions and vision is its aspiration to become a research university with international standards, which is also the current trend in the higher education in Vietnam and across the world. Traditionally, Vietnamese universities focus mostly on teaching; research is the concern of research intensive institutions operating independently from universities. Today, with the aim of integration into international higher education, the Vietnamese government is emphasising research and internationalisation in universities, particularly prestigious public universities.

For the realisation of its vision and missions, HCMU argues that it is essential to have an educational philosophy which guides all the administrative, training and researching activities in the university. Hence, on 4 December 2015, HCMU promulgated a Decision announcing its educational philosophy, which is *Giáo dục toàn diện – Khai phóng – Đa văn hóa* (Whole person – Liberal – Multicultural Education). This philosophy has to some degree formed and been impacting the educational practices at HCMU since 1976, when HCMU became a member institute in charge of social sciences and humanities in VMU. As HCMU is entering the strategic period 2016-2020, the official announcement of this educational philosophy helps monitor the activities at HCMU in years to come.

According to the President of HCMU[17], the aim of education is to produce whole persons with good qualities; therefore, HCMU's aim is that students graduating from its bachelor, master's and doctorate programmes will have all four qualities – that is, *Đức* (morals), *Trí* (knowledge), *Thể* (health), and *Mỹ* (sense of beauty). These four qualities are inter-connected and thus should all be emphasised in education, especially in the field of social sciences and humanities. As the President emphasised, these four qualities should be the base for all the teaching programmes, content, methods and extracurricular activities. In fact, the focus on these four good qualities, particularly the first two, has long since been underlying educational practices at HCMU in particular, and in Vietnam in general. For example, in policies developed in 2009 stating the required outcomes for each training programme at HCMU, one of the criteria is *vừa hồng vừa chuyên* (having both political moral dignity and expertise). This criterion is also one of the guidelines in the teaching of Ho Chi Minh's ideologies for the youth in Vietnam. The importance of cultivating good qualities in the youth can also be seen in the movement of *sinh viên 3 tốt* (students with three good qualities including good academic achievements, active participation in the youth union and community activities, and good health) and recently *sinh viên 5 tốt* (students with five good qualities including political and moral dignity, good academic achievements, good health, active participation in the youth union and community activities, and integration ability). Moral dignity and expertise are the two prominent qualities, which have always been valued in the Vietnamese tradition as a result of Confucian teaching, as mentioned in Section 2.2.2.

The second element in the educational philosophy (i.e., liberal education) has its origins in Liberal Arts in the times of ancient Greek philosophers, as the HCMU President explained. Liberal Arts originally included only grammar, rhetoric and logic but have gradually been expanded to involve other fields such as arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. With this philosophy of liberal education, the President said the university will focus on developing comprehensive knowledge, balancing between general knowledge and professional knowledge, and between moral development and scientific knowledge improvement. The President believed this philosophy would help students realise their full potential, become flexible and adaptable so as to be able to work in any environment, and be moral and live responsibly. The emphasis on developing comprehensive knowledge has long since been reflected in the bachelor

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[17] Most of the information about HCMU's educational philosophy was obtained from an interview by one HCMU staff member with the HCMU President which was posted on the HCMU website.

curricula at HCMU. For example, students in the English Faculty (as presented in Section 2.3.2 below) not only study English courses in the field of English Linguistics and Literature but also attend courses taught in Vietnamese in other fields such as Basics of Marxism and Leninism, History of World Civilization, Vietnamese Writing Practice, Basics of Vietnamese Culture, Basics of Psychology, and Basics of Logics Studies. However, with this liberal philosophy explicitly stated, HCMU is offering more and more courses in general education, and categorises them into core and elective courses to ensure that students can acquire core general knowledge and at the same time can choose to develop knowledge in the fields of their interests. In addition, courses such as Vietnamese Writing Practice and Basics of Vietnamese Culture are always among the core courses, for HCMU always emphasises the respect for and preservation of the national character. This emphasis can also be seen in the President's explanation of the last element in the philosophy.

HCMU has always had in some respects a multicultural feature as it teaches a number of the most popular languages and cultures in the world. It has, therefore, attracted a great number of international students, lecturers and researchers. Also, the Vietnamese students at HCMU are religiously, culturally and ethnically diverse as they come from sixty-three provinces and cities in the country. With the educational philosophy of multicultural education, the President said HCMU has set up three foci. Firstly, HCMU places more emphasis on knowledge related to the Vietnamese culture. It aims to renovate the teaching of Vietnamese linguistics, history, culture, politics, and philosophy in order to cultivate students' national spirit in the general education component. Secondly, HCMU will renew the professional education component in the programmes of all the faculties and departments in order to meet the demand of the development of the society. The quality of the academic staff will be improved to be comparable with their counterparts in Southeast Asia, and HCMU will continue inviting international lecturers to come for teaching and academic exchange. Thirdly, HCMU will take steps to improve its lecturers' and students' adaptability in this context of globalisation. Courses concerned with regional issues will be enhanced and courses related to globalisation and international integration will be added to the general education component. Each lecturer and student will be required to master at least one foreign language with the English language being the top priority. HCMU will also strengthen the community of international students and lecturers so that the extracurricular activities and community events become more multicultural and more

like global citizen programmes. In short, what is implied in the last element of the educational philosophy of the university is an enthusiastic embrace of multiculturalism/multilingualism and at the same time a determined attempt to strengthen the national identity. These are also two important issues emerging from the presentation and discussion of the national context in the previous section.

To realise its vision and missions, HCMU has implemented some significant structural and pedagogical changes (Ho Chi Minh University, 2011). Since the academic year 2005-2006, following the guidelines from VMU and also one of the plans in the Vietnamese government's HERA as presented in Section 2.2.3, HCMU has switched from 'school-year training' to a 'learning unit (credit) system' in order to promote flexibility and transferability. All the faculties and departments are encouraged to revise their programmes, and the lecturers to experience with new teaching methods in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Quality assurance practices are particularly enhanced. A self-evaluation board has established, so that undergraduate programmes are now evaluated according to the standards set by ASEAN University Network for Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) in 2008. Also, procedures have been established to obtain feedback from students about the learning units and programmes, for teachers to receive comments from their colleagues through class observations, and to get feedback from alumni and recruiters in order improve the teaching programmes methodologies, and facilities. Academic staff are encouraged and given opportunities to enhance their knowledge and develop their teaching and researching ability (e.g., through overseas study, exchange programmes, and rewards for achievements in research). Cooperation with international universities, institutions and organisations has been enhanced through diversified activities. These structural and pedagogical changes are consistent with the issues discussed in the national context.

With this overall picture of the broad contexts, I now turn to look at the specific setting where I conducted the fieldwork for this research – that is, my faculty.

2.3.2. The English Faculty

The English Faculty (hereafter EF) is one of the faculties which have been given priority in development since HCMU was officially founded. With the growing emphasis on English as the dominant foreign language in Vietnam (as discussed in Section 2.2), EF has gradually developed into one of the largest faculties at HCMU. It

has contributed to the strong reputation of HCMU in particular and VMU in general in the field of English language education in the south of Vietnam. At the time of this research, EF has thirty-nine permanent academic staff members and a considerable number of casual teachers teaching in different training programmes at different levels including a Bachelor programme in English Linguistics and Literature and a Master's programme in TESOL.

In this globalising era, EF views the education of lifelong learners and global citizens as central to its vision. Its mission is to provide learners with a good foundation for lifelong learning in the field of teaching and researching the English language, translation-interpretation, culture-literature and other applied fields, and to equip learners with necessary soft skills for their lifelong learning and future career in a globalising world.

Since an English major is considered a very valuable credential for an undergraduate student in Vietnam, EF always receives attention in HCMU's development plans. Specifically, it is among the few faculties in which HCMU is investing in an attempt to achieve the regional and international standards (Ho Chi Minh University, 2011). It is one of the seven faculties/departments selected by HCMU for self-evaluating the undergraduate programme with AUN-QA standards in 2008. In addition, in light of HCMU's desire to become a research university and in response to the call for innovation in foreign language instruction in the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*, EF has started to organise workshops, seminars and conferences, aiming to stimulate discussion and research on English teaching methodologies. Furthermore, the EF academic staff is encouraged to engage with and undertake research into new pedagogical practices in order to improve learners' English proficiency as outlined in *Project 2020* and contribute to the renovation of the English language education in Vietnam.

As this study is concerned with the language skills courses in the Bachelor degree, the rest of this section describes this programme and the general characteristics of undergraduate students enrolled in the programme.

The Bachelor of Arts programme

Since the academic year 2007-2008, in the context of high demand for changes in education in Vietnam for the purpose of global integration, EF redesigned the whole Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme and has since continually updated its courses. Traditionally specialising in English linguistics and British and American literature and culture, EF still keeps these two foci in the programme. However, to meet the demands of the society and the students' needs, the programme has been restructured with a variety of courses and a new division into three sub-groups of specialisation (presented below) to ensure the graduates will be qualified for a wide range of jobs such as foreign relations, public relations, marketing, sales, journalism, work in education and/or social sciences research centres and institutes, and English teaching at universities, colleges or foreign language centres. The redesigned BA programme in EF consists of general education and professional education (plus the requirement of a certain level of proficiency in a second foreign language) (see Appendix 2 for the detailed curriculum map at the time of this research). General education includes compulsory and selective courses in other fields such as politics, sociology, physical education and military sciences, which are taught in Vietnamese throughout the four years by lecturers in relevant faculties. Professional education comprises compulsory and elective courses taught mainly in English by the EF permanent and casual academic staff to develop students' English competence and specialisation knowledge. Professional education consists of three stages with three corresponding groups of courses. The first group, called 'basic courses', is composed of language skills courses aiming to enhance students' ability to use English. The second group, called 'intermediate courses', comprises (1) advanced language skills courses, (2) professional skills courses, and (3) some introductory courses to help students transition to the third stage with their chosen specialisation. The third group, termed 'specialised courses', is composed of three sub-groups – that is, American - British Culture and Literature, English Linguistics - English Language Teaching, and Translation - Interpreting. Students choose their specialist stream at the end of their third year after they have obtained enough credits in the basic and intermediate courses. In structuring the curriculum as such, EF hopes each graduate from any specialisation can work effectively even in professions related to the other two specialisations (if the situation requires), for they will have been equipped with the necessary inter-specialisation knowledge and professional skills in the second stage and thus can self-study and adapt in a new working domain. The re-structured programme at

EF to some extent reflects its own vision and mission in particular and the educational philosophy of HCMU in general. It aims to promote active learning and develop well-rounded persons to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. However, the courses in the curriculum (see Appendix 2) reveal that, perhaps because of its traditional specialisation in British and American literature and culture, there seems to be a lack of attention to the diverse sociolinguistic landscape of the English language in today's globalising world. This can be seen more clearly in the description of the language skills courses below.

Language skills courses in the basic[18] group are the context in which my fieldwork was conducted. They are traditionally called EFL courses in English language teaching literature. At the time the fieldwork was conducted, the language skills programme consisted of four sets of courses delivered throughout the first two years, or in other words, the first four semesters: Language Skills 1A, 1B; 2A, 2B; 3A, 3B; and 4A, 4B (with A referring to Reading-Writing-Grammar and B to Listening-Speaking). The syllabi of these courses were written by experienced academic staff based on the guidelines from the EF Academic Council. The syllabi mainly stated what textbooks to be used (with some recommended reference materials), what core content from each book chapter to be covered, and information regarding tests and examinations. Teachers were given space to adapt the content to a certain extent as long as they could fulfil the objectives of the courses (see the syllabus I used in this PhD project in Appendix 4). The textbooks used for these courses at the time of my fieldwork were published by McGraw-Hill. They were: *Interactions 2* (written for different skills by Hartmann & Kirn, 2007; Pavlik & Segal, 2007; Tanka & Baker, 2007; Werner, Nelson, Hyzer & Church, 2007), *Mosaic 1* (by Hanreddy & Whalley, 2007; Pike-Baky & Blass, 2007; Wegmann & Knezevic, 2007; Werner & Spaventa, 2007), and *Mosaic 2* (by Hanreddy & Whalley, 2007; Pike-Baky & Blass, 2007; Wegmann & Knezevic, 2007; Werner & Nelson, 2007). These textbooks were designed with a theme-based approach so that students could use different language skills in an integrated manner in the process of exploring the given topics. There were also activities to promote thinking and reflective learning. However, the listening-speaking sections in the textbooks were based on the so-called standard American English, and did not take into account the diversity and

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[18] As can be seen from the earlier description of the BA programme at EF, the use of the term 'basis' and 'intermediate' here refers to categories of courses in the programme rather than English proficiency levels, for students who enrol on EF's Bachelor programme are expected to be at the low intermediate level of English according to the proficiency scale commonly understood in most English textbooks.

complexity of the English language. A look at these sections confirms Truong's remark back in 2004 as presented in Section 2.2.2 – that is, the majority of the characters were 'native' speakers; the few 'non-native' speakers in the textbooks tended to be studying or working in 'native' English-speaking countries (and, in the case of the textbooks at EF, they spoke very much like American people!)[19].

Students enrolled in the English Faculty at HCMU

EF is one of the faculties/departments at HCMU that receive a large annual student intake. Each year, it accepts approximately two hundred and fifty new students and they are divided into six or seven classes. As EF is one of the largest and distinguished faculties/departments in the field of English language education in Vietnam, it attracts students from different cities and provinces in the country, particularly in the south. Since there remain regional disparities in social and economic development, students coming from different areas might have different learning experiences, especially English learning experiences, owing to different learning environments. Although there is a tendency to introduce English to earlier grades at school (see, for instance, *Project 2020* in Section 2.2.2), because of the lack of qualified Vietnamese teachers of English, in some provinces, particularly remote and/or underprivileged areas, students only start to know the English language subject when they get to the lower secondary level. Therefore, students' English language learning experiences before entering universities range from seven to twelve years in length. Moreover, English can be accessed through numerous ways other than the formal training at school such as taking classes at English language centres, and learning via media and contact with foreign tourists or business people in Vietnam. Therefore, students' English proficiency varies according to their opportunities to access English, with students from big cities, especially Ho Chi Minh City, being in general more fortunate. Furthermore, although CLT is being advocated in Vietnam, teaching and learning English at schools still focuses on vocabulary, grammar and translation instead of skills, particularly oral skills (N. H. Nguyen, 2013). This is due to the fact that the school graduation and university entrance examinations are based on a discrete-item approach with a focus on grammar. Nevertheless, because of societal expectations that citizens improve English proficiency for international communication, most English language centres place an emphasis on communication

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[19] After my fieldwork, the faculty has changed the textbooks twice, using the series *Skillful* published by Macmillan and then *Inside* by Oxford University Press but, to my knowledge, the new textbooks are also imported from 'native' English-speaking countries and mainly based on the so-called 'standard' Englishes.

skills. Thus, in terms of listening and speaking skills, there are considerable differences among students owing to their access to different English instruction. Given all of these factors, the levels of first-year students at EF range from low intermediate to high intermediate, particularly in terms of communication skills.

Despite the differences presented above, students enrolling in EF share the general characteristics of the Vietnamese learners of English. They are hard-working, like Vietnamese learners in general (Dang, 2010). In addition, they tend to be more open than students of other majors owing to their learning English languages and thus English cultures which are generally considered to be more relaxing than their own. They are also more active since there are now more opportunities for them to interact in the classroom in order to practise English. Their learning styles can change if the teaching methods are altered (V. C. Le, 2000; Dang, 2010). Last but not least, as HCMU has had to some degree a multicultural feature, which will be enhanced with the official introduction of the educational philosophy as presented in Section 2.3.1, this may have some influence on EF students' characteristics.

In this chapter, I have contextualised my study at various levels. I first situated my research in the global context by looking at impacts of globalisation on the development of countries around the world in terms of economy and education, and on the global status and sociolinguistic landscape of the English language. The first impact helps explain significant changes in Vietnam (i.e., the national context of the study) after the introduction of the Open Door policy in 1986, which aimed at economic development and global integration. In order to increase the competitiveness of the Vietnamese universities in the global knowledge economy, the Vietnamese government has implemented several educational reforms to renovate the teaching and learning at the tertiary level in order to improve the quality of the labour workforce. The discussion of the global spread of English helps explain the special status of English as the dominant foreign language in the country after 1986. Particularly, I presented and discussed the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* – the most recent and ambitious attempt of the Vietnamese government to reform English language education and enhance the Vietnamese people's English proficiency. I also set out a number of pedagogical issues facing Vietnamese teachers of English in this changing context. Finally, I detailed the features of the institutional context where the fieldwork of this PhD study was conducted. The presentation and discussion of the vision, missions and educational philosophy reflect several issues discussed in the national context including global

integration, standardisation and attempts to enhance the teaching and learning methodologies. With regard to the last issue, emphasis has been placed on educating well-rounded people, and simultaneously promoting multilingualism/multiculturalism and also strengthening the national identity. However, a look at the BA programme of the English Faculty discloses a lack of attention to the diverse and complex landscape of English in this globalising world and this therefore needs consideration in my project. As I say earlier in the chapter, an examination of the socio-historical contexts helps to explain the pedagogical framework developed in my study, which I present and discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

In this second chapter of the Literature Review, I explore different understandings of knowledge base for teaching (particularly teaching English), language, the English language, and pedagogy. The presentation and discussion of these concepts provide a base for the process of framing and reframing the pedagogical framework for teaching English in my particular context throughout this project. That is to say, the chapter reviews the literature that I have been engaging with throughout the project. It is hard to capture this inherently iterative and complex process but I have attempted to indicate in various places throughout the chapter (sometimes by the use of verb tenses) which conceptual resources informed the development of the initial pedagogical framework before and during the fieldwork (and still inform my pedagogical understandings), and which notions emerged later during the data analysis and contribute to the development of a coherent, contextually appropriate framework by the end of the project.

3.1. Conceptualising knowledge base of English language teaching

This first section of the chapter examines the literature on knowledge base of teaching or what is sometimes referred to as what teachers 'should know and be able to do' in order to teach effectively (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989, 2016). It presents and discusses different conceptions of knowledge base in education in general and in English language teaching in particular. It then looks at how the Vietnamese government conceptualises this notion in their attempt to improve the English language education in the country with *Project 2020*, as noted in Chapter 2. In so doing, the section provides a rationale for the following sections which investigate conceptions of language, the English language, and pedagogy.

3.1.1. Knowledge base in the field of general education

The question as to what the knowledge base of teaching is can be regarded as one crucial question in the field of education. Providing a coherent answer to this question helps in laying solid foundations for teacher education and professional development programmes. And it is reasonable to assume that as the quality of teachers improves, students' learning can be enhanced. This helps to explain why the education research

literature in the past three decades has devoted so much attention to the question of teacher knowledge (e.g., Goodwin, 2010; M. L. Hamilton, 2004/2007; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; M. C. Reynolds, 1989; Shulman, 1986, 1987). There is, however, little consensus as to what constitutes the knowledge base for effective teaching. This can be seen in the different constructs used in conversations about knowledge base of teaching such as domains of knowledge (e.g., pedagogical content knowledge), ways of knowing (e.g., practical knowledge), and ways of doing (e.g., effective teaching practices) (A. Reynolds, 1992). This high level of contestation and debate about the concept is understandable given the complexity and multifaceted nature of teaching work. And thus, it is important to clarify these numerous conceptions, and understand the reasons for the different conceptions, in order to make sense of all of the different advice about the various understandings, skills and dispositions required of a teacher.

One of the first influential conceptualisations of knowledge base in education was Shulman's (1986, 1987) work. Working from within the discipline of science education initially, Shulman proposed a fairly radical range of categories of knowledge, an explanation of the major sources for that knowledge, and the process of pedagogical reasoning and action through which the teacher takes what (s)he understands and makes it readily comprehensible to the students. According to Shulman (1987), teacher knowledge entails "at minimum" the following:

- content knowledge;

- general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter;

- curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as "tools of the trade" for teachers;

- pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;

- knowledge of learners and their characteristics;

- knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and

- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds.

(p. 8)

With these "minimum" domains, Shulman sought to represent the knowledge needed for effective teaching as a large repertoire of categories of knowledge. These categories of knowledge can be found in the conceptualisations of many other scholars, though with some variations in definitions, labels, and emphasis. Of particular interest in Shulman's conception is his notion of *pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK), which he says "goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge *for teaching*" (1986, p. 9, original emphasis). It is, as Shulman contends, the unique combination of content and pedagogy by the teacher in the process of helping her/his students grasp subject matter. Thus, PCK is, in a way, Shulman's attempt to address one basic issue underpinning the discussion on the knowledge base of teaching – that is, the question regarding the relationship between knowledge and pedagogy. Conceptualised as such, PCK is closely linked with notions like the *wisdom of practice* and *pedagogical reasoning and action process*. Wisdom of practice is, in Shulman's (1987) conceptualisation, an important source for the teaching knowledge base[20]. It is "the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalization for) the practice of able teachers" (p. 11). The pedagogical process "begins with an act of reason, continues with a process of reasoning, culminates in performances of imparting, eliciting, involving, or enticing, and is then thought about some more until the process can begin again" (p. 13). Taking this understanding, teaching is viewed "as comprehension and reasoning, as transformation and reflection" rather than merely transmitting subject matter to students (p. 13). In the 1980s when Shulman first proposed PCK, both wisdom of practice and these thinking, planning, and reflecting aspects of teaching were ignored in the literature, despite their importance in the development of teacher knowledge. Shulman's framework has led to a number of

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[20] The other three sources are "(1) scholarship in content disciplines, (2) the materials and settings of the institutionalized educational process (for example, curricula, textbooks, school organizations and finance, and the structure of the teaching profession), (3) research on schooling, social organizations, human learning, teaching and development, and the other social and cultural phenomena that affect what teachers can do" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

studies exploring PCK and the pedagogical reasoning process (e.g., Angeli & Valanides, 2015; Grossman, 1990; Hashweh, 2005; Kind, 2009; Loughran, Berry, & Mulhall, 2012).

There has been, however, a sustained critique of PCK from the moment Shulman's work was initially published (e.g., Sockett, 1987). Despite Shulman's attempt to highlight the active role of teachers in the teaching of subject matter knowledge, his conception of PCK draws a distinction between knowledge *created by teachers* and knowledge *produced by content specialists*, who, according to Shulman (and his advocates), are located in the academy (see Doecke, Locke, & Petrosky, 2004; Parr et al., 2013). As pointed out by critics of his framework, in an endeavour to codify teaching knowledge, Shulman appears to assume that disciplinary knowledge is stable, culturally neutral and existing above and beyond context; and he under-appreciates the extent to which the processes of teaching, learning and knowledge building are all shaped by multifarious contextual factors. He tended to view teachers' responsibility as merely creating teaching strategies to make disciplinary knowledge comprehensible to students (Doecke et al., 2004; Parr et al., 2013). These problematic aspects of Shulman's framework can be seen throughout the discussion of conceptions of knowledge base by the other authors in the remaining of this section.

With his emphasis on PCK, wisdom of practice and the pedagogical process, as noted, Shulman (1986, 1987) can be said to be attempting to conceptualise teaching from a teacher perspective. However, he seems to fail to take into account the role of teachers' own background, culture, past experiences and perspectives on teaching. This dimension is to some extent taken up by Shulman himself and some colleagues (see Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989) in their discussion of the construct of *beliefs about subject matter*. By this concept, they refer to the values and assumptions about subject matter that prospective teachers have developed throughout years of learning before they enter teacher education programmes. In a similar vein, Banks, Leach, and Moon (1999) propose the notion of *personal subject construct* – that is, "a complex amalgam of past knowledge, experiences of learning, a personal view of what constitutes 'good' teaching and belief in the purposes of the subject" (p. 95). Goodwin (2010) even calls this amalgam *personal knowledge* – "all manner of expectation, preconceived notion, implicit theory, assumption, and belief about teaching, learners, teachers, and schools [...] formed from years of being a student in elementary, secondary, and even university classrooms" (p. 22). Long before these scholars, Lortie

(1975/2002) referred to this process of accumulating knowledge as "apprenticeship of observation". The knowledge acquired from this apprenticeship is, as Lortie argued, "intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical; [...] based on individual personalities rather than pedagogical principles" (p. 62). They exert a powerful impact on what and how prospective teachers choose to teach their students. My study takes the view that it is, therefore, crucial that teachers, inexperienced as well as experienced, examine their personal knowledge and how it has shaped their sense of what a teacher is and what they 'do'. As Goodwin (2010) argues, "the failure to see how one's accumulated life experiences bridge to one's continuing growth is to miss the opportunity to make them relevant to the future" (p. 23).

An elaboration on contextual knowledge is needed here, as it has gained increasing attention in the literature, particularly in the context of globalisation (see my presentation and discussion of globalisation in Section 2.1.1). In Banks et al.'s (1999) discussion of the development of professional knowledge, they emphasise the importance of the interplay of the various knowledge domains and how these domains are "brought into existence by the learning context itself" (p. 96). Teaching occurs, they argue, not in a vacuum, but in a multilayered context, ranging from the particular group of students that the teacher works with, the classroom setting, the school culture, the family communities, to the larger political, historical, structural, cultural contexts. Teaching contexts are even more complex and dynamic in today's globalising world, with unprecedented global mobility and multiple changes in all societies (Goodwin, 2010; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013). These contextual factors influence those choices that teachers make regarding what and how to teach as well as their educational goals (Tzuo, Liang, & Yang, 2014). Thus, Goodwin (2010) underscores the importance of contextual knowledge, which "propels teachers beyond subject or instructional strategy to examine learners' needs as nested within multiple socio-cultural-economic-political locations" (p. 24). And, as will be seen shortly in this section and particularly in the first methodology chapter (Chapter 4), the understanding of local as well as global contexts is essential for the development of knowledge-*of*-practice of teacher-researchers.

Some discussion on the notion of pedagogy is also necessary here, since how it is related to content is one basic question in deliberations regarding knowledge base of teaching, as mentioned above. From Shulman's (1986, 1987) discussion of pedagogy, it can be inferred that he uses the term to refer to strategies and methods to enhance effective instruction such as how to manage classroom, give explanations, assign and

check work, and interact with students. Similarly, pedagogy is often defined in non-specialist dictionaries as "the art or science of teaching; teaching methods" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 24). However, as Goodwin argues, this narrow conception may lead to a simplistic view of teaching as "the technical implementation of specific methods" (p. 25). Since teaching contexts (including global, cultural, national, institutional, curriculum, and classroom contexts) are diverse and dynamic, as noted above, and few 'methods' are unproblematically applicable to all settings, the development of pedagogical knowledge should be more than the mastery of a collection of 'toolkits'. For Goodwin, "ways of doing" should be in the form of "ways of *thinking* about what to do" as content knowledge, PCK, curriculum knowledge, theories of learning and development, and methods of teaching are brought together (Goodwin, 2010, p. 25, original emphasis). As such, Goodwin's notion of pedagogic knowledge subsumes the first four categories in Shulman's (1987) framework. Goodwin particularly highlights the importance of curriculum development and its influence on what is understood as teacher knowledge. She suggests that when teachers develop curriculum they are part of an ongoing process of generating knowledge themselves. That is, as teachers develop and adapt curriculum to meet the needs of their students and teaching contexts, they are doing much more than merely implementing the curriculum mandates written by authorities with no particular knowledge of those students' needs. As a curriculum maker, "the teacher and his or her students have agency and are actors in the process; they are not simply acted upon" (p. 25). With this conceptualisation of pedagogical knowledge, Goodwin shows the interrelatedness of different domains of knowledge and the active role of teachers in the educational process, particularly in the age of globalisation. As she says:

> Pedagogical knowledge is essential to quality teaching in a global context where educational innovation is a necessity because: transformation in pedagogical knowledge is what will drive transformation in education [...] teachers who are pedagogical authorities are equipped to be active partners in any educational reform because they can be *architects of change*, not passive implementers. (p. 25, my emphasis)

With a particular concern over teaching in the context of globalisation, Goodwin (2010) also proposes the domain of *sociological knowledge*. Sociological knowledge points to the diversity of the world which is being intensified due to globalisation and associated sociological changes including increased human mobility, transnational employment,

and greater disparities between the poor and the rich. These issues place a demand on teachers for knowledge and commitment to teach for diversity, harmony and equity. Diversity is, according to Goodwin (2010), "a mindset, a concept, a way of thinking, perceiving, living, and teaching [...] a quality, characteristic, disposition, and perspective that all teachers, each person, must seek" (p. 27). With this domain of knowledge, Goodwin expands the conception of knowledge base beyond understanding and skills as commonly thought of.

Prior to Goodwin, M. L. Hamilton (2004/2007), in her detailed review of numerous approaches to understanding knowledge for teaching, also raises question as to whether such important issues as ethics, caring, social justice and emotion should be counted as elements of a knowledge base. Using Hansen's (2001) language, M. L. Hamilton points out that teaching is "inherently a moral endeavour" (p. 394). Teachers set an example, whether consciously or not, to their students in terms of behaviours, values and ways of being. In addition, caring, trustworthiness and integrity are important in teaching, for they help students realise their potentials (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000, as in M. L. Hamilton, 2004/2007). Moreover, scholars interested in teaching for a socially just world are concerned about the impact of factors such as race, class, and gender on access to knowledge. And lastly, there has been increased attention to emotion, which is "often avoided as a topic because it skirts the margins of rationality" but "affects the ways we are in the classroom and in our lives" (M. L. Hamilton, 2004/2007, p. 398). The addition of such issues as ethics, care, diversity, social justice and emotion to the deliberations of what a teacher 'should know and be able to do' shows the large, diverse and complex landscape of teaching work and thus of knowledge base for teaching. It is apparent that teachers' knowledge should include not only skills and understandings of context-bounded notions of content but also dispositions and commitments to good cause.

My discussion so far has raised questions about the notion of teaching knowledge being fixed and complete, for teaching contexts are clearly diverse and changing and teachers, therefore, have to constantly reflect on the knowledge and their practice settings. In his preface to the volume "Knowledge base for the beginning teachers" (M. C. Reynolds, 1989), Gardner asserts that "teachers should be prepared for a career in which they are continuously involved in critical appraisal of emerging knowledge and in making adaptations in their work in accord with the changing knowledge base and their own teaching situations" (p. x). Indeed, what can be inferred from many of the chapters in

this volume – a collective attempt to delineate what counts as knowledge for teaching – is the vision of the teacher as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1987) (I elaborate on this notion in Chapter 4). This issue is also alluded to in the other authors' discussions of knowledge base (e.g., Shulman, 1987; Goodwin, 2010), which points to the necessity of an ongoing learning process on the teacher's part in relation to repertoires of knowledge for teaching.

To complicate further the conceptualisations of knowledge, there has been ongoing debate in the literature over the relationship between knowledge and practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004/2007) distinguish three types of knowledge corresponding with three perspectives about this relationship and, accordingly, three modes of inquiry for creating knowledge claims. The first form of knowledge – *formal knowledge*, or what they call *knowledge-for-practice* – refers to "general theories and research-based findings on a wide range of foundational and applied topics that together constitute the basic domains of knowledge about teaching and teacher education, widely referred to by educators as "the knowledge base"" (p. 611). Some inquiry into the practice of competent teachers or, to use Cochran-Smith and Lytle's more generic term, 'practitioners'[21] is to produce knowledge-for-practice, for it is done by outside researchers using conventional scientific methods and aiming at generalising state-of-the-art strategies and understandings for universal use. Some versions of research that seek to codify PCK and other domains of knowledge are of this type. The second form of knowledge – *knowledge-in-practice* (commonly called *practical knowledge*) – refers to "what practitioners know or come to know as it is embedded in the artistry of practice, in practitioners' reflections on practice, and/or in practitioner's narrative and autobiographical probing of practice" (p. 612). Teachers undertake research by themselves or in collaboration with outsider consultants, particularly from a university, into their practice in order to unravel and articulate the knowledge that they create in action. The third type – *knowledge-of-practice* – refers to "local knowledge" generated by practitioners when they work "within the contexts of inquiry communities to theorize and construct their work and to connect it to larger social, cultural, and political issues" (p. 614). Inquiry here does not aim either to promote teachers' knowledge in action as sufficient for them to work in their own contexts, or to generalise teachers' 'best' practices in order to add to the knowledge base for use across contexts. Instead, in this type of practitioner inquiry, teachers problematise the knowledge and practice of their

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[21] An explanation of the term is provided in Chapter 4.

own as well as of others in the process of building theory from their practice. It can be inferred that these three types of knowledge reflect different views on the role of the teacher in identifying what is knowledge and in understanding the process of knowledge generation. The second two types of knowledge, particularly the last one, highlights teachers as owners and *creators* of knowledge, rather than merely *users* of knowledge generated by others, not least university researchers. M. L. Hamilton (2004/2007) refers to this issue of knowledge ownership as the political aspect of knowledge – the question as to "who owns the knowledge, who shares the knowledge and who presents the knowledge" (p. 394).

Thus far what I have been trying to show throughout the discussion is that teaching is complex and non-linear, and the knowledge base for teaching is mutable as contexts change and ever-growing as thoughtful teachers work and at the same time inquire into their own practice. This helps to understand why there has been such contestation of what constitutes teachers' professional knowledge base, and why so many writers argue that such a knowledge base eludes categorisation and standardisation. It also shows the limiting and limited nature of any conception of knowledge base premised on what a teacher 'should know and be able to do', such as in the documents produced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the USA (see National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989, 2016). I revisit the critique of this issue of codification when speaking in relation to standards documents in Section 3.1.3. For the moment, to temporarily close the discussion here, I want to signal the alignment of my study with M. L. Hamilton's (2004/2007) suggestion that "rather than defining knowledge base as the lowest common denominator of ideas, we consider viewing this base as an anchor, a point where the social, moral, political, personal, and emotional fit together" (p. 397). In the next sections, I look at how knowledge base has been conceptualised in the field of English language teaching and then how it is framed in *Project 2020* by the Vietnamese government.

3.1.2. Knowledge base in the field of English language teaching

Interest in the knowledge base for teaching has increased since the 1990s in the field of English language teaching, especially in the area of second language teacher education (SLTE)[22]. As in debates enacted in the field of general education, there are numerous

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[22] Like Faez (2011), I use the term SLTE here to refer to second/additional/foreign language teacher training.

perspectives and lively debates about what should constitute the knowledge for English language teaching. Nevertheless, what can be seen from the deliberations is a tendency amongst some researchers to broaden the conceptualisation of teaching knowledge and include issues such as context, culture and pedagogy that were neglected in early conceptions, and to emphasise the active role of teachers in the process of learning as well as developing teaching knowledge.

As in the broader field of education, there have been proposals with detailed categorical representations of knowledge base for language teaching. Two often-cited examples are Richards (1998) and J. Roberts (1998) as summarised below:

Richards's (1998) domains of content:	J. Roberts's (1998) types of language teacher knowledge:
- Subject matter knowledge	- Content knowledge
- Theories of teaching	- General pedagogic knowledge
- Teaching skills	- Pedagogical content knowledge
- Pedagogical reasoning and decision-making skills	- Process knowledge
- Communication skills	- Curricular knowledge
- Contextual knowledge	- Contextual knowledge

Despite occasionally different discourses invoked here, these two frameworks are similar in many ways and appear to draw on Shulman's (1987) work as discussed above. The standpoint of my study which is emerging through my discussion thus far is, on the one hand, it appreciates the attempts to show the wide range of understandings and skills required of a language teacher in these authors' work; on the other hand, it recognises the critique of such attempts to codify knowledge in narrower ways, as I have presented in the previous section. Before moving to another framework, one point that should be noted in Richards's model is the importance of communication skills, which refer to the general ability to communicate effectively and the target language proficiency of the teachers. Richard's inclusion of communication skills is due to the fact that many language teachers are 'non-native' speakers of the target language and thus need to reach a certain level of proficiency in order to be able to teach it. This is an essential category in many SLTE programmes, as can be seen in the Vietnamese government's framework of knowledge base for teaching English (see Appendix 3).

One important framework that needs attention in my study is D. Freeman and Johnson's (1998), which might be seen as stimulating the debate on knowledge base by focusing the attention in the field on the sociocultural processes of learning to teach (in the broadest sense of the words, including both teacher education programme and professional development afterwards). Traditionally (and still in many instances today), the ELT profession drew on research knowledge in its parenting disciplines, especially linguistics and second language acquisition, for framing its own knowledge base. Programmes for language teaching and language teacher education were commonly structured around knowledge about a particular theorisation of what language is, how it is used and how it is acquired. Little attention was paid to how teaching is learned and practised. However, to D. Freeman and Johnson:

> [...] teaching [is] more than the accumulation of research knowledge because it is evident that giving more research knowledge to teachers does not necessarily make them better practitioners. Learning to teach is a long-term, complex, developmental process that operates through participation in the social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching. (p. 402)

They thus propose "an epistemological framework that focuses on the activity of teaching itself – who does it, where it is done, and how it is done" (p. 405). The framework consists of three inter-related components – that is, (a) the *teacher-learner* (which takes into account teachers' prior knowledge, experience and beliefs in teaching, and the development of teaching knowledge over time and throughout their careers), (b) the *social context* (which includes both the physical and sociocultural settings of the teaching and learning and the schooling processes), and (c) the *pedagogical process* (which entails pedagogical thinking and activity, the disciplinary subject matter, classroom content, and language learning). D. Freeman and Johnson's reconceptualisation of the knowledge base has contributed to "a new, sociocultural orientation to SLTE whereby teacher learning is viewed as situated and highly context-dependent" (Faez, 2011, p. 54).

D. Freeman and Johnson's (1998) conceptual framework is, however, criticised for privileging the activity of teaching over knowledge about language. Yates and Muchisky (2003), for example, express their concern about the marginalisation of language and second language acquisition in this call for reconceptualisation of knowledge base for language teaching. In a slightly different way, Tarone and Allwright

(2005) criticise D. Freeman and Johnson for over-relying on research in general teacher learning and thus losing sight of the particularities of language teacher learning and the importance of understanding of language learners and the way they acquire the language. The critique gestures at the issue concerning the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogy as mentioned earlier in Section 3.1.1.

In response, D. Freeman and Johnson (2005) have explained that although they did not address these issues directly in their framework, they did not "reject the value" of knowledge about language, language learners and their learning (p. 30). Indeed, a careful reading of D. Freeman and Johnson (1998) shows that they "affirm the value of such knowledge" (D. Freeman & Johnson, 2005, p. 30):

> insofar as teaching and what is taught are inseparable, we must also understand what makes our teaching *language teaching*. This will undoubtedly involve discipline-derived understandings from applied linguistics, SLA, psychology, and curriculum development, among other areas, in a deeper examination of our subject matter – language – as it becomes classroom content. (D. Freeman & John, 1998, p. 413, original emphasis)

In a later paper, Johnson (2009) explicitly adds to the earlier framework particular attention to conceptions of language and second language acquisition. She also calls for broadening these conceptions in order to make the teaching knowledge base aligned with the epistemological stance of the sociocultural turn.

In addition to concerns regarding the role of subject matter knowledge and the activity of teaching, knowledge about the social, cultural and historical factors has recently received considerable attention in the literature, especially with the growing awareness of the status of English as an international language. Besides D. Freeman and Johnson (1998), a number of scholars have pointed to the importance of the awareness of the sociocultural and political contexts of teaching English on the language teachers' part in order to make appropriate pedagogical decisions (e.g., Holliday, 1994; Pennycook, 1994). For Holliday (1994), these contexts are not "simply backdrops for the practice of English language education" but "a significant input in the process" (p. 218). With this input, teachers can "link the micro aspects of English language teaching with the macro context" and "problematise and contextualise their practice and engage in praxis" (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006, p. 290). In so doing, they can realise and fulfil their social

roles and responsibilities (Pennycook, 1994). This socio-political consciousness is, indeed, at the heart of critical pedagogy, which is increasingly influential in the ELT field. Critical pedagogy positions teaching in general and English teaching in particular as "not a politically or morally neutral activity" (Burns & Richards, 2009, p. 7). One consequence of this position is the strong advocacy for language teachers helping students become aware of pervading "ideological forces" in their contexts and equipping them with knowledge and skills necessary for "function[ing] as moral agents in society" (Burns & Richards, 2009, p. 7). This deliberation of the situatedness of teaching work and the attention to good cause resonate with the issues discussed in the field of general education in the preceding section.

Speaking of teachers' learning and development, a trend is occurring in the field of ELT as in general education, though in a narrower scope to date – that is, the wider recognition of the legitimacy of practitioner (teacher) knowledge and the call for teachers to engage in practitioner (teacher) inquiry to help contribute these distinctive forms of teacher knowledge that have perhaps previously been undervalued. Drawing on Hiebert et al. (2002), Johnson (2006, 2009) highlights the value of teachers' ways of knowing and ways of coming to know which are grounded in specific issues in their work settings. She contends that teachers' knowledge, when made public and open for verification and modification, can, together with disciplinary knowledge, broaden the knowledge base for language teaching. Teachers are, thus, encouraged to reflect on and inquire into their teaching practice. Early on in Chapter 1, I have presented the dissatisfaction over the concept of 'method' in ELT and the emphasis on teachers to do research in order to construct and contribute contextually-appropriate pedagogies to the field (see, e.g., Allwright, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2006c). Different forms of practitioner inquiry have, therefore, been advocated in ELT such as reflective teaching (e.g., Lockhart & Richards, 1994), teacher research (e.g., D. Freeman, 1998) and action research (e.g., Burns, 2010).

To sum up, in this section I have looked at discussions on the knowledge base of teaching the English language. It can be seen that English teaching in international contexts is complicated and multifaceted, particularly as English has gained the status of a global language. The knowledge base therefore consists of multifarious areas of knowledge and skills. However, at the heart of the deliberations is the attention given to the interaction between linguistic knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, set in particular sociocultural and political contexts of practice. And more importantly, "it is

teachers' connecting and reflecting on the interrelatedness of these areas that will strengthen their professional knowledge base" (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006, p. 280).

3.1.3. Knowledge base as conceptualised in *Project 2020*

As noted in the Context Chapter (Chapter 2), at the time that my PhD study is being conducted, the Vietnamese government is undertaking an ambitious project aiming to 'renovate' the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the national education system – that is, *Project 2020* (see Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008a, 2008b). One objective in the Project is to build *Khung năng lực giáo viên tiếng Anh phổ thông* (English Teacher Competency Framework for teachers of English at primary and secondary schools). For this purpose, a team was set up which consisted of international consultants, leading Vietnamese English language experts and a team of English teacher educators drawn from different regions of Vietnam. The English Teacher Competency Framework (ETCF) was developed in 2010, and was approved by the Ministry of Education and Training in December 2012 (see the figure below and an overview of the ETCF version for pre-service teacher education programmes[23] in Appendix 3). According to the ETCF team's explanation, the term "competency" in the framework is "often referred to in international literature as standards"; "competencies are the levels of knowledge or skill at which teachers are expected to perform" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a[24], p. 13). They also claim that ETCF "provides a blueprint of the knowledge, skills, values, and processes that make up English teaching in Vietnam in the early 21st Century" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, p. 11). I will pause here, for a moment, and take a closer look at this framework, since an understanding of it is of crucial importance in understanding the context of the teachers' knowledge and practice in Vietnam although this framework is mainly for English teachers at primary and secondary schools rather than at tertiary level like me. Below is the overall framework extracted from the User's Guide of the ETCF documents (see Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, p. 14):

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[23] There are two versions of ETCF: one for pre-service teacher education programmes and the other for training and development programmes for in-service primary and secondary English teachers. The core of the framework is the same for the two versions but the pre-service ETCF includes some additional competencies and more rigorous knowledge and performance indicators.

[24] While most of the documents regarding *Project 2020* are written mainly in Vietnamese, the User's Guide for ETCF is written in English.
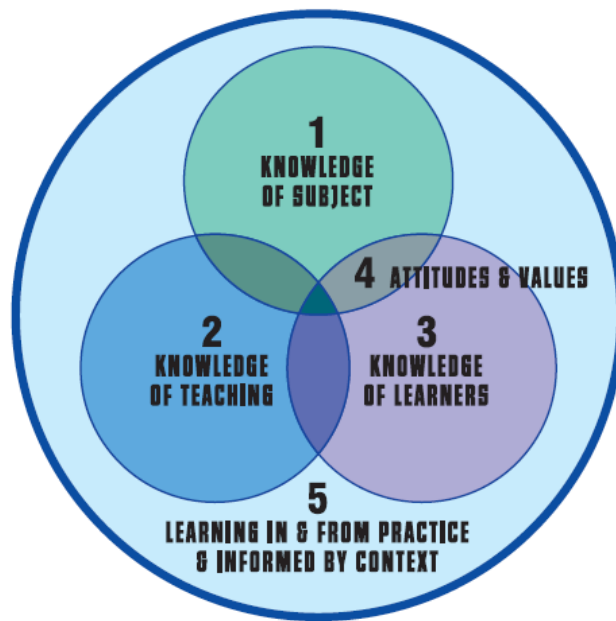
Dudzik, 2008 adapted from Bransford, Darling-Hammond et al. 2005 & Ball & Cohen, 1999

Figure 3.1 – Vietnam's English Teacher Competency Framework

Drawing on conceptions in general teacher education and some international standards documents, such as the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR), the ACTFL Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2002), TESOL/NCATE Teacher Education Standards (2010), the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Language, and a Vietnamese project (i.e., the Hue University EFL Teacher Education Standards, 2010), the ETCF team proposes five domains of understanding, skills, dispositions and practices: (1) knowledge of language, language acquisition, content and curriculum; (2) knowledge of language teaching; (3) knowledge of language learners; (4) professional values and processes in language teaching; and (5) connections to practice and contexts of language teaching. Acknowledging that there is a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes making up teachers' knowledge, the Vietnamese government hopes, with the development of ETCF, to be able:

> to build the profession of English teaching beyond the level of technicians or teaching machines (giáo viên là những cái máy dạy) to practicing teachers with "adaptive expertise", considered the "gold standard" in teacher training (Bransford, Deny, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005, p. 76). (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012a, p. 8)

An examination of ETCF shows that it gestures at all of the main issues discussed in general education literature as well as ELT-specific literature, as I represent these fields

above. Also, it pays attention to thorough knowledge about language and teaching, and it emphasises the importance of understanding the diversity of learners and considering differences in practice contexts. More importantly, it highlights the teachers' ongoing professional development after the completion of the teacher education or training programmes.

By presenting knowledge domains in the form of a Venn diagram (Figure 3.1), the ETCF team seems to intend to show the inter-relatedness among the five components; however, the list of prescribed competencies and performance indicators associated with the diagram (see the extracts in Appendix 3) shows a contradictory desire to atomise teaching knowledge into finite and demarcated ideas and requirements. This process of simultaneously integrating and demarcating is a feature of many attempts to codify and standardise knowledge or what teacher 'should know and be able to do' (see Parr et al., 2013). By compartmentalising knowledge and using such language as "competencies", "standards", and "performance indicators", ETCF, which is in fact based on other standards documents as shown above, fails to appreciate the rich and situated nature of teaching work and runs the risk of "clos[ing] down critical reflection and discussion about the knowledge and practice of English teachers" (Doecke et al., 2004, p. 106).

3.1.4. A knowledge base framework for this PhD study

In this final section in relation to knowledge base, I present the framework that I have developed for my inquiry into my own practice as a teacher of English in a Vietnamese university. Through an ongoing process of critically engaging with the literature as represented above, before and after undertaking my fieldwork, I came to better understand the significance of knowledge and practice of practitioner inquiry in teachers' learning and professional development. I also came to appreciate the importance of seeing teacher knowledge as necessarily involving the integration of subject matter knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, and an awareness of contextual and cultural factors that mediate the educative process. I now explain in what ways these four dimensions are inter-related and crucial in my inquiry.

Firstly, what has emerged from the previous discussions on various conceptions of knowledge base is the increasing recognition of the contribution of practitioner knowledge and practitioner inquiry to the development of a knowledge base for teaching. I have also shown through my autobiographical account in Chapter 1 how

practitioner inquiry was, and is, essential for my learning and professional development as a teacher. Therefore, in this PhD project I adopted practitioner inquiry as my overarching methodological approach. In Chapter 4 I present my growing understandings of this research tradition and how it was enacted in this present project.

As is clear from the discussion above, the relationship between knowledge about subject matter (in this case, language and the English language) and knowledge about pedagogy is at the heart of questions regarding what constitutes teaching knowledge. Many scholars have pointed out that these two dimensions are integrated and integral to a knowledge base for teaching. My study in the context of English teaching takes the view that the theorising of pedagogy is inseparable from understandings of language (and the English language). By pedagogy, I mean a broader conception rather than a narrow focus on teaching strategies or methods. As can be seen in the presentation of Goodwin's (2010) framework, when broadly conceived, pedagogical knowledge entails content knowledge. Indeed, Segall (2004) has pointed out how one's conceptualisation of pedagogy affects the ways one can think about the relationship between these two dimensions. Therefore, it is essential for me to explore the notion of pedagogy and articulate the view adopted in my study. I present this in Section 3.4 of this chapter.

Similarly, there is a need in my research to examine various conceptions of language. Critics of Shulman's work have pointed out the situated and changing nature of disciplinary knowledge (see Doecke et al. 2004; Parr et al., 2013). Moreover, in his exploration of the connection between pedagogy and subject matter knowledge, Segall (2004) contends that the act of adopting a particular conception of subject matter – which represents a particular view of the world – is "inherently pedagogical" (p. 498). Furthermore, in my discussion of knowledge base in the ELT-related field, I have noted Johnson's (2009) call for broadened conceptions of language in light of the sociocultural turn in SLTE. This call is particularly significant in the case of English, considering that its special status and diverse sociolinguistic landscape have raised a number of pedagogical concerns as I have presented in Chapter 2. It is, therefore, important for me to engage with different conceptions of language and the English language, and be able to communicate the understandings underpinning this project. I discuss these in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

Lastly, the discussion above shows a wide range of contextual factors that could shape the educative process. This highlights the importance of my developing a rich

understanding of the global, national and institutional contexts in which my practice is located. I have provided a detailed picture of these settings in Chapter 2. I have also described the general characteristics of the students enrolled in my faculty. Moreover, as will be seen throughout the methodology and discussion chapters, for the particular group of students that I was teaching for this project, I tried to understand their backgrounds, needs and preferences by different ways including having them fill in a profile and constantly getting their oral and written feedback throughout the teaching course. This ongoing process of getting to know my students contributed to the development of a pedagogy that was grounded in contexts. In this dimension of contextual knowledge, I also include what Banks et al. (1999) call *personal subject construct* or Goodwin's (2010) *personal knowledge* (see Section 3.1.1 above). This helps explain why I drew on autoethnography in this practitioner inquiry project and included my reflection on some moments in my earlier learning and teaching experience. Also, with autoethnography, I wish to highlight the connection between the self and the society. I elaborate on this in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

In summary, in this first section of the chapter, I have reviewed different conceptualisations of knowledge base. My standpoint in this study which emerges from the discussion is that a knowledge base for teaching English entails a complex interplay among different dimensions, including conceptions of language (and the English language), conceptions of pedagogy, and understandings of the local and global contexts in which the teaching practice is situated. Moreover, it is important that I as a teacher engage in practitioner inquiry to develop this knowledge for my teaching context and contribute to the literature in the field.

3.2. Conceptualising language

As noted in the previous section, this second section of the chapter examines the concept of 'language'. Despite the ubiquity of language in human life and the large body of literature published about language and language education, it remains a highly contested concept. Drawing on Kumaravadivelu's (2006c) categorisation of conceptualisations of language, I explore this notion from three perspectives: (i) language as system; (ii) language as discourse; and (iii) language as ideology. The discussion of these three views on language will lay the foundation for the theorisation of language in my thesis.

3.2.1. Language as system

One of the scholars whose work has significantly contributed to the understanding of language as system is Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure (1959), human speech (*langage*) is composed of language (*langue*) and speaking (*parole*). Language (*langue*) is an abstract system of signs, and a linguistic sign is an arbitrary combination of meaning (*the signified*) and sound (*the signifier*). Language is "the social side of speech" in the sense that it is "a sort of contract signed by the members of a community", which the individual "can never create or modify […] by himself [sic]" (p. 14). Conversely, speaking (*parole*) constitutes concrete examples of the use of *langue* by individuals. For Saussure, *parole* is too ephemeral and random to systemise; thus, he focuses more of his attention on *langue*, which he believes consists of relatively stable structures, is independent of individual speakers, and thus gives unity to speech. By proposing language as the object of linguistic inquiry and excluding the other heterogeneous and intangible aspects of speech, he aspires to turn linguistics into a legitimate science like other physical sciences. Saussure's work is widely thought of as underpinning most structuralist conceptions of language in the discipline of linguistics (García & Wei, 2014).

The idea of language as system was later developed by Chomsky into a mentalist conception of language (García & Wei, 2014). Drawing on Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, Chomsky (1965) distinguishes between *competence* (i.e., the tacit knowledge of the language system) and *performance* (i.e., the use of language in specific situations). Like Saussure, Chomsky is interested in *competence*, the "mental reality" underlying the user's *performance* (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c, p. 6). In other words, Chomsky is more concerned with language as a cognitive psychological mechanism rather than as a tool for communication. Chomsky's theory focuses on:

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

Moreover, Chomsky believes in what he calls *Universal Grammar* – that is, a set of abstract rules which is common to all languages and which is an "innate ability" in all

babies that helps them to develop a complex grammatical system from their parents'
and caretakers' speech.

By distinguishing *langue* from *parole*, and *competence* from *performance*, Saussure and
Chomsky can be said to be aiming to offer a methodological tool for exploring
language. Their work contributes to our understanding of how different elements of a
language (including phonemes, words, phrases and sentences) work together, with their
own rules as well as the rules for combination, to form spoken or written texts.
However, because of their main interest in language as an abstract system, Saussure and
Chomsky do little to help us understand how language works in real-life contexts. This
matter has been taken up by theorists who advocate the view of language as discourse,
which I explore in the next section.

3.2.2. Language as discourse

In contrast to Saussure's and Chomsky's formalist approaches to language, the
conception of language as discourse emphasises "connected and contextualized [units]
of language use" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c, p. 8). There are a considerable number of
scholars advocating this view; however, due to the scope of the study, this section only
discusses the work of Dell Hymes, M. A. K. Halliday, L. S. Vygotsky (and the related
sociocultural perspective developed from the Vygotskian cultural-historical tradition),
and Mikhail Bakhtin (especially his dialogic theorising of language, culture and
identity), and the influence of these theorists on the fields of linguistics and applied
linguistics.

Sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1972) criticises Chomsky's perspective on linguistics for
focusing primarily on structure and, as a result, neglecting language use. Instead of
notions of "homogeneous speech community", "perfect competence", and
"independence of sociocultural features" in Chomsky's theory (p. 274), Hymes argues
for the development of a theory which takes into consideration "a heterogeneous speech
community, differential competence, [and] the constitutive role of sociocultural
features" in the language use (p. 277). In contrast with Chomsky's conception, Hymes's
image of an ideal speaker-listener is "multilingual" (p. 274); even in the case of an
apparently monolingual communication, Hymes argues that an individual speaker also
needs to master a variety of functions within one language. For Hymes, in order to
successfully participate in a speech event, one needs not only the knowledge of formal

linguistic properties but also sociolinguistic competence – that is, the ability to use appropriate language in particular situations. He coins the term *communicative competence* to include Chomsky's grammatical competence but with the addition of sociolinguistic competence. Hymes's concept of communicative competence is often regarded as significantly contributing to the development of CLT in language teaching and learning (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). Since the late 1970s, with the emergence of CLT, language learning and teaching has tended to shift the focus from linguistic knowledge to language use and communicative functions within discourse (Widdowson, 1978, as in Breen & Littlejohn, 2000).

Unlike Hymes, who attempts to expand Chomsky's notion of competence, Halliday proposes a different conceptualisation of language altogether (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c). In his seminal book in 1978, he defines language as *social semiotic*. Although Saussure's idea of signs contributed to the emergence of semiotics (i.e., the study of signs) (Bouissac, 1998), his work resulted in a narrower focus on the formal linguistic system (i.e., *langue*). Halliday, however, seeks to explore how language is used in social contexts. For Halliday, language is a system of *meaning potential* – that is, a set of meaning resources that the speaker-hearer can use in a particular situation. Instead of a mentalist conception of language as developed by Chomsky, Halliday adopts a functional view by suggesting three metafunctions of language, namely the ideational (i.e., ideas about the world), the interpersonal (i.e., social relationships), and the textual (i.e., the transfer of the ideational and interpersonal functions into meaningful texts in particular contexts). Through the interplay between these three metafunctions, the speaker-hearer can, as Halliday posits, communicate or, in other words, make meaning in particular social contexts.

Within this language-as-discourse tradition, it is also useful to discuss the contribution of sociocultural theory rooted in the work of the Russian psychologist and psycholinguist L. S. Vygotsky. According to Lantolf (2004), sociocultural theory is a cognitive theory, not a theory of language use. However, since sociocultural theory argues for the dialectic connection between human forms of thinking and socially and culturally constructed concrete (e.g., computer) and symbolic (e.g., language) artefacts (Lantolf, 2004), it contributes to the literature on the important role of human communicative activity in shaping language. Drawing on Marx's theory about tool use in labour activity, Vygotsky (1962, 1987) posits that higher forms of human mental functioning are possible through the *mediating* function of culturally constructed

symbolic artefacts, including numbers, graphical representations and language. With this perspective of the dialectical unity between thinking and speaking, he recommends the linguistic sign, particularly the word, as the unit of analysis for the study of verbal thinking. While Saussure's sign is supposed to possess stable meanings as a result of a kind of shared contract amongst all members in a speech community, Vygotsky's (1987) sign consists of conventional meaning *and* emergent and contextualised meaning (which he called *sense*). Although this dual view of sign was "prescient in its time" (Thorne & Lantolf, 2007, p. 187), it is this focus on sign as a unit of analysis that is, according to Marshall (2002), contested by some of his colleagues and students, resulting in the development of theory of activity, largely by Leontiev (1981). Activity theory emphasises the mediating role of socially-organised and goal-directed actions in human development. Despite different foci between Vygotsky's theory and its outgrowth (i.e., activity theory), overall, sociocultural theory contributes to research into language with its proposal of a "dialectic relationship between the concrete practical activity in the material world and the mental activity, which emerges as a consequence of and condition for this activity" (Lantolf, 2004, p. 31).

Another significant contribution to the conception of language as discourse as opposed to the formalist view can be found in the work of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. For Bakhtin, a word, or an utterance, is never context-free; it is "a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere" (1986, p. 91). One characteristic of a live utterance is the dialogic relations between the speaker and the Other, and this Other could include other people, others' utterances and other cultural worlds. As Bakhtin (1986) puts it:

> Any understanding [of a live utterance] is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it in one form or another: the listener becomes the speaker. […] When we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral, *dictionary* form. We usually take them from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style. (pp. 68 & 87, original emphasis)

Discourses or chains of utterance are, thus, fundamentally dialogic and closely tied to their social, cultural and historical contexts. Another important concept in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue is *heteroglossia* (i.e., multiple voices and discourses in continuing

and dynamic interaction with each other). This concept refers to different styles, voices, and perspectives interacting in a dynamic manner in live speech, as Bakhtin (1981) explains:

> And finally, at any given moment, languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another. […] Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying "languages". (p. 291)

Some see Bakhtin's construction of language "as comprising dynamic constellations of sociocultural resources" (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2005, p. 2) and thus directly challenging Saussure's and Chomsky's views of language as a self-contained system of fixed codes and their dichotomies of *langue/parole* and *competence/performance*, respectively. Further, Bakhtin's (1981) view of language as "a living, socio-ideological concrete thing" and thus "not a neutral medium" (pp. 293-294) is to some degree related to the construction of language as ideology that I discuss in the next section. In their discussion of another concept by Bakhtin, *ideological becoming*, Freedman and Ball (2004) explain that although the Russian word *ideologiya* refers to a system of ideas by a social group in a general sense, the inclusion of a political idea system is inevitable in ideological development. Bakhtin's notion of *heteroglossia*, for example, suggests that perspectives of language as an autonomous system (e.g., Saussurean view) may result in the issue of the 'standardisation' of language, as language becomes a means for centralising power (Robinson, 2011). Moreover, Bakhtin's dialogism can be applied politically in the discussion of several issues. In education, for instance, it can relate to the attempt to encourage the multiple voices to be heard and valued in classrooms as opposed to the 'traditional' power hierarchy of the teacher as 'knower' and others' voices being less important and thus often silenced (Robinson, 2011).

To sum up, the works by Hymes, Halliday, Vygotskian scholars and Bakhtin have helped to 'turn the spotlight' on language-in-use, blurring the separating line between language and society, a legacy of Saussurean structuralism. Through the lens of

language as discourse, language is viewed as more flexible, dynamic, and socially contingent. Moreover, in the case of Vygotskian tradition and Bakhtin's theory, we can see partly the operation of language in broader contexts (i.e., historical, cultural, and political), or, in other words, the interplay between language and ideology. This issue of ideology is the central concern of scholars who conceptualise language as ideology and who I present and discuss in the next section.

3.2.3. Language as ideology

The concept *ideology* has its origins in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment but has often been linked to the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Brooker, 2003). One dimension in Marx and Engels's definition of ideology refers to a fixed set of ideas by the ruling class. This class-related definition of ideology has been attacked as narrow, particularly in light of social and technological developments, which have significantly changed traditional class identities. In critical studies of ideology, attention has been directed to issues of "language, gender, generation, race, ethnicity, sexuality and nation" (Brooker, 2003, p. 134). However, the principal theme in inquiry into ideology has, in general, still been the connection between ideas and power. Thus, Thompson (1990) defines ideology broadly as "the ways in which meaning serves, in particular circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of power which are systematically asymmetrical – what [he] shall call 'relations of domination'" (p. 6).

One significant contribution to understandings of the interrelation between language and ideology is the work of the poststructural thinker Michel Foucault on the concept of *discourse*. Foucault (1972) refers to discourse not "as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). According to Foucault, "of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things" (p. 49). Discourse is produced in a particular discursive context with particular ideologies and interests. Different discourses therefore construct different ways of viewing the world, or in other words, they make different truth claims. As Burr (2015) interprets Foucault's idea, "if discourses regulate our knowledge of the world, our common understanding of things and events, and if these shared understandings inform our social practices then it becomes clear that there is an intimate relationship between discourse, knowledge and power" (p. 79).

Another significant source of understanding language as ideology can be found in the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. For Bourdieu (1977), language is an "instrument of action (or power)" (p. 645). In arguing against the abstraction of Chomsky's concept of competence, Bourdieu holds that "language is a *praxis*: it is *made for saying*, *i.e.* for use in strategies which are invested with all possible functions and not only communication functions" (p. 646, original emphasis). He posits that in linguistic transactions, one needs to know not dictionary words with abstract meanings but how to use language appropriately in particular fields or markets. For him, the linguistic production in a particular field is decided by "the symbolic power relation between the two speakers, *i.e.* on the size of their respective capitals of authority (which is not reducible to specifically linguistic capital)" (p. 648). One speaks not only to be understood but also to command respect, obedience, or belief from the listener. With this argument, Bourdieu proposes what he believes to be a fuller definition of competence than Chomsky's: "competence as the right to speech, *i.e.* to the legitimate language, the authorized language which is also the language of authority" (p. 648). Bourdieu uses these conceptions to explain issues in historical and social contexts such as the struggle of those defending a threatened capital (e.g., Latin), the issue of languages in formerly colonized countries, and the dominance of one language in the case of a bilingualism situation or one usage in the case of a class society.

The connection between language and ideology is also clearly reflected in the works of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in literacy education. Drawing on Marx's view that school knowledge was underpinned by the ideology of the ruling class, Freire (1970/2005) develops a pedagogy to help oppressed communities to learn literacy skills, and at the same time to understand the social, cultural and economic systems as the causes of their oppression and to become more fully human by actively changing society for the better. His approach to literacy starts with finding the program content of education – the "generative themes" – through investigating (by dialoguing with these people) their "thought-language" about their reality, their level of consciousness of their reality, and their worldviews (pp. 96-7). This is then followed by helping them to decode and recode the meanings of the words and rename their world. Thus, central to his literacy programs are issues of race, class, gender, culture and ethnicity. Freire's literacy program with the principle of reading the word reading the world shows clearly the relationship between language and ideology, or in Freire's (1985) words, "the relationships between the discourse and the reality that shapes the discourse" (pp. 18-9).

Works of scholars like Foucault, Bourdieu and Freire have been recognised as constituting a critical turn in the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics. Pennycook is one of the scholars who have tirelessly promoted critical approaches to applied linguistics and language education, contributing to the development of a new field – that is, critical applied linguistics (see Pennycook, 1990, 2001). Quite recently, he and some like-minded scholars attempt to 'disinvent' and reconstitute the notion of language (see Makoni & Pennycook, 2007b). Makoni and Pennycook (2007a) question the assumptions about language that they believe are not considered in many other conceptions. They point out that languages were invented as a result of the Christian/colonial and nationalistic projects. The social construction of language implies an ideology that languages are autonomous and countable entities situated in clear territorial boundaries. This ideology of linguistic enumerability and singularity is, in fact, tied to notions of uniformity and homogeneity and has, therefore, exerted very real material effects on the construction of language policies, the implementation of education, the development of language tests and the labelling of people. Makoni and Pennycook (2007a) argue that concepts such as additive bilingualism, multilingualism and code-switching are in fact "a pluralization of monolingualism", for they are still based on the idea of language as 'objects' (p. 29). Makoni and Pennycook (2007a) propose disinvention as a strategy for rethinking some conceptions of language such as language as a medium of communication, language as system, language as describable entity, and language as competence.

In the same critical line, but working from Vygotsky-inspired sociocultural theories, Thorne (2005) argues for the need and the potential to advance sociocultural theory and its outgrowth, activity theory, to critical scholarship, with more focus on issues of power, agency and identity. It is because Vygotsky's cultural-historical approaches[25] have their roots in Marxist principles. In 2007, consistent with Makoni and Pennycook's (2007a) central concern regarding disinventing and reconstituting the notion of language, Thorne and Lantolf (2007) propose a linguistics of communicative activity (LCA) which aims to address "the historical-contextual dynamics of the adaptability of the sign as it mediates communication, meaning and thinking" (p. 175). In developing the LCA framework, Thorne and Lantolf aspire to "disinvent language understood as an object and to reinvent language as *activity*, where the term activity describes a specific form of human societal existence that consists of purposeful changes to, and

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[25] According to Lantolf and Beckett (2009), 'cultural psychology' or 'cultural-historical psychology' is Vygotsky's term to refer to his theory. It was later replaced by Wertsch's term 'sociocultural'.

transformation of, natural, social and mental realities (Davydov, 1999:39)" (p. 171, original emphasis). This perspective highlights the agency of individuals in employing a range of semiotic resources for interpersonal communication with others and, more importantly, for transforming themselves and the community.

I have so far reviewed different understandings of the concept *language* from three major perspectives: language as system, language as discourse, and language as ideology. On the one hand, there are conceptions of language as a monolithic system independent of contexts; on the other hand, we also see constructions of language as contextually contingent practice, action and activity, with contexts ranging from interpersonal to socio-cultural to historical and political. It is worth noting here that the three traditions are not mutually exclusive. To some extent they overlap. For instance, Hymes's notion of communicative competence can be seen to include Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence. One can also see a connection between Halliday's and Saussure's discussions of language as a system, though from different perspectives. Further, there is potential for extending the Vygotskian tradition (which is rooted in Marx's principles) and Bakhtin's theory into the tradition of language as ideology. Thus, the categories that I am using here are unavoidably arbitrary in part and should not be seen as choices between opposites. I have attempted to present them as complementing each other and contributing to our growing understanding of the complexity around the concept of language. As Hanks (1996) puts it, language can be viewed as both individual and social, and as both an abstract system and a situated practice; what is important is to see that these systematic features of language are "locked into the kinds of activities that speakers carry out with speech" (p. 9, as cited in Thorne & Lantolf, 2007, p. 171).

Therefore, all three traditions are useful for studies into language pedagogy such as this research project. The views of language as a system (here, I mean both abstract and dynamic) assist with constructing instructional materials and teaching practices. Meanwhile, the conception of language as ideology helps me understand the way language operates in society, and thereby develop and adjust my social vision and pedagogical instruction for teaching the English language in the present Vietnam.

3.2.4. From language to languaging to translanguaging

In this last section of the conceptualisation of language, I discuss one recent perspective which attempts to move beyond the constraints of the notion of 'language' per se in order to be better able to capture the dynamism of language practices. Although my research project was not informed by this development at the stage of the fieldwork, my analysis of the data suggested to me the usefulness of this perspective in constructing a pedagogy for English language teaching in Vietnam in this globalisation era. It is, therefore, essential to review the relevant literature, which shed light on the analysis and discussion of the data and helped me reframe my pedagogical framework after the fieldwork.

One issue emerging from the literature of language as discourse and language as ideology is the agency of speakers in the meaning-making process. When language is conceptualised in terms of practices rather than as a static structure, the focus shifts to consider the multiple ways in which language users appropriate language. Recently, those who have been exploring this perspective have proposed the term *languaging* to capture this dynamic practice of appropriation (García & Wei, 2014). According to Joseph (2002), *languaging* was, in fact, incorporated into the English vocabulary as early as the seventeenth century. García and Wei (2014) trace the first use of the term to the work of the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in 1973. Their theory of *autopoeisis* about the inseparability of our biological and social history of actions from our perceptions of the world leads them to view language as closely connected with human actions with others. Thus, they use *languaging* to refer to the process of continuous becoming of ourselves as we make meaning of the world through language practices.

With the rise of post-structuralism and the move away from the view of language as an enclosed system (as can be seen in the preceding sections), languaging has received increased attention from scholars who believe it better reflects the fluidity of language practices. The concept of 'language' has traditionally been thought of as national phenomenon (Møller & Jørgensen, 2009), which is an invention of nation-state/colonial language ideologies (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007a). Languages are often associated with delimitable entities such as English, French, Swahili and Kinyarwanda (Gafaranga, 2005). However, for Møller and Jørgensen (2009), "as human beings, we do not primarily use "a language" or "some languages", we use *language*, linguistic features,

and we do so to achieve our aims" (p. 147, original emphasis). We, *languagers* (Jørgensen, 2004), "use semiotic resources at our disposal in strategic ways to communicate and act in the world" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 10). Thus, according to Juffermans (2011), the traditional Fishmanian question 'who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom, and when and to what end' in sociolinguistics can be changed to "*who languages how and what is being languaged under particular circumstances in a particular place and time*" (p. 165, original emphasis). The move toward *language* (in singular or as a verb) is "a human turn" in sociolinguistics (Juffermans, 2011, p. 165), highlighting the speakers' agency in the meaning-making process (García & Wei, 2014).

Another closely related concept, which has gained in popularity recently, especially in bilingual education, is *translanguaging* (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Wei, 2011). According to García and Wei (2014), the term is Baker's (2001) translation of the Welsh *trawsieithu* coined by Cen William (1994, 1996) to refer to a pedagogical practice in which students switch between two languages for different purposes – for example, reading in one language and writing in another language. García (2009) extends Baker's definition, which she says was still based on the concept of two languages, by referring to translanguagings as "*multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*" (p. 45, original emphasis). Translanguaging is different from code-switching, which refers to shifting between two languages and is thus critiqued by Makoni and Pennycook (2007a) (presented in Section 3.2.3 earlier) as still caught within the monolingual paradigm. Translanguaging also differs from traditional conceptions of bilingualism, which Makoni and Pennycook (2007a) critique as merely "a pluralization of monolingualism" (p. 29). It refers to languaging actions that challenge the power inequalities between national languages as produced by nation-state/colonial language ideologies (García & Wei, 2014). It "works by generating trans-systems of semiosis, and creating trans-spaces where new language practices, meaning-making multimodal practices, subjectivities and social structures are dynamically generated in response to the complex interactions of the 21st century" (p. 43). As such, it is, as García and Wei say, subsumed under the Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia* (referred to earlier in Section 3.2.2). With this translanguaging lens, the language practices of bilingual people become the norm, not the language of monolinguals as traditionally conceptualised (García, 2012). This construction of norm echoes Hymes's image of the

ideal listener-speaker as multilingual (presented in Section 3.2.2). It is also linked with McKay's (2002) conception of language learning as bilingualism rather than 'language shift' in her discussion of teaching and learning English as an international language, which I present later in Section 3.3.3.

To sum up, the section has presented and discussed a range of understandings of the concept 'language' which informed the pedagogical framing and reframing throughout my project. The first three conceptions (i.e., language as system, discourse and ideology) justify my decision to draw on Cummins's (2001) academic expertise development framework (explained in Section 3.5.1) when I devised and implemented teaching plans before and during the fieldwork. The last two conceptions (i.e., languaging and particularly translanguaging) help me gain insights into a number of pedagogical issues arising during the teaching course in the fieldwork and thus develop a more coherent pedagogical framework for my teaching context. As my study aims at reframing pedagogy for teaching English, in the next section, I explore how the English language has been conceptualised in the literature.

3.3. Conceptualising the English language

The preceding section has shown the complexity around the conception of language and how one's conceptualisation of language will influence both the kinds of teaching enacted in language learning classrooms and the kinds of research into pedagogical practices undertaken in these classrooms. Similarly, there are diverse perspectives regarding how to understand the English language, as it becomes the dominant vehicle for international communication in this globalising world. As presented in Chapter 2, the global spread of English has led to significant changes in the sociolinguistic landscape of this language. It has become a heterogeneous language with diverse forms, users and uses. Therefore, the 'traditional' conceptualisations of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language/English as an Additional Language (ESL/EAL), and English as a Native Language/English as a Mother Tongue (ENL/EMT) are no longer sufficient to capture the fluidity, diversity, and complexity of the English language in today's world. Different approaches to conceptualising English for the purposes of research, teaching and learning have emerged. Within the scope of this study, I look at three perspectives that have been attracting much scholarly

attention: World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and English as an International Language.

3.3.1. World Englishes

World Englishes (WE) is conceptualised by Kachruvian scholars as a paradigm to capture the global functions of English. According to Kachru (1992, 1997), the emergence of the concept dates back to the post-colonial period in the 1960s with his own early attempt to study one of the post-imperial Englishes – that is, Indian English (see Kachru, 1965). The pluralisation of the term 'English' is, as Kachru (1992, 1997) emphasises, intended to reflect the diversity in forms, functions, and sociocultural and linguistic contexts of English. The abbreviation of the term 'World Englishes' stresses "'WE-ness', and not the dichotomy between *us* and *them* (the 'native' and 'non-native' users)" (Kachru, 1992, p. 2, original emphasis), or in McArthur's (1993) words, "a club of equals" (p. 334). The WE paradigm thus advocates "pluralism and inclusivity" (Bolton, 2005, p. 78). Kachru's (and like-minded scholars') interest in linguistic, cultural and pragmatic diversity led to the launch of the *World Englishes* journal in 1982, which documents and discusses varieties of English in the world.

Despite the aim of "democratization of attitudes to English everywhere in the globe" (McArthur, 1993, p. 334) and the contribution of WE studies to the recognition of bilinguals' creativity, the WE paradigm has been critiqued for the ways WE scholars capture the plurality of English. For example, Canagarajah (1999) is critical of the removal of "eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes" in the process of systematising and standardising the varieties (p. 180). In doing so, as he argues, "the Kachruvian paradigm follows the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists" (p. 180). Saraceni (2009) expresses concerns over the concept of country-based varieties. He points to the simplification of the geographical demarcation which is based on some selected phonological, lexical and grammatical items, the assumption of a uniformity of use within a country, particularly multilingual multicultural countries like Singapore, and the assumed alignment between nation and language which is, indeed, a legacy of European imperialism. This issue of variety echoes Makoni and Pennycook's (2007a) critique of the ideology of enumerability, singularity, uniformity and homogeneity underlying the concept of language (referred to earlier). Pennycook (2007) posits that "the concept of World Englishes does little more than pluralise

monolithic English" and "pluralisation of English, therefore, […] remains an exclusionary paradigm" (p. 107).

Sharing the same interest with WE scholars in bilinguals' creative ways of using English but discontent with their geographically based model, some scholars have proposed what they believe is a more fluid perspective of English use – that is, English as a Lingua Franca. The next section looks at this paradigm with its contribution to understandings of the global nature of English as well as the critique of its limitations.

3.3.2. English as a Lingua Franca

The term *lingua franca* is usually used to refer to a language chosen for communication between people who do not speak each other's languages (Jenkins, 2014; Seidlhofer, 2004). Nevertheless, some scholars also acknowledge the use of the term in interactions between 'native' speakers of the lingua franca and other groups of people (see, e.g., Friedrich & Matsuda, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2004). Throughout history, various languages have been used as a kind of lingua franca. However, no language has ever achieved such a global status as English in the past few decades (Friedrich & Matsuda, 2010; Jenkins, 2014). Therefore, the notion of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been suggested as a way to capture the current global functions of this language.

Within this paradigm, there have existed two main schools of thought. In the first school, researchers are interested in identifying and codifying distinctive features (mostly grammatical and phonological) characterising the use of English in lingua franca contexts in order to build ELF corpora for the purposes of research, teaching and learning. This interest in ELF was kindled by Seidlhofer's (2001) call for empirical work on describing the extensive use of English in contexts where it serves as a lingua franca. According to Seidlhofer, despite the discourse of multiculturalism, multilingualism and pluricentrism in ELT, English teachers' work was still oriented towards 'native' speakers' norms. The reason of this "*conceptual gap*" (p. 137, original emphasis) was, as Seidlhofer argued, "the way 'English' is talked about in the relevant literature – the default referent, implicitly or explicitly, is ENL (English as a native language)" (p. 135). Drawing on Widdowson's (1997) construction of the spread of English as a virtual language rather than the distribution of a franchised copy of ENL, she proposed the conceptualisation of ELF as an alternative to ENL. Further, taking Kachru's work on codification of indigenised varieties of English as examples, she

called for research agenda that could describe and codify ELF use. In her view, this would serve as a new resource for English teaching and learning. Since the publication of Seidlhofer's (2001) article, there have been several corpus projects conducted such as the corpus of English in Academic Settings, or ELFA (Mauranen, 2003), the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English, or VOICE (Seidlhofer, 2004), and the Asian Corpus of ELF or ACE (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Also, the increasing body of research on ELF has led to the launch of the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* as a platform for scholars in the field.

Despite its contribution to the recognition of 'non-native' speakers' English use, this ELF approach has some limitations. First, while acknowledging the participation of 'native' speakers in some ELF interactions, ELF scholars tend to focus their investigation on ELF contexts without this group of speakers (Prodromou, 2007) (see also Jenkins, 2006a, 2006b; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2005). Ironically, this shows that "the spirit of the 'native-speaker'," as Prodromou reasons, still "haunts ELF by its very absence, […] hovering in the background like a slightly malignant presence" (p. 49). In addition, although it is generally agreed that 'native' speakers are no longer the norm for English, it is doubtful that their use of English plays no role in shaping the language, given the global flows in today's world. Another criticism of this paradigm is the confusion in the work of these ELF scholars as to whether ELF refers to form or function (Saraceni, 2009). For Saraceni, it is impossible to conceive that there exist some particular linguistic features characterising English as it serves as a lingua franca in diverse contexts. The approach thus has, as he concludes, both epistemological as well as methodological problems. Drawing on Pennycook's (2006) discussion on transcultural flows, he suggests that the language is depicted *a posteriori*. In relation to research into ELF forms, Matsuda and Friedrich (2012) express their concern over "the birth of a super-national variety", creating "an additional layer in the English language hierarchy to which different people would have different degrees of access, and that, as a result, would generate greater inequality among speakers of different Englishes" (p. 19). Earlier, Prodromou (2007) emphasises the multiplicity of English and the supremacy of heteroglossia [in Bakhtin's (1981) sense] in today's world, and proposes thinking "in terms of varied *processes of interaction* rather than a *single prescriptive model*, which is what the ELF core is in danger of becoming" (p. 50, original emphasis). It is probable that in light of the critique of ELF as variety, ELF proponents have recently proposed another conceptualisation of the term. Seidlhofer (2009) views ELF

as inherently fluid and ELF users as "languagers [in Phipp's (2006) sense]" (p. 242) participating in "*communities of practice* characterized by 'mutual engagement' in shared practices, taking part in some jointly negotiated 'enterprise', and making use of members' 'shared repertoire' (Wenger 1998:72ff.)" (p. 238, original emphasis). She uses the notion of 'languaging' [in Swain's (2006) sense] to describe the process in which ELF users negotiate English, exploiting their linguistic resources so as to achieve their communicative purpose. From this, Seidlhofer (2011) redefines ELF as "not a variety of English but a variable way of using it: English that functions *as* a lingua franca" (p. 77, original emphasis, as cited in Jenkins, 2014, p. 95). This adapted framework seems to be in line with the conceptualisation of ELF by the second school of thought.

Unlike the first school, who tend to view (at least, originally, as presented above) ELF as an identifiable grammatical and phonological system, the second school is interested in the pragmatic features that enable ELF interactions (Canagarajah, 2007). On grounds of the diversity in ELF participants' backgrounds and expectations, House (2003) suggests basing ELF research on an "activity-based concept of community of practice [in Wenger's (1998) sense] with its diffuse alliances and communities of imagination and alignment" (p. 573). With this concept, ELF is characterised as a hybrid language shaped by the heterogeneous sources that ELF users bring to the interaction. In a manner congruent with House's theorisation, Meierkord (2004) argues that as ELF communities are not stable, it is unlikely that ELF will have a standardised form. Therefore, she views ELF as "a variety in constant flux, involving different constellations of speakers of diverse individual Englishes in every single interaction" (p. 115). Both House and Meierkord thus focus their attention on strategies that ELF users employ when communicating with one another. In a similar vein, Canagarajah (2007) takes the position that multilingualism, variation, hybridity and fluidity are at the heart of lingua franca English (LFE) research. He contends that "LFE is not a product located in the mind of the speaker; it is a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors" (p. 94). This conception of LFE is later referred to by García and Wei (2014) as languaging. Like House and Meierkord, Canagarajah is interested in complex pragmatic strategies that LFE users utilise to "negotiate their variable form" (p. 93).

In addition to the focus on pragmatic features as opposed to forms, Canagarajah and some other scholars are attempting to broaden the ELF perspective by including 'native'

speakers of English in their research. Considering increased interactions in the context of global flows, P. Roberts and Canagarajah (2009) suggest including in EFL research international encounters where 'native' speakers use English as a lingua franca. They propose "[moving] on to a further level of consideration in the global status of English by asking the question: How is English used as a contact language by all speakers, irrespective of their English language acquisition history?" (p. 210). Hesitating to use the term ELF for fear of confusion with 'traditional' ELF research which tends to exclude 'native' speakers, P. Roberts and Canagarajah propose the label 'ELF2' to refer to this "second, broader level of meaning" of ELF (p. 210). In looking at some ELF research, particularly in the second school, which included 'native' speakers in the data, and showing their own study, P. Roberts and Canagarajah (2009) posit the potential and the need for research into negotiation strategies that facilitate international interactions among speakers of English, either 'native' or 'non-native'.

Overall, we can see here a tendency in the whole ELF paradigm to develop an approach which can celebrate ELF users' heterogeneous repertoires. In the next section, I look at another emerging framework which attempts to capture the heterogeneity of the global English community and the pluricentricity of English. While WE research tends to focus on (and thus be associated with) nativised Englishes in Kachru's outer circle, and 'traditional' ELF research with interactions among 'non-native' speakers in Kachru's extending circle, the third paradigm aims to embrace all interactions in which English is the medium (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

3.3.3. English as an International Language

The concept of English as an International Language (EIL) was initially proposed by Larry Smith (1976/1983, 1978/1983, 1981/1983). Smith (1983) refers to EIL broadly as "functions of English, not to any given form of the language" (p. vi). For Smith, "it is the use of English by people of different nations and different cultures in order to communicate with one another" (p. vi). He insists that 'native' speakers of English can no longer claim the ownership of English and they also need to learn EIL in order to interact internationally. The need to study and teach EIL as called for by Smith has been taken up by other scholars among whom are McKay with her book in 2002, *Teaching English as an international language,* and Sharifian with his edited book in 2009, *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues*. Both McKay and Sharifian have been striving to develop EIL as a paradigm for researching,

teaching and learning English in light of the global spread of the language and the pluralisation of its users, uses and forms. Like Smith, Sharifian (2009a) stresses that EIL does not refer to a particular variety of English as thought by some scholars, particularly those who use the term *International English*. Sharifian (2009a) maintains that:

> EIL in fact rejects the idea of any particular variety being selected as a *lingua franca* for international communication. EIL emphasizes that English, with its many varieties, is a language of international, and therefore *intercultural*, communication. (p. 2, original emphasis)

It can be seen that with the broad theorisation, EIL includes speakers in both the WE and 'traditional' ELF models (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). Indeed, the EIL paradigm is closely connected with these two frameworks (Marlina, 2014; Sharifian, 2009b). The work in WE is relevant to the teaching and learning of EIL (see, e.g., Matsuda, 2009) and EIL can also contribute to the WE framework (see, e.g., Sharifian, 2009a). ELF is also germane to the work in EIL (see, e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2014) and vice versa (see, e.g., Modiano, 2009). Since its emergence, EIL has attracted much scholarly attention, especially in the area of teaching and learning English (see, e.g., Alsagoff, McKay, Hu, & Renandya, 2012; Matsuda, 2012b). The growing body of research in EIL has also led to the launch of the *Journal of English as an International Language* as a forum for scholars in the field.

Since its emergence in the 1970s, EIL scholarship has helped broaden understandings of the global spread and use of English. However, some researchers have been critical of the notion of EIL. As one of the scholars who maintain that the concept of language is an invention [see Makoni & Pennycook (2007b) as referred to earlier], Pennycook (2007) challenges the existence of a thing called English. The myth of English as an entity has, as he argues, produced a discourse around it with many truth claims (in Foucaultian sense). Earlier, Pennycook already expressed concerns over the natural, neutral and beneficial discourse of EIL [see Pennycook (1994) as discussed in Chapter 2]. Kubota (2012) adds a good point to Pennycook's discussion on the myth of EIL when offering a different perspective on the statistics that are often employed to talk about the global status of English. While the figure of more than one billion users of English is often used as a way to discuss the notion of EIL, which is, according to Pennycook (2007, p. 100), "casually insidious", Kubota reminds us that Graddol's

(2006) estimation of more than three-quarters of the world being non-English speaking means English does not function as a lingua franca in all communications. Thus, the "pragmatic power" of English as an international language is "overestimated" (p. 62). The reason for this exaggeration is, according to Kubota, the "exclusive attention" to English in the discussions in the field (p. 63). While acknowledging that English is our inevitable topic, she suggests shifting from "the monolingual focus in EIL pedagogy as the norm" to "greater attention to multilingual conditions" (p. 63). This idea resonates with McKay's (2002) suggestion for bilingualism rather than 'language shift' in English teaching and learning. In order to "situate English language education in global/local multilingualism" (p. 63), Kubota proposes the notion of border-crossing communication which "embraces other languages as it takes into account the situations where English does not function as a lingua franca" (p. 65). Kubota's inclusive position is, in a way, similar to Makoni and Pennycook's (2007a) suggestion of translingual language practices as the basis for language policy and language education, given the reality of overlapping and translingual uses by language users. It is also aligned with the perspective of those who advocate translanguaging as a lens for research and pedagogy (discussed in Section 3.2.4). English should then be treated as part of users' (and learners') interlingual resources.

In summary, I have presented in this section three conceptualisations of English in this globalising world. They overlap to some extent and, despite the criticisms that each has received, they have all contributed complex insights into the uses, users and forms of English today. They all embrace diversity and challenge the 'traditional' view which favours 'the Queen's English', 'Received Pronunciation' and 'General American' (Marlina, 2014). Although the concept of English per se has been challenged by some scholars, as English language teaching is the focus in my study, it is important that I have a way to talk about English. Here I adopt the notion of EIL, for I find it more comprehensive than WE and ELF. In addition, critically engaging with the growing body of literature on EIL pedagogy has been important for me to construct my pedagogy in this study. While adopting EIL, I also take into consideration the critique of EIL and this has helped me develop a pedagogical framework.

3.4. Conceptualising pedagogy

As my study concerns pedagogy for teaching the English language, it is important that I clarify how I interpret this concept and in which tradition of pedagogy my research is situated. In this section I first investigate the origins of the term 'pedagogy', and then present the main pedagogical orientations discussed in the literature. From this, I explain what school of thought and discourses I draw on in constructing and reconstructing the pedagogical framework for my teaching context.

The term 'pedagogy' has its etymological roots in Greek, meaning "to lead a child" (from *pais* – 'child' and *ago* – 'to lead') (Macedo, 2000/2005, p. 25). To understand this term, it is essential to comprehend the meaning of the concept *pedagogue* (*paidagögous*). This Greek word refers to a "child-tender", not a teacher (*didáskalos*) as normally thought of in English today (Longenecker, 1982, p. 53). *Paidagögous* was normally a slave trusted by the father of the family to accompany his son(s) and oversee his/their activities and conduct. As such, *paidagögous* did not give formal instruction like *didáskalos* although that might have happened indirectly through his custodial and disciplinary functions. Longenecker cites Plato's explanation of *paidagögous* as "men who by age and experience are qualified to serve as both leaders (*hëgemonas*) and custodians (*paidagögous*) of children" (p. 53). Notwithstanding the differentiation between pedagogy and didactics, over an apparently intersecting history, marked by the instructional turn in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which brought these two terms, together with 'syllabus', 'curriculum', and 'method', into a conceptual infra-structure of modern schooling with a focus on the process of teaching, the terms have come to have almost the same meaning – that is, the science or art of teaching [see D. Hamilton (1999) for a detailed discussion].

The concept of 'pedagogy' re-emerged with growing scholarly interest in the 1970s and has since been associated with historical, social and cultural analysis (D. Hamilton, 1999). Different pedagogies have been developed such as critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, progressive pedagogy, and radical pedagogy. One scholar whose work has contributed to this resurgence is Paulo Freire (D. Hamilton, 1999). In his seminal book *Pedagogy of the oppressed* in 1970/2005, Freire criticises what he calls the 'banking' conception of education in which "the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (p. 72) whose task is "to "fill" the students with the contents of his [sic]

narration" (p. 71). The banking method is, as Freire insists, a way of "projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression" and this "negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry" (p. 72). He proposes instead a dialogical approach to literacy (referred to in Section 3.2.3 earlier), which he terms "the pedagogy of the oppressed, a pedagogy which must be forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity" (p. 48, original emphasis).

With respect to pedagogic analysis, Freire's work contributes to the construction of the notion of 'pedagogy'. It helps to draw attention to the relationship between education and politics. Arguing against those who interpret 'pedagogy' (the term Freire used to describe his educational approach) as "a 'teaching' method rather than a philosophy or a social theory", Aronowitz (1993) stresses that with this term, Freire "means to offer a system in which the locus of the learning process is shifted from the teacher to the student" (p. 8). The aim is "an altered *power* relationship, not only in the classroom but in the broader social canvas as well" (p. 8, original emphasis). Macedo (2000/2005) adds that educators who fail to see the difference between 'method' and 'pedagogy' tend to view education as neutral. He points out that the Greek root of the notion 'pedagogy' indicates that "education is inherently directive and must always be transformative" (p. 25).

As mentioned above, different socio-political approaches to pedagogy have emerged since the 1970s. These pedagogies are often contrasted with ""mainstream" or "traditional" schooling practices and theories", "rooted in ostensibly positivistic and phenomenological thought" (Gore, 1993, p. 3). With a view of "pedagogy as constitutive of power relations" (p. 3), these "critical" pedagogies focus on "macro" issues such as the institutions and ideologies, putting forward their social visions for education. While sharing the view of the critical approaches, Gore holds that each approach to pedagogy "is never *only* a new set of instructional ideas" but always contains, sometimes implicitly, a social vision (p. 4, original emphasis). From this, she proposes a construction of pedagogy which consists of both instruction and social vision. This conception relates to both attention to the social political contexts of the teaching processes and concern regarding the actualisation of the social vision into classroom practice. As such, this broad definition of pedagogy is appropriate for my project, for while framing and reframing my instructional act, I am also considering its educational vision in the light of the social, cultural and political contexts of my

teaching practice (see the knowledge base framework in my study in Section 3.1.4). These two components are closely connected and require attention in my attempt to develop my understandings and practices of English teaching and learning.

I have mentioned a number of approaches to pedagogy, which have been subsumed under two broad (thus, perhaps crude) categories: "mainstream" or "traditional" versus "critical". For the purpose of developing an appropriate pedagogical framework for my tertiary context, it is helpful here to have a closer look at some pedagogical traditions. Here I find Cummins's (2009b) categorisation useful. Cummins (2009b) specifies three pedagogical orientations: transmission, social constructivist, and transformative (see also Cummins, 2001).

Transmission or traditional orientation is characterised by the goal of transmitting information and skills stated in the curriculum (and embodied in tests) directly to students. Activation of students' prior knowledge may occur but is mostly in the form of recalling content and skills previously taught. Learning strategies may also be included in the instruction but generally with a focus on the content in the lessons instead of in terms of collaborative inquiry and knowledge generation. Social constructivist pedagogy then broadens the focus by including the development of students' higher-order thinking abilities. This is done through experiential learning, and teachers' and students' co-constructing knowledge and understanding. This approach is generally attributed to the influential work of Vygotsky. Transformative pedagogy[26] in general shares a common instructional orientation with social constructivist pedagogy but, as inspired by the work of Freire, broadens still further by incorporating a focus on the interrelationship between knowledge and power. With the aim of developing students' critical literacy, transformative pedagogy uses collaborative critical inquiry to enable students to analyse societal discourse, understand their social realities, and conceive (and frequently act on) ways that might transform these realities.

Cummins does not see these three orientations to pedagogy as oppositional to each other but nests them within each other instead (see Figure 3.2). He contends that in pursuit of "a wider variety of pedagogical goals and a broader educational vision" (p. 43), transformative pedagogy builds on and expands the other two orientations. Like many transmission approaches, transformative pedagogy acknowledges the relevance of

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[26] Cummins explains elsewhere that the use of the term 'transformative pedagogy' instead of 'critical pedagogy' is to highlight an active focus on social change (see Cummins, 2001).

explicit instruction and structured guidelines for effective teaching and learning. However, it does not rely exclusively on transmission of information and skills, for this may lead to memorisation and passive learning. Instead, transformative pedagogy sees the value of co-construction of knowledge between teacher and students in social constructivist approaches. By actively tapping into students' prior knowledge and experience and developing their higher-order thinking capacities, social constructivist pedagogy helps empower students. However, this empowerment is constructed more in terms of "cognitive dimensions of learning" rather than "how societal power relations affect learning" (p. 43). The latter is addressed directly in transformative pedagogy. Therefore, as Cummins says, "the orientations are nested within each other and merge into each other along an expanding continuum characterized by increasing instructional inclusion of social justice and equity concerns" (p. 44).
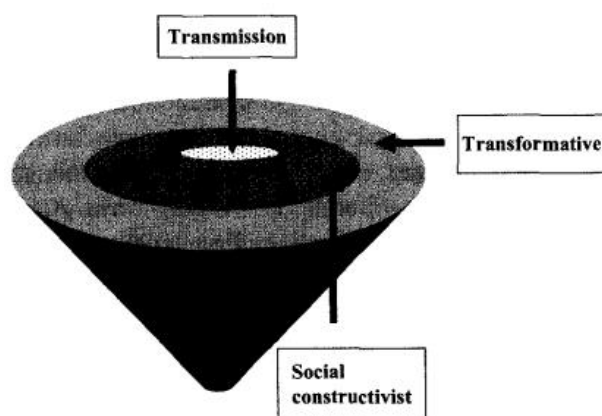
Figure 3.2 – Cummins's (2004/2009b) nested pedagogical orientations

As such, Cummins's conception of transformative pedagogy is useful for my PhD project. His formulation of vision of social justice in terms of instructional practice along the expanding continuum provides an inclusive conceptual space for me to frame and reframe my pedagogy for teaching the English language, particularly in light of the prevalence of transmission approaches in my teaching context (presented in Chapter 2).

3.5. Emerging pedagogical framework for the project

The conceptualisations of language, English and pedagogy that I have presented and discussed in the preceding sections, along with the discussion on the international, national and institutional contexts in Chapter 2, provide the basis for me to frame and reframe my pedagogy throughout this project (i.e., before, during and after the

fieldwork). In this section, I present the initial emerging pedagogical framework that I used to develop specific content and instructional strategies for my classes in the fieldwork in Vietnam. I view this framework as "emerging" – that is, it was dynamic and open to adaptation as the project proceeded (as will be seen in the discussion chapters) and will continue to emerge after the completion of the project, as long as I still engage in reflexive inquiry into what it means to teach English. The framework is based on Cummins's (2001) academic expertise development framework complemented by an EIL pedagogy.

3.5.1. Cummins's academic expertise development framework

One of the key conceptual resources I drew upon in the construction of the initial frame for the fieldwork was Cummins's (2001) framework for academic language learning. This was particularly helpful because of the way it was developed from a multilingual perspective and it represents a transformative approach to pedagogy, as I now present below.

Drawing on research into issues of schooling in North America, where teachers are seeking to address the needs of immigrant children, Cummins (2001) posits that interactions between students and teachers and among students play a determining role in the academic success or failure of culturally and linguistically diverse students. He shows how these interactions can be empowering when students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and prior experiences are respected and included, leading to their active participation and academic investment; or they can be disempowering when these repertoires of students are ignored and excluded, resulting in a disconnection between instruction and what they have learnt previously, and thus their silence and non-participation in class. Cummins regards these interactions as processes of identity negotiation and contends that they reflect the macro-interactions between dominant and subordinated groups in the society. Just like micro-interactions in the classroom, macro-interactions can be *collaborative relations of power* when "participants in the relationship are *empowered* through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in his or her identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to create change in his or her life or social situation", or *coercive relations of power* when "the dominant group defines the subordinated group as inferior (or evil)", resulting in a relationship which "restricts [the latter's] development and potential" (pp. 14-16, original emphasis). Micro-interactions between teachers and students not only reflect macro-interactions but

they also help promote collaborative relations of power or reinforce coercive relations of power. This is because through the interactions with students, teachers' role definitions are revealed – that is, "the way they view students' possibilities and the messages they communicate to students in regard to the contributions they can make to their societies" (p. 17). In other words, classroom interactions project "a triangular set of images", including "an image of our own identities as educators", "an image of the identity options we highlight for our students", and "an image of the society we hope our students will help form" (p. 17). Therefore, in his pedagogical framework (p. 125), Cummins emphasises the interactional space between teachers and students and offers instructional guidelines for shifting the micro-interactions towards collaborative relations of power, as represented in Figure 3.3 below:
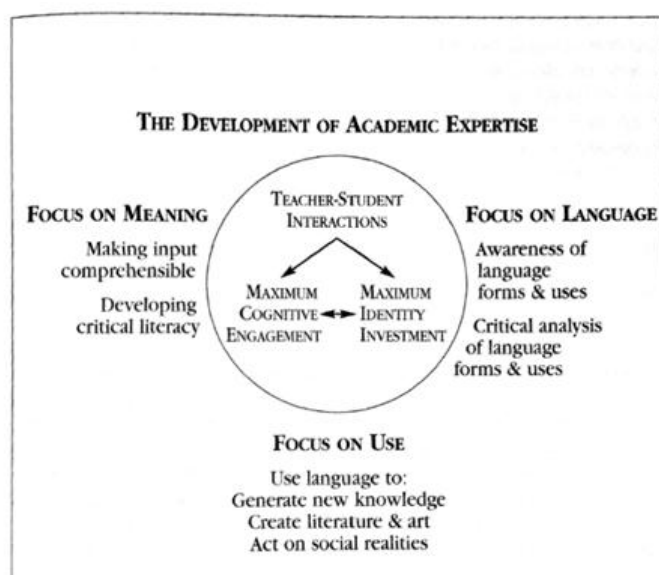
Figure 3.3 – Cummins's (2001) academic expertise development framework

At the heart of this instructional framework is the teacher-student interactions referred to above. Within this "interpersonal space"[27] maximum cognitive engagement and identity investment can happen if optimal instruction is given (p. 19). Cummins specifies three focus areas for instruction: language, meaning and self-expression. The focus on language entails not just explicit knowledge of the formal aspects of the target language but also an awareness of how language works in society. In the focus on meaning, instruction must not only provide sufficient comprehensible input in the target language but also move beyond literal comprehension to a deeper level of cognitive and

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[27] This term has strong connections with Vygotsky's (1962) conception of the *zone of proximal development*.

linguistic processing. Finally, instruction must provide opportunities for students to use the target language to express themselves – their identities and knowledge. What is most important in this framework is the encouragement of the first languages of linguistically diverse students in all the three instructional areas in light of Cummins's arguments for collaborative power of relations, which I have presented above. The affirmation of students' cultural, linguistic and personal identities will, as Cummins maintains, encourage their cognitive engagement and identity investment, facilitating the teaching and learning process and helping to challenge coercive relations of power in the society.

Cummins's framework for academic language learning engages to varying extents with all of the conceptions of language as system, as discourse and as ideology that I have discussed earlier. In addition, situated in transformative pedagogy, it draws on explicit instruction in transmission pedagogy and the focus on higher-order thinking and co-construction of knowledge in social constructivist pedagogy, and expands these two pedagogical orientations by taking into account the interrelation between power and education. In adopting a bilingual/multilingual perspective and stressing the value of the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students while developing the target language, it fits in with discourses of diversity, pluricentricity and hererogeneity that I have referred to throughout the earlier discussions. Further, it was a useful intellectual resource for my project in light of the discourses of simultaneously promoting multilingualism/multiculturalism and strengthening the national identity in my national context in general and in *Project 2020* in particular as mentioned in Chapter 2.

In addition to the issue of the first language, English has become a heterogeneous language with multiple forms and uses. Nevertheless, most language teaching and learning materials in Vietnam are still reliant upon 'native' English speakers as models, advocating Anglo-Saxon values (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the issue of language diversity addressed in Cummins's framework needs to be further explored from another perspective in my teaching context. Here my contention was that an EIL paradigm can complement Cummins's framework in offering useful guidelines for teaching and learning English in this context of globalisation.

3.5.2. English as an International Language pedagogy

Since Smith's conceptualisation of EIL and teaching proposal in the 1970s (referred to earlier), there has been a growing body of research into teaching practices within this paradigm. Different guidelines have been put forward regarding teaching practices, materials, and assessment. All of them share two points – that is, a break from 'native'-speaker norms, and an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity in the English landscape (see, e.g., Alsagoff et al., 2012; McKay, 2002; Matsuda, 2012b). One goal in teaching EIL is to prepare learners for participation in the globalising world with linguistic and cultural diversity (Matsuda, 2012a). EIL pedagogy, according to Marlina (2014), refers to:

> the act of professionally guiding students from all Kachruvian circles to (1) gain knowledge and awareness of the pluricentricity of English and the plurilingual nature of today's communication; (2) inspire students to give equal and legitimate recognition of all varieties of English; and (3) develop the ability to negotiate and communicate respectfully across cultures and Englishes in today's communicative settings that are international, intercultural, and multilingual in nature. (p. 7)

Within the scope of the course I was teaching in my fieldwork at Ho Chi Minh University in Vietnam, the third aim in EIL pedagogy as conceptualised by Marlina, which involves the inclusion of training for cross-cultural communication, was not possible. Therefore, I mainly focused on the first and second aims when constructing the instructional content and strategies for the course.

One important principle in EIL pedagogy is developing teaching practices that take into account global concerns and at the same time are sensitive to the local context (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; McKay, 2002; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). 'Global thinking, local teaching' (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996) has become a motto in EIL pedagogy. However, as EIL is an emerging field with a different set of assumptions from 'traditional' approaches, teachers are faced with the challenge of constructing appropriate practices for their context (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Thus suggestions regarding pedagogical strategies and content materials have been made as examples for adoption and adaptation (see, e.g., Alsagoff et al., 2012; Hino, 2010; Matsuda, 2012b). Of particular interest to my project is Hino's (2010) list of approaches, which he

identifies based on his observation of classroom practices in Japan (see Table 3.1). As actual examples of EIL teaching practices, particularly in an Asian country, these approaches served as useful starting points for me to develop my instructional framework.

Table 3.1 – Hino's (2010) list of EIL pedagogical approaches

Approach	Explanation
1. Teaching "about" EIL	raising students' awareness of the global function and the sociolinguistic landscape of English
2. Exposure to varieties of English	acquainting students with the linguistic and cultural diversity of EIL
3. Role-plays as cross-cultural training	using role-play activity to prepare students for EIL or intercultural interactions
4. Content-based approach to EIL	using content matters in EIL to help students learn EIL
5. Participation in a community of practice in EIL	providing real-life experience in EIL
6. *Yakudoku* (reading by translating) plus *ondoku* (reading aloud) (in the case of Japan)	building on indigenous approaches to teach EIL
7. Presenting the local teacher's own 'non-native' English as model	the 'non-native' English teacher's positive attitude toward her/his own indigenous variety of English turning an EFL class into an EIL-oriented class

Out of the seven approaches, I found the first and the second particularly appropriate for my teaching course in the fieldwork. Given the time and syllabus constraints and the limited resources available in my teaching context, teaching "about" EIL and exposure to varieties of English were helpful in my efforts to achieve the first and second aims in EIL pedagogy as posited by Marlina (2014) above. Inserting a session about EIL into the existing syllabus in my institution was, for me, a suitable way to raise my students' awareness of the implications of the widespread expansion of English. In addition to that, exposing my students to different varieties of English by having them listen to different accents might not only assist with raising their awareness of but also help them

to become familiar with the linguistic diversity that is part of the EIL paradigm. This second approach also relates to the focus on language and focus on meaning in Cummins's instructional framework above. Although the instruction at this stage may be only at the surface level rather than going further to critical analysis or critical literacy, the awareness of the pluricentricity of English in this globalising world is critical by itself. I hoped that this awareness, if developed, would inspire my students to recognise all varieties of English as legitimate. Besides these two approaches, my own presence as a local 'non-native' English teacher and my positive attitudes towards my and my students' indigenous variety of English (i.e., Vietnamese English) were intended to help to promote "equal and legitimate recognition" (Marlina, 2014, p. 7) of all varieties of English in general and of Vietnamese English in particular. It was also my belief that this awareness and recognition would help my students become more confident with their own way of using English. Overall, it was my hope that the application of these two approaches could contribute to my students' identity investment and cognitive engagement, which are at the centre of Cummins's framework for academic language learning.

Drawing on Cummins's framework and these two EIL pedagogical approaches, I adapted the activities and tasks in the textbooks designated for the course, and designed new ones based on my previous teaching experiences and available resources. For example, using the guidelines for the three focus areas of instruction in Cummins (2001), I created opportunities for my students to activate and build up their prior knowledge in each lesson, to engage in extensive listening, and to use English in meaningful and creative ways such as drama/role-play, interviews, and presentations. A more detailed description and explanation of the activities, tasks and techniques, along with my students' work samples for analysis, is provided in discussion chapters 6 and 8. Regarding EIL, I organised a session to discuss with my students some key issues regarding the global spread of English and designed various activities in order to expose them to different Englishes in class as well as at home (see Appendices 4 and 10). It should be noted that some of the activities that I initially planned for the course were slightly modified when I started the fieldwork as a result of the comments and suggestions from the two colleagues who observed my classes. I explain these modifications throughout the three discussion chapters (and also in Appendix 10).

In this chapter, drawing on different conceptions of knowledge base for teaching, I have articulated the framework for my study, which highlights the importance of practitioner

inquiry, and the need to develop my understandings of language (and the English language), pedagogy and different contextual factors mediating my teaching work. In light of this knowledge base framework, I have reviewed different conceptions of language, the English language, and pedagogy (and have looked at the global and local contexts in which my practice is situated in Chapter 2). I have also explicated the initial pedagogical framework for this project, which emerged from my growing understandings of these concepts by the time that I conducted the fieldwork. In the next chapter, I explore the last dimension in my knowledge base framework and also the methodology of my research – that is, practitioner inquiry.

PART THREE: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this first methodology chapter, I begin by presenting my understanding of social constructionism and qualitative research, and how they have guided the conduct of my study. I then elaborate on the practitioner inquiry tradition and explain how I draw on elements of self-study action research and autoethnography for my overall research design. This is followed by a discussion on the notion of reflexivity and its importance for research in the self-study and autoethnography traditions such as mine. Finally, I provide an explanation of the emergence of the research questions, which I have mentioned briefly in Chapter 1.

4.1. Social constructionism and qualitative research approach

This research project is predicated on the view of knowledge as socially constructed in the social constructionist paradigm, as opposed to the view of knowledge as a product of objective observation of the world in positivist traditions (see Burr, 2015; Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 2008). As an outcome of postmodernism, social constructionism challenges the modernist values of "individual reason," "objectivity," "scientific truth," "order," "prediction," and "control" in positivism (Gergen, 2009, p. 13). It opposes the positivist belief that there exists an objective reality out there and the researcher, by using scientific methods, can test and define it in an unbiased manner. For a social constructionist, "meaning is not discovered but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). It does not reside in the object, or in the individual's mind, but is collectively generated through the interaction between people. As such, social constructionism shares the view of dialogic philosophy. To use Bakhtin's (1984/1999) words, "truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (p. 110, original emphasis).

As constructed in people's interactions or social practices, knowledge is thus partial, representing one way of understanding the world. It is reflecting "vested interests" (Burr, 2015, p. 9), rather than objective truth as believed in positivism. Underlying this social view of knowledge is the way language is understood in social constructionism. As social constructionists would argue (and as I have discussed in Chapter 3), language, which gives meaning to our experience of ourselves and our lives, is a social practice

and thus socially, culturally, historically and politically contingent (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 2008). For social constructionists, the application of this view of language for research means each research community has their own rules or discourse which give value to their practices. The implication of this is "science cannot make claims to universal truth, as all truth claims are specific to particular traditions – lodged in culture and history" (Gergen, 2009, p. 8). Social constructionism therefore aims to open up a dialogue for multiple voices to be heard and different possibilities to be considered. As Gergen (2009) maintains, "constructionism does not itself seek to be a *final word*, but a form of discourse that will help us to avoid building worlds in which claims to Truth put an end to dialogue" (p. 166, original emphasis).

In situating my research project in the social constructionist paradigm, I subscribe to the view that the inquirer cannot distance herself/himself from the phenomenon under scrutiny. I do not strive to produce a truth – an objective, unbiased observation of the world as in the positivist paradigm. Indeed, I aim to offer an alternative for consideration, "one among many" (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 817). This alternative is the product of "historically and culturally situated social processes" (p. 817). It has been brought into being in light of the specific contexts in which my study was conducted (as can be seen in Chapter 2) and the bodies of literature that I have been engaged with (Chapter 3), and through the interactions between me and the participants (as will be seen in the discussion chapters). There is no separation between me as the researcher and the participants of the research. In effect, I am one participant in the project, as briefly explained in the presentation of the rationale for the conduct of this research in Chapter 1, and will be elaborated shortly in the explanation of practitioner inquiry, self-study action research and autoethnography.

Following the argument that all ways of interpreting the world are historically and culturally specific, social constructionism stresses the need to adopt "a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves" (Burr, 2015, p. 2). Gergen (2009) refers to this as "critical reflexivity" – that is, "the attempt to place one's premises into question, to suspend the "obvious", to listen to alternative framings of reality, and to grapple with the comparative outcomes of multiple standpoints" (p. 12). By inviting us to challenge existing ways of understanding, and reflecting on our assumptions and practices, social constructionism opens up spaces for dialogue and collaborative participation so that new forms of understanding and practice can emerge. This notion of critical stance or reflexivity, which I will explore further in a

separate section below, is particularly important to my research, given my positionality as both an insider and outsider. Although it is not easy to define the researcher's positionality in relation to the setting (Herr & Anderson, 2015), at the risk of appearing simplistic, I would say that in drawing on self-study and autoethnography, I am in the position of an insider studying my own practice at my practice setting. However, my absence from my workplace and the resultant lack of knowledge as to what happened there during the time I did my PhD in Australia give me the feeling that I am in a sense an outsider. This positionality requires me to keep a critical stance toward the tacit knowledge that I developed in the previous teaching years as an insider as well as the new bodies of knowledge that I gained during the time I was absent from the practice setting. It behoves me to constantly reflect on my assumptions and understandings as I describe what is happening and what I observe, as well as how I interpret particular observations or actions. In taking this dual position, I need to be open to alternative and sometimes simultaneously multiple perspectives, particularly from my participants. At the same time, I also keep in mind that the other views are also framed within particular sociocultural contexts. Reflexivity helps open up a space for all the voices in my research to be heard and critiqued, and through this, "new forms of understanding" and "new ways of being" can emerge (Gergen, 2009, pp. 28-29).

Social constructionism offers some implications for considering the methodology of this research. One implication of the social ontology of knowledge is that every methodological practice is constructed out of the presumptions of their particular community (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Each research community offers us a way of understanding the world in its terms, and social constructionists do not privilege any tradition over the others. The second implication following from the first is that social constructionism encourages "a posture of inquiry, where new methodological amalgams are invited" (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 819). Thus, in this study, to gain insights into how I develop my practices as an English language teacher in my institutional context, I find it useful to draw on different methodological traditions including practitioner inquiry (as the umbrella methodology), self-study action research, and autoethnography, which I explain later in this chapter.

As I adopt the view of the socially constructed nature of reality, a qualitative research approach is more appropriate for my study than a quantitative one. My purpose of conducting this research is to gain insights into "processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount,

intensity, or frequency" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). I aim at obtaining a "holistic" picture of the situation rather than "breaking down components into separate variables" (Lichtman, 2013, p. 19). In adopting "a qualitative stance", I am aware that "the world – its process and phenomena – are [sic] (or should be) described before they are theorized, understood before they are explained, and seen as concrete qualities rather than abstract quantities" (Nielsen et al., 2008, p. 7). The product of my research is thus "richly descriptive" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16). There are descriptions of the context, the participants involved, and the activities. There is also a combination of quotes from documents and interviews, excerpts from audio-recordings of the lessons, and pictures. The design of a qualitative inquiry is "ideally […] *emergent and flexible*, responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16, original emphasis). Lichtman (2013) remarks that the research process is "iterative and nonlinear, with multiple beginning points" (p. 23). In effect, my research project was emerging over time, as I engaged with the literature, embarked on the fieldwork, and immersed myself in the data. The inquiry was not following a straight line as in traditional quantitative research. The process was messy, as I was going back and forth between different sources of data as well as different bodies of relevant literature, along with constant reflection, in an attempt to piece them all together in a picture. The work is like that of a bricoleur creating a complex bricolage from different images and representations (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Speaking of the course of conducting this qualitative research project, I find it also necessary to acknowledge that I started the study with a fairly positivist perspective due to my previous education, and the transition to a qualitative mindset has been long and not easy. When I did my Master's degree, positivism was so dominant that despite the mention of qualitative research, numbers were often preferred in research and there was widespread concern about the researcher's biases 'contaminating' the findings. Starting this PhD project, with a vague feeling of frustration over the failure of statistics to reflect the experiences that my students and I had in the classroom (as I recounted in the autobiographical account at the beginning of the thesis), I decided to situate my research in the qualitative realm. However, during my first six months of PhD candidature, at some points I was still thinking of incorporating some statistics to 'prove' the significance of my findings. More than one year later, during the fieldwork, sometimes I felt the urge of distancing myself from my participants for the fear of 'contaminating' their views. It took me some time to learn (and I know that am still learning) to be a

reflexive qualitative researcher, through critical reflection on the research process, and ongoing engagement with different bodies of literature that I have presented so far.

In sum, my study is informed by social constructionism and a qualitative approach to research. The view of "scientific claims as human constructions, locked in a cultural tradition" (Gergen, 2009, pp. 22-23) and the "multidimensional and fluid" nature of qualitative research (Lichtman, 2013, p. 6) enable numerous possibilities for methodological innovation so as to gain in-depth understandings of the world. As mentioned above, I draw on different methodological traditions including practitioner inquiry, self-study action research, and autoethnography in an attempt to gain insights into the complex journey of developing my practices, with the focus on the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam, a potential pedagogical framework for teaching English and the mediating role of the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and personal history in this development. In the next section, I explain why and how I draw on these methodological traditions in my inquiry.

4.2. Practitioner inquiry

4.2.1. Conceptualisation of practitioner inquiry

My research project is situated in the tradition of practitioner inquiry or practitioner research as discussed in G. L. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (1994, 2007), Zeichner and Noffke (2001), and particularly Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004, 2009). Practitioner inquiry has a long history with multiple roots. Most scholars writing about different traditions of practitioner inquiry trace back to the inspiring work of John Dewey in the early 1900s in America. Dewey (1904/1927) argued that "the lack of intellectual independence" results in teachers' "willingness […] to accept without inquiry or criticism any method or device" given by those in authority (p. 16). He submitted that it is essential for would-be teachers to develop intellectual habits of constantly observing and reflecting on their own experience rather than feeling that they can acquire or unproblematically adopt teaching skills or techniques. For Dewey, only when teachers "continue to be students of subject-matter, and students of mind-activity" can they "grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul-life" (p. 15).

Dewey's emphasis on reflection and teachers as lifelong learners was later developed by a number of scholars. One notable figure is Donald Schön, whose work (1983, 1987)

has contributed to the promotion of the image of reflective practitioner in the literature. Schön vigorously criticises technical rationality – the legacy of the nineteenth century positivism – which posits that formal, scientific knowledge is produced by the research universities *for* the professional schools to apply to their everyday practice. He uses the term "knowing-in-action" to suggest a different view of knowledge – that is, professional knowledge which is grounded in practice, held and developed by practitioners for their contexts. Since this practical knowledge is usually tacit, to bring it to a conscious level and share with others, practitioners need to reflect. Schön distinguishes two processes of reflective thinking: (1) reflection-in-action or the practitioner's ability to make on-the-spot decision to deal with the unexpected situation at hand, and (2) reflection-on-action or the practitioner's systematic and retrospective thinking in order to draw out understandings from their tacit knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action. With these three concepts, Schön underlines the value of professionals' practical knowledge and shows how they can contribute to knowledge generation from their experiences at the site of practice.

Another influential scholar whose works contributed to the development of practitioner inquiry tradition is Lawrence Stenhouse. In conceptualising curriculum as a "proposal" that "needs to be tested and verified and adapted by each teacher in his own classroom" (p. 143), Stenhouse (1975) emphasised the role of teacher in curriculum research and development and, accordingly, in school improvement. His works contributed to the emergence of the teacher-as-researcher movement in Britain. In the same context of curriculum reform and with the same emphasis on teachers' role in pedagogical change, Elliot (1997), one of Stenhouse's colleagues, advocated action research, thus helping to revive the interest in this methodology in Britain. In relation to action research, the work of Paulo Freire (1970/2005) in South America (mentioned in Chapter 3) should also be noted. By involving the community members in the identification of the generative themes for the literacy programme and exploring these with them during the instruction, Freire (and his colleagues) aimed to help them not only develop their literacy but also critique (and act on) social issues that led to their oppressed situation. Freire's thematic research projects add a social political dimension to traditional action research which tends to focus more on efficiency and practice improvement alone (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Further, they break down "the dualisms of macro/micro, theory/practice, subject/object, and research/teaching" in academic research (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 18).

The multiple roots, as shown above, have led to the development of different versions of practitioner inquiry, including action research/participatory action research, teacher research and self-study. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) use 'practitioner inquiry/research' as "an umbrella term to encompass multiple genres or forms of research […] where the practitioner is simultaneously a researcher who is continuously engaged in inquiry with the ultimate purpose of enriching students' learning and life chances" (pp. viii-ix). 'Practitioner' is used here in an expansive manner to encompass a wide range of education practitioners, including teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, teacher candidates, university faculty members, community-based educational activists, parents, and others who work in educational sites of practice. As such, I find the conception of practitioner inquiry/research as defined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) useful for my project as it is comprehensive in terms of the agents, genres and purposes of research and thus offers me a high degree of flexibility in designing my study. Specifically, I draw on not only self-study action research but also autoethnography traditions in an attempt to reframe my understandings and practices of teaching English at my practice setting. To generate data for the self-study action research part, I acted as teacher in two English language skills classes at HCMU. However, besides this role, I also drew on my prior experiences as an English learner. In addition to the above reasons, by using the term practitioner inquiry/research, I aim to highlight a construction of practitioner as knower and agent at the site of practice and in larger educational contexts, which underlie different traditions that have constituted the current practitioner inquiry movement, as presented earlier.

In this thesis, like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), I use practitioner inquiry and practitioner research more or less interchangeably. However, Cochran-Smith and Lytle deliberately use the term "research" in their title instead of "the somewhat softer word *inquiry*", meaning it as "a valuable mode of critique of the inequities in schools and society and of knowledge hierarchies, which have implications within as well as beyond the local context" (p. ix, original emphasis). Although I appreciate their purpose when employing the term research, which they regard as "a political and strategic decision" (p. ix), in my opinion, this use ironically confirms the privileged status conventionally given to research in knowledge generation. In a fairly similar vein as Parr's (2007) argument for "a notion of professional inquiry that blurs Reid's distinction between inquiry and research" (p. 24) (cf. Reid, 2004), I disagree with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's depiction of inquiry as "somewhat softer" than research. Accordingly,

throughout this thesis, I deliberately mainly use practitioner inquiry rather than practitioner research. In so doing, I am highlighting the concept of 'inquiry as stance' as a framework for transforming teaching, learning, and schooling, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1998, 1999, 2009) posit themselves. This is also aligned with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) view of practitioner research as "a theoretical hybrid grounded more deeply in the dialectic of critical inquiry and practice than in one particular theoretical tradition or framework" (p. 93), which I elaborate later.

The above brief review of some prominent scholars has revealed the most important feature of the various forms of practitioner inquiry – that is, practitioner as researcher. Closely related with this characteristic is the link among knowledge, knowers and knowing, the view of professional context as a site for inquiry, and the blurred boundaries between inquiry and practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004, 2009). All of these contradict traditional research traditions which attempt to define and maintain a distance between the researcher and the objects of study. In practitioner inquiry, the researcher is also the object or subject of study. They make full use of their "emic perspective", "unique insight" and "longitudinal perspective" in the process of knowledge generation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 101). Furthermore, along this line, all the participants involved in particular educational contexts are considered knowers, learners and researchers, for they have knowledge germane to the situations (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Following from this, practitioner inquiry values local knowledge which is socially constructed by participants in particular inquiry communities and put into use in those local contexts. This diverges from the idea of easily generalisable knowledge in traditional research. It should be noted here that this does not mean that the knowledge produced in practitioner inquiry only has relevance for local contexts. On the contrary, as discussed later, those who work from an inquiry stance also connect local knowledge with global contexts by taking into consideration knowledge created in other contexts and larger social, cultural and political issues.

Because of the above-mentioned characteristics, practitioner inquiry is well-suited to my project. The study began with my wonderings as to how to engage my students in language skills courses at EF of HCMU in the teaching and learning process and to enhance their agency in English language learning by using negotiation-based practices. The questions have evolved over time with my engagement with the existing literature in the search for answers to my wonderings. Specifically, the consideration has been expanded from the narrow concept of learner autonomy to include insights from

transformative and bilingual/multilingual pedagogies. Eventually, the general focus has broadened, though throughout the study my questions are still grounded in my practice and experience, when I ask what is the knowledge base of English language teaching and what is a potential pedagogical framework for English language teaching in this particular or local context, which is subject to and reflective of a range of globalising forces that act on all educational sites. Thus, the questions in the study have been formed through a process of "critical reflection on the intersections of the two [theory and practice]", as pointed out by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009, p. 42). Embarking on this project, I brought with me the knowledge and experience gained from my prolonged immersion in this site of practice, as an English learner, pre-service teacher, English teacher and teacher educator. The knowledge created in my study is, as shown throughout the thesis, "enhanced conceptual frameworks", "altered practices" and "reconstructed curricula" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 42). As the practitioner is constructed as the knower and researcher, and the professional context as the research site, I argue that the borders between inquiry and practice become blurred. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) describe the practitioner's work as "working the dialectic of inquiry and practice"; that is, "capitalizing on the tensions between research and practice, researcher and practitioner, conceptual and empirical research, [and] local and public knowledge" (p. 94). In practitioner inquiry, the constructs in each pair are regarded as having a "reciprocal, recursive, and symbiotic" relationship, rather than an "oppositional" one as in traditional research. As noted, the practitioner's questions emerge from the interplay between theory and practice. The practitioner goes back and forth between conceptual frameworks and empirical documentation of daily practice. Therefore, practitioner research should be viewed as "an epistemological hybrid"; that is, either "conceptual-empirical inquiry" or "empirical-conceptual inquiry" (p. 95).

Further elaboration on the notion of inquiry as stance mentioned above is needed here as it is instructive for this project. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) define an inquiry stance as:

> perspectival and conceptual – a worldview, a habit of mind, a dynamic and fluid way of knowing and being in the world of educational practice that carries across the course of the professional career – not a teacher training strategy, a sequence of steps for solving classroom or school problems, or a skill to be demonstrated by beginners to show competence. (p. 113)

Although the writing of this thesis (including the fieldwork conducted to generate data pertaining to the pedagogical framework presented in Chapter 3) appears to be a time- and place- bounded research project to solve classroom problems or improve practice, I have endeavoured to show throughout the thesis that I have engaged in inquiry as a way of knowing and being in the world of educational practice. Some data, particularly the autoethnographic accounts, show that there has been no clear beginning (or end) points of the journey that I have embarked on. For me, as for Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), there have been no "distinct moments" when I am acting as only researcher or only practitioner (p. 95). I am constantly moving back and forth between theory and practice, reflecting on and critiquing my own and others' assumptions, experiences and beliefs. In speaking this way, I am connecting with traditions of practice as praxis (see Freire, 1970/2005) – which involves a dynamic interplay between teaching, learning and research; and I am trying to generate local knowledge-*of*-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) by working with my students and colleagues and linking my work with national and global demands. In adopting these conceptions of practice and knowledge, I am subscribing to the ultimate goal of inquiry as stance – that is, "enhancing students' learning and life chances for participation in and contribution to a diverse and democratic society" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 146). This is a "lifelong project" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 145) and I see myself as "an abiding student of education" (Dewey, 1904/1927, p. 16).

In addition to the above features, most forms of practitioner inquiry display different conceptualisations of validity and generalisability compared with traditional scientific paradigms of research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2004, 2009) and Zeichner and Noffke's (2001) reviews of various genres of practitioner research disclose no consensus on criteria for validity and quality. However, Zeichner and Noffke (2001) highlight a moral and ethical consideration in terms of the relationship between the researchers and the other participants in the project. I elaborate on this issue in Section 4.3 of this chapter and Section 5.3 of the next chapter. Zeichner and Noffke (2001) also add that in the process of developing ways to assess the quality, besides knowledge production, attention should be given to the transformative impacts of the research on practitioners' understandings and practice. This point is particularly relevant to my project. In conducting this research, I not only aim to seek answers related to the knowledge base and pedagogical framework of teaching English in my particular context, but also to gain insights into the development of my practices and

understandings through practitioner inquiry. In other words, one main purpose of this project is to see how I (and, by implication, other teachers) can use praxis approaches to improve my (and so their) practices and knowledge. As each genre of practitioner research has developed their own criteria for validity and quality (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004, 2009; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001), I discuss this issue further when I explain the particular genres of research that I draw on for this study (i.e., self-study and autoethnography).

Lastly, most forms of practitioner inquiry underline a commitment to systematicity in terms of data generation and analysis, and efforts to make the work public and open to the critique of a larger professional and research community. In his paper "Research as a basis for teaching", Stenhouse (1979/1983) already referred to research as "systematic inquiry made public" (p. 185). In this project, I systematically documented and examined not only issues of teaching, learning and schooling as in many genres of qualitative and interpretive study, but also my own thinking, planning, actions, reactions, changes, and dilemmas (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004). By discussing my research with my colleagues, presenting it at conferences and writing this thesis, I tried to make my work public and open to the critique of the people in my local context and larger professional and research communities. I understand this critiquing is crucial to the process of generating knowledge-*of*-practice – that is, theorising local practice and situating it in larger social, cultural and political contexts.

I have explained in this section the conception of practitioner inquiry underpinning my research. To recap, I would like to emphasise one more time the two basic premises of this tradition – that is, the important role of practitioners in *creating* knowledge of practice, and the powerful position of practice and practitioner knowledge in the transformation of teaching, learning, schooling and society. I now turn to the particular genres of research that I draw on in my study, beginning with self-study action research before moving on to autoethnography.

4.2.2. Self-study action research

As stated above, my project draws on some elements of a collection of research practices that have come to be known as self-study. Self-study was originally developed (with the organisation of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) SIG of AERA in 1994) out of the challenge of taken-for-granted assumptions of teacher

education and the call for teacher educators to examine their own teaching practices (Loughran, 2004). Therefore, self-study is often used to refer to studies done by those involved in teaching about teaching [see, e.g., Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) definition of self-study]. However, Loughran (2004) remarks that self-study is not restricted to teacher educators or teacher education practices. This can be seen in the title of the volume *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* and the discussion of self-study throughout this handbook. This explains Pinnegar and Hamilton's (2009) decision to use the more inclusive acronym S-STTEP instead of S-STEP in their book.

M. L. Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) define self-study as:

> the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, as well as the 'not self'. It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political and it draws on one's life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered. These are investigated for their connections with and relationships to practice as a teacher educator [and I would add, "or a teacher", following from the point mentioned above]. (p. 236)

Self-study works on the postmodern perspective which highlights the indivisibility of the 'self' and the research or educational practices (M. L. Hamilton, Pinnegar, Russell, Loughran, & LaBoskey, 1998; Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004). However, the label self-study might suggest a focus on self solely. In effect, as illustrated in the above definition and as seen more clearly in the below discussion of the foundations and characteristics of self-study, the core of this methodology is "the *self and the other in practice*" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 12, original emphasis).

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) posit that self-study researchers' central concern is "ontology (practice and its improvement)" (p. 50). They are committed to "making *what is* better for others" (p. 55, original emphasis). They conduct research in order to improve, and share, their understandings and practices. In so doing, they generate living educational theories (Whitehead, 1993) – that is, the theories that live in their practices as teachers and teacher educators and therefore grow and change as their practices and understandings grow and change. This ontological stance explains the other three theoretical foundations of self-study methodology as delineated in LaBoskey (2004) – that is, epistemological, pedagogical, and moral/ethical/political. In terms of

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epistemology, self-study challenges the distinctions between research and practice, between formal and practical knowledge, and between researcher and teacher, as I have discussed in the practitioner inquiry section. Self-study scholars, many of whom work in the field of teacher education, adopt social constructivist learning theory, emphasizing the importance of practical experience and multiple perspectives of participants in the particular educational setting in the process of learning. Teaching as a process of knowledge production is a praxis in which the teacher critically examines their own practice. Most often, self-study starts from the teacher educators' recognition of the dissonance in their belief and practice and results in the reframing of their own thinking and practice, which in turn impacts on their student teachers' learning. The pedagogical underpinning therefore reflects the moral/ethical/political values of self-study. The research is done not only for the purpose of theorising practice but also for students' benefit. In conducting self-study, teacher educators critically look into the integrity of their work – that is, whether they practise what they preach. They often challenge the status quo and transform the relationship of power in their educational settings. The questions raised in self-study are often "framed in an orientation and parallel to critical pedagogy" (Samaras, 2011, p. 57). Therefore, underlying self-study is the ethic of caring and a human approach to education with an equity and social justice agenda. This echoes Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) discussion of democratic purposes and social justice ends in practitioner inquiry, as I represent it above.

These ontological, epistemological, pedagogical and moral/ethical/political underpinnings explain the five characteristics of self-study as pointed out by LaBoskey (2004), which are also evident in discussions on self-study by other authors (see, e.g., Loughran et al., 2004; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009): (i) self-initiated and focused; (ii) improvement-aimed; (iii) interactive; (iv) multiple, primarily qualitative, methods; and (v) exemplar-based validation. These five features explain why I draw on this type of practitioner inquiry. My PhD project emerged partly from my *wondering* about my own practice. It is situated in my lived practice and focuses on me as teacher in relation to my students. The aim of the project is to improve my understandings and practices, and through this improvement to enhance my students' learning. In addition to this self-focused purpose, by making my local knowledge public, I may offer useful information for researchers, teachers, and educators in the field of English language teaching and contribute to the current language education reform in Vietnam.

To improve my pedagogy, I need to challenge my assumptions, recognise tensions and seek alternative perspectives. I have therefore interacted with my colleagues, my students, and "texts" of varied types in different ways (e.g., engaging with the professional literature, and reflexively revisiting texts constructed by myself) (LaBoskey, 2004). Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) refer to this process of coming-to-know as a dialogue – a dialogue with oneself as well as with others in the professional practice setting and the wider public arena. To gain insights into the complexity of the self in practice, I used multiple sources of qualitative data including focus group interviews with my students, discussions with my colleagues, students' work throughout the course, and my research journal. Since the research is grounded in my practice context, the knowledge produced is "local", "approximate" and "suggestive" (LaBoskey, 2004, p. 851); therefore, validation in my study is reconceptualised as "the social construction of knowledge" (Mishler, 1990, p. 417). Mishler uses Kuhn's concept of 'exemplars' – "concrete models of research practice" – and contends that the trustworthiness of the exemplars will be tested and retested over time (p. 415). For this validation process, I make my data available and the process of data analysis and interpretation transparent.

Given the ontological stance as discussed above, it is understandable why action research is one of the most prevalent approaches in self-study research (LaBoskey, 2004). What distinguishes action research from other methodologies is its focus on "taking action to improve practice" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 10). Discussions on action research often trace its origins back to Lewin (1946, 1948) in the United States with his contribution to the development of a theory of action research in social sciences, and then Corey (1953) as the first to introduce action research into education. Despite Corey's works, action research was judged by conventional academic standards and thus did not catch on in the United States until the late 1970s, when it re-emerged as part of the North American teacher research movement (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). In the meantime, in Britain, Elliot's efforts, and his colleagues', helped stimulate the interest in action research, as mentioned above. The work of Freire and his colleagues in South America has inspired the participatory action research movement which involves the community participants in the research process and focuses on social critique and social action rather than practice improvement as in traditional action research. In a fairly similar critical line, in Australia, Kemmis, who had worked with Elliot and his colleagues in Britain, together with Carr, drew on Habermas's critical theory,

challenged technical, instrumental models of action research, and emphasised collaboration with participants and emancipatory purposes in their approach (see Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

There are now multiple forms of action research differing in terms of "who counts as a knower, who is able to offer explanations, about what, what counts as knowledge, and who makes decisions about these things" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 14). Consistent with the discussion of self-study here and particularly relevant to my project is first-person action research or self-study action research founded by Whitehead and embraced by scholars who emphasise practitioners' ability to research their own practice and offer explanations for what they do (e.g., Whitehead, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This form of action research is one key methodology for practitioners to develop their own living educational theories. As Whitehead (2000) explains, a living educational theory is constructed through the description and explanation of the practice as the teacher-researcher learns through question and answer in the enquiry into "How do I live my values more fully in my practice?" and "How can I help you (students) to improve your learning?" (p. 99). Through that kind of enquiry, the teacher-researcher creates and publicly shares an explanation of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations. The action/reflection cycle that is often mentioned in the action research literature is reconceptualised as:

> I experience a concern when my values are negated in my practice.
>
> I imagine a way forward.
>
> I act.
>
> I evaluate.
>
> I modify my concerns, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations.
>
> (Whitehead, 2000, p. 93)

The distinguishing feature of this form of enquiry is the inclusion of 'I' as a 'living contradiction' – that is, "the experience of holding together two mutually exclusive opposite values" (p. 93). For me, the question 'How do I improve what I am doing?' was the initial motivation of this PhD journey. Feeling myself not living up to the

values that I was holding in my teaching (i.e., student agency, respect for students, and collaboration), I decided to carry out this research to look closely at what would transpire in my classroom when I adopted what I constructed and believed to be negotiation-based teaching practices. In effect, reflecting on my teaching time before this research, I realise the question had been underpinning my practices since I started working as a teacher. Like Whitehead (2008), I always experienced a feeling that I was not doing as well as I could to help my students improve their learning. With that question in mind (though implicitly), I somehow had engaged in multiple action/reflection cycles (though intuitively) in an attempt to improve my practice and live the values that I embraced (and are embracing). As I proceeded with this project, although the research focus has shifted from the initial motivation as said above, the question has still been underlying my inquiry as I attempted to engage with the transformative pedagogy and bilingualism/multilingual perspectives.

As action research is often thought of as action/reflection cycles, there may well be a question about cycles in my project. For me, all the planning, acting and reflecting in my study constituted only one cycle, for I was looking into not particular strategies or techniques but a pedagogical framework for English language teaching, which needed to be enacted throughout one whole course. Although there were two classes in my research (as I explain in Section 5.1 of the next chapter), they were conducted at the same time in one academic semester, and what transpired in the two classes, together with the feedback from my colleagues and students and my constant reflection, complemented to help me reframe my understandings and practices after the completion of the course, and the insights obtained will be applied in my future teaching. Herr and Anderson (2015) define (in an eclectic manner) action research as "oriented to *some action* or cycle of actions that organizational or community members *have taken, are taking, or wish to take* to address a particular problematic situation" (p. 4, my emphasis). Following them, I do not adopt a reductionist conception of action research as rigid steps or stages but regard it as "a stance and perspective toward knowledge construction and coming into knowing with a community of inquiry within but beyond academe" (p. 149). This construction is aligned with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) notion of inquiry as stance. As mentioned above, I had engaged (though intuitively) in action/reflection cycles prior to the conduction of this project. I believe that the explanation of the educational influence in learning as a result of the action in this

project along with the reflection on my previous experience helps to demonstrate the inquiry stance that I claim to adopt.

I would like to finish my discussion of self-study by referring to one reservation of this genre of practitioner inquiry. As mentioned earlier in this section, the label of this type of research might suggest an individualistic focus, and indeed, there are self-studies which tend to be more concerned with the improvement of the researcher-practitioners' practice rather than contribution to the broader understandings in the field (see Grossman, 2005; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Louie, Drevdahl, Purdy, & Stackman, 2003; V. Richardson, 2002; Zeichner, 2007). Many self-study researchers are inclined to focus more on the local context of their classroom rather than situating their inquiry within the larger contexts of the education programme (Grossman, 2005; Zeichner, 2007). For self-study research to contribute to the knowledge base in the field, Grossman (2005) proposes setting the particular pedagogy under investigation within a broader theoretical framework for a better understanding of "the relationship between the pedagogies of professional education and features of professional practice" (p. 450). Loughran (2007), drawing on Shulman's (1999) notion of scholarship of teaching, points to a need to go beyond the self and seek a balance between the specific and the general by making the work available for critique, use, adaptation and development by members of the community. Zeichner (2007) stresses that self-study researchers engage with important issues in the broader literature in the field and situate their work in the policy debates which impact on teaching practice at the local level. Earlier than these scholars, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) underscore the balance between biography and history in quality self-study research. As they maintain, "when biography and history are joined, when the issue confronted by the self is shown to have relationship to and bearing on the context and ethos of a time, then self-study moves to research" (p. 15). Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) also remark that inquiry in self-study occurs in spaces in-between: apart from the fundamental space between self and practice, there are spaces "between the larger historical and institutional context and the personal local space of our classrooms", "between our public and private lives", and "between public theory and private action" (p. 14).

The above suggestions are instructive for my project. Indeed, they reiterate some of the points that I have been trying to underline throughout the discussion on self-study in particular and practitioner inquiry in general: that is, the need to take into account the knowledge produced in other contexts and the wider setting in the process of generating

knowledge-*of*-practice, and the importance of gaining alternative perspectives through dialogues with the others in practice and the wider community. In light of these guidelines, I have strived to draw on the broad literature on language and pedagogy to develop a pedagogical framework for my project. Although the initial motivation of the study is to improve my practice and thus my students' learning, as noted above, beyond this seemingly self-referential concern is the implied question as to how other teachers can use praxis approaches to improve their practices and knowledge. The overall objective of the project is, thus, to contribute to the understanding in the field of English teaching and learning, particularly in the Vietnamese context. For this purpose, besides my own reflection on my teaching during the fieldwork, I have incorporated voices from my students and my colleagues and in writing this thesis, I wish to open up a dialogue with the wider community. More importantly, I have situated my research in the international, national, and institutional contexts, framing it in relation to particular concerns in the field. As the attention to the broad context or, to put it more precisely, the connection between the self and the historical, cultural and political settings is one important way to prevent self-study from becoming narcissistic or a confessional, I have drawn on another methodological tradition – that is, autoethnography – to strengthen the methodology of the study. In the next section, I present and discuss this methodological concept and its use in my research.

4.2.3. Autoethnography

A detailed explanation of this methodology will follow shortly, but for the purpose of justification here as a follow-up to the previous section, I find Pinnegar and Hamilton's (2009) brief operational definitions useful. For them, whereas self-study is "a look at self in action, usually within educational contexts", autoethnography is "a look at self within a larger context" (p. 70). Autoethnographers seek social cultural elements through personal experience. By connecting the personal and the cultural, they "agitate, disrupt and contest views of the world (Jones, 2005) with a desire to make a difference in it (Renner, 2001)" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 72). In a similar line, self-study also aims to "provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20). Given the need to link the self with larger social, cultural and political issues in order for this aim to be fulfilled, as noted above, autoethnography is one useful methodology that can complement self-study so that practitioners such as me can draw on to generate their living educational theories in the enquiry of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?' (Whitehead, 2016).

It should be noted that Pinnegar and Hamilton are at one with Geertz (1983) that autoethnography and self-study, as well as some other methodological traditions that have a kind of focus on self such as narrative, phenomenology, and life history, are blurred genres. Besides, there may be a question as to whether I am drawing on autoethnography or autobiography. According to C. Ellis and Bochner (2000), these two genres, as well as some others such as native ethnography, self-ethnography, memoir, and even fiction, have become blurred. Which term to use to describe a work depends on the author's justification of her/his claim. C. Ellis and Bochner's definition of autoethnography on the one hand demonstrates this overlap and on the other hand explains the reason for the use of this term by many authors including me for this PhD project – that is, the importance of linking the self and the social: "Autoethnography is an *autobiographical* genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, *connecting the personal to the cultural*" (p. 739, my emphasis). Emerging from the influence of postmodernism, this hybrid term is "useful" for "question[ing] the binary conventions of a self/society split, as well as the boundary between the objective and the subjective" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2).

Autoethnography is a synthesis of postmodern ethnography and postmodern autobiography (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Traditionally, ethnographic studies were conducted by white males observing the 'other' as an object of study. With the growth of feminism and postmodernism and the increasing attention to reflexivity in research, this distanced objective masculine observer position has been challenged (Etherington, 2004). Scholars have become increasingly aware of 'facts' and 'truths' as socially constructed, the inevitable but valuable implication of the researcher and their personal experience in the research, the complex connections among authors, audiences and texts, and the need to open up spaces for multiple voices and perspectives, particularly from those who have been marginalised in positivist research traditions (C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Many postmodernist and feminist researchers feel a motivation to write directly from their personal experience, "narratively", "poetically" and "evocatively" (p. 747). In addition, under the influence of postmodernism, self is viewed as dynamic and "socially and historically shaped" (Bergland, 1994, p. 134), and thus autobiography and other forms of self-representation become "a site of identity production" (Gilmore, 1994, p. 3). Autoethnography emerges as "a bridge, connecting autobiography and ethnography in order to study the intersection of self and others, self and culture" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 446). It is "a social constructionist approach that enables

critical reflection on taken-for-granted aspects of society, groups, relationships, and the self […] [and thus enables] richness of representation, complexity of understanding, and inspiration for activism" (p. 448).

There is a wide array of approaches to autoethnography, differing in the emphasis on the research process, culture, the researcher's self and the relationship with others (see C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000; C. Ellis et al., 2011). For my study, I draw on what C. Ellis and Bochner (2000) and C. Ellis et al. (2011) categorise as "personal narratives". I use my autobiographical stories as data and weave them into the story of what transpired in the action research project. The autobiographical narratives are meant to shed light on the social and cultural contexts through some aspects of my learning, teaching and living experience and the influences these have had on my practices. In narrating my experience, I wish to engage in a dialogue with myself as well as with my readers. In the conversation with myself, I seek to understand and show how my pedagogical understandings and practices changed over time. Readers are invited to enter the conversation bringing their own experiences, reflecting on them and forming their own perspectives and standpoints.

It seems appropriate here to elaborate on the point pertaining to dialogue with myself and with the readers, which I have reiterated so far. Vygotsky's concept of "inner speech" offers a useful lens to look at the individual's interaction with the others and, more broadly, with the society. For Vygotsky (1962), the inner speech which we use to plan and monitor our activity stems from our engagement in social speech activity during our early stage of development. This conception of inner speech is part of Vygotsky's general claims about the social origins and social nature of individual mental functioning and his general genetic law of cultural development (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992):

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. […] Social relations or relations among people genetically underline all higher functions and their relationships. (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 163)

Individual mental functioning is thus "inherently social, or sociocultural, in that it incorporates socially evolved and socially organized cultural tools" (Wertsch &

Tulviste, 1992, p. 551). In this sense, it is hardly possible to speak of humans as being independent of social environments or, in other words, the separation between the self and the social and cultural.

As deriving from communicating activity, Vygotsky's inner speech is intrinsically dialogic, as pointed out by Emerson (1983), Wertsch (1980) and Wertsch and Tulviste (1992). Although Vygotsky did not use the term "dialogue", he is assumed to have had this idea in mind when referring to inner speech as "internal collaboration with oneself" (Vygotsky, 1960, p. 451, as cited in Wertsch, 1980, p. 153). For a more comprehensive explanation of the notion of dialogue, it is useful to turn to Vygotsky's contemporaries – Bakhtin and Vološinov.

As discussed in Chapter 3, language is conceptualised by Bakhtin not as a self-contained system but as a socio-ideological thing. Entailed in an utterance are dialogic relations between the speaker and the Other, be it other utterances, other people, or other cultures. As Vološinov (1973) puts it, "the word *is oriented toward an addressee*, toward *who* that addressee might be" (p. 85, original emphasis). "Each and every word," he says, "expresses the "one" in relation to the "other"" (p. 86). It is, as Bakhtin (1981) succinctly describes, "half-ours and half-someone else's" (p. 345). Dialogic relationships are conceptualised by Bakhtin (1984/1999) as:

> a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue [...]; they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life – in general, everything that has meaning and significance. (p. 40)

For Bakhtin, dialogic processes are epistemologically richer and more dynamic than the common conception of dialogue as external speech between interlocutors. They refer to "multiple overlapping interactions between words, between texts, between people, between cultures" (Parr, 2010, p. 95). Importantly, these interactions "[*activate*] the *potential* for richer dialogue and thus for richer learning" (p. 94, original emphasis). Parr refers to this dynamic as "a constant effervescing of dialogic activity and dialogic possibilities" (p. 95). This conception of dialogue is fundamental to my study, not only in terms of research methodology but also in terms of professional learning for me as a practitioner-inquirer. There is dialogic connection among me, my participant colleagues and students, the readers of this thesis, and the social and cultural. As all the voices are

drawn together in a conversation, they can open up potential for rich understanding and learning.

In this project, to connect the personal with the cultural, I find C. Ellis and Bochner's (2000) notion of zooming instructive:

> Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations […] As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. (p. 739)

From the beginning and continuing throughout the study, I have kept looking, backward and forward, inward and outward, between the cultural experience and the personal experience. This process of zooming helps me reframe my understanding of myself, my practice and the social cultural context in which my practice is located.

Autoethnographers "retrospectively" and "selectively" tell "epiphanies" – moments that they considered significant in their lives (C. Ellis et al., 2011, p. 276). More importantly, these epiphanies "stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity" (p. 276). They not only tell but also analyse these remembered moments based on existing research, the experience of the others in the same culture, and relevant cultural artefacts. Autoethnographic texts are:

> usually written in first-person voice […] in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novel, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed *through action, feeling, thought, and language*. (C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739, original emphasis)

There is doubt, from the positivist perspective, about the narrative truth – that is, the accuracy of the description of the past in stories. However, as C. Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue, we can never capture the past and this is not the aim of autoethnography. In self-narration, autoethnographers subjectively recall, select, rearrange, and reconstruct the past experiences that they hold significant to the formation of their present and future. The goal of retelling our life is to produce a sense of continuity from past to present to future. Etherington (2004) makes a similar comment, saying that what we are doing in autoethnography is a kind of recollection – that is, "remembering from the viewpoint of a fresh perspective" (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 186, as cited in Etherington, 2004, p. 146). In doing so, we are "re-affirming and re-educating our selves, our experiences and our lives and creating new stories" (Etherington, 2004, p. 146). Schratz and Walker (1995), when writing about memory-work, maintain that "what is significant about memories is not their surface validity as true records, but their active role in the construction of identity" (p. 43), and "the key question for memory-work is not, who am I? But, how did we get to be the way we are and how can we change?" (p. 44). More fundamentally, the idea of an absolute truth is problematic from the social constructionist perspective, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Truth is not something out there to discover but is socially constructed. This view is consistent with the notion of a collective search for truth through dialogic interaction in the dialogic epistemology of language [see the quote from Bakhtin (1984/1999) earlier in the chapter]. As Parr (2010) elaborates, "any purported truth of a self is elusive and unfinalizable", for it is "generated through and mediated by complex sociocultural processes and the dialogic nature of language itself" (p. 82).

Following from the discussion on truth in narratives, it can be inferred that the criteria for judging the quality of an autoethnographic study are different from those in positivist conventions, as is the case for other qualitative research methodologies. C. Ellis and Bochner (2000) and C. Ellis et al. (2011) reconceptualise the traditional notion of reliability as the narrator's credibility in their recount of the experiences. Validity is interpreted as the verisimilitude of the autoethnographic text: Do the readers feel that the story is coherent and believable? Can it connect the readers with the author? How useful is the story to the readers, participants and author? The generalisability of the story is constantly being tested by the readers in terms of how the story speaks to them about their experience and about other people's lives, familiar as well as unfamiliar. In addition, Etherington (2004) adopts L. Richardson's (2000) metaphor of crystals as an

extended conception of triangulation for postmodernist texts such as autoethnography. As L. Richardson (2000) explains, "crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions"; therefore, she says, "what we see depends upon our angle of repose" (p. 934, original emphasis). Different from the traditional concept of triangulation which is still underpinned by the positivist assumption of a definitive truth, crystallisation provides "multiple, refracted realities simultaneously" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5), resulting in "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic" (L. Richardson, 2000, p. 934) (see also Ellingson, 2009).

4.3. Reflexivity

I have so far mentioned in passing the concept of reflexivity as a dimension of the methodology in my project. Indeed, this notion has become an important theme in contemporary discussions of qualitative research (see, e.g., Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Davies, 2008; Etherington, 2004; Luttrell, 2010c; Steier, 1991b). In this section of the chapter, I discuss in more detail why and how I draw on reflexivity in my study. But before that, it is necessary here to look at another term which is often confused, and sometimes used interchangeably with reflexivity – that is, reflection.

Most writing on reflection, particularly in education, generally starts with the work of Dewey (1910) and Schön (1983, 1987). Dewey (1910) distinguishes between reflective thinking and routine thinking on the basis of the extent to which one considers the beliefs and ideas underlying their particular thoughts. With routine thinking, one goes about their daily life without thinking, whereas, with reflective thinking, one seeks "the ground or basis for a belief" and examines "its adequacy to support the belief" (Dewey, 1910, pp. 1-2). Thanks to the reflective thinking, one becomes aware of and can challenge the prejudices they have acquired over their lives. Following Dewey, Schön (1983), mentioned earlier in Section 4.2.1, continues to criticise the technical rationality approach in which formal knowledge is generated for professionals to apply in their practice. He posits that reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action help practitioners to bring their tacit know-how or intuition to a conscious level, reframe their theories and practice, and contribute their voice to the literature in their field. Both Dewey's conception of reflection as a logical process and Schön's attention to intuition and craft

knowledge help blur the dualisms of thought/action and theory/practice, and contribute to the development of an epistemology of reflective practice (see Schön, 1995).

Reflection, therefore, has an indispensable role in both the teaching and researching process in my project. Reflective practice, which challenges the technical view of teachers (or practitioners), can be subsumed under the practitioner inquiry movement that I have discussed above. Moreover, it is closely related with action research. Schön (1995) himself links Deweyan inquiry with Lewin's work on action research, explaining inquiry as "thought intertwined with action – reflection in and on action – which proceeds from doubt to the resolution of doubt, to the generation of new doubt" (p. 31). Although my inquiry into the pedagogical framework that I have developed consists of only one action/reflection cycle, as noted above, since the course lasted twelve weeks, I engaged in multiple 'micro-actions' and 'micro-reflections', which added up to my growing pedagogical understanding. These micro-actions and micro-reflections blended into one another; in other words, there were no clear boundaries between when I was acting and when I was reflecting. There was ongoing reflection (in and on action) before, during and after the class time, the talks with my students, and the discussions with my colleagues. I reflected on what was transpiring and had transpired, on the feedback from my students and colleagues, on my own experiences and on the micro- and macro-contexts in which my teaching was situated. This thinking process has helped me identify my underlying assumptions, look closely into the interplay between my espoused theory and theory-in-use (see Argyris & Schön, 1974/1976), and from this reframe my understanding and practice. In a similar way, this mental process has constantly occurred to other aspects of my research process such as research design, data generation and data analysis, regarding the what, why and how of the plan and the situation at hand.

Although necessary, reflection is not sufficient for the conduct of practitioner inquiry in particular and qualitative research in general. Literature on practitioner inquiry has been highlighting the need to move beyond reflection to embrace reflexivity (e.g., Cole and Knowles, 2000; Edge, 2011). As Cole and Knowles (2000) explain, teaching practices are undergirded by the teacher's self and the teacher's personal history. Reflexive inquiry is "reflective inquiry situated within the context of personal histories in order to make connections between personal lives and professional careers, and to understand personal (including early) influences on professional practice" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 2). Reflexive inquiry thus stresses the need for teachers to make sense of who they

are as individuals – that is, the beliefs, values, and perspectives that they have developed through their experiences before, during and after their entry into formal teacher education programmes. This kind of autobiographical inquiry is also mentioned in Edge's (2011) discussion on the reflexive teacher educator. Reflexive inquiry is, for Cole and Knowles (2000), grounded in a critical perspective, as it examines the status quo and norms, especially in terms of power and control. Moreover, Bass, Anderson-Patton, and Allender (2002) underline the importance of "worldviews clash from the input of critical friends and theory" to push reflective to reflexive thinking in self-study (p. 67). "Reflexivity asks us to turn these conflicts back on ourselves so as to uncover, study, analyze our views and assumptions in response to engagements with an 'other' – another text, idea, culture, or person" (Gradin & Carter, 2001, p. 3, as cited in Bass et al., 2002, p. 61). Being reflexive is, to use Cole and Knowles's (2000) explanation, like viewing practice through prisms and mirrors, where ideas and thoughts from different experiences and interactions throughout one's life are, like light, reflected and refracted. This metaphor shows that reflexivity is closely linked with L. Richardson's (2000) notion of crystalisation as referred to earlier in Section 4.2.3.

Speaking of qualitative research in general, reflexivity plays a crucial role in knowledge generation. As Luttrell (2010b) and Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) explain, it is because qualitative researchers are the primary instrument in data collection and analysis. There are different interpretations of reflexivity (see, e.g., Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Dowling, 2006; Finlay, 2002a, 2002b). In this PhD project, I use this notion to refer to the epistemological relationships between the researcher, the researched, the audience, and the context. It is a continuous process of "critical reflection both on the kind of knowledge produced from research and *how* that knowledge is generated" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 274, my emphasis). The reflexive researcher is aware of and strives to negotiate and represent the complex interplay among different kinds of personal, methodological, theoretical, ethical, linguistic, social and political elements during the process of knowledge construction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Luttrell, 2010b). As such, reflexivity is more dynamic and multidimensional than reflection as conceptualised above. It permeates all stages of the research process (Guilleman & Gillam, 2004; Luttrell, 2010b). Thus, Luttrell (2010a) places it at the centre of his qualitative research design, and Luttrell (2010b) confidently remarks that "those who overlook the necessity of researcher reflexivity do so at the risk of producing "bad data"" (p. 4).

Adopting a reflexive stance, I have been trying to critically examine and make transparent the impact of my own experiences, backgrounds and preferences on my study and the changes in me as a result of the process and outcomes of the research. I have also been learning to "consider the ways in which [my project rests] on *taken for granted* problems, categories, concepts and theories" (Luttrell, 2010b, p. 4, original emphasis). I am aware that these pre-conceived categorisations and conceptions, from a social constructionist perspectives, are "represented in language" and thus "part of the coordinated activities of individuals, which are used to accomplish locally-agreed-upon purposes concerning the real and the good" (Gergen & Gergen, 1991, p. 78). The shift from *language* to *languaging* as "an act experienced *in statu nascendi*" challenges the notion of objectivity and embraces the view of the self as a social self and research as a conversation (Becker, 1991, p. 228). Thus, in this reflexive research process, I have been attempting to expand "the languages of understanding" (Gergen & Gergen, 1991, p. 78) and to open up different understandings and constructions in this dialogue about the process of developing English language teaching practices in a globalising world (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 1991).

For this kind of dialogue to happen, the process of writing plays an important role. Scholars have pointed to the close connection between researcher reflexivity and reflexive writing (see, e.g., Lincoln et al., 2011; Kleinsasser, 2000; Schwandt, 2007). As L. Richardson (2000) contends, writing offers a way for us to examine how we frame the world, ourselves and others. It is because in poststructuralism, language is the place for constructing, rather than reflecting, social reality with historical and local specificity. In drawing on reflexivity, I am aware that writing is also, as L. Richardson views it, "a *method of inquiry*, a way of finding out about [oneself] and [one's] topic"; it is "a way of "knowing"" (p. 923, original emphasis). Through the process of writing – writing journal during the fieldwork, writing memos while coding the data (see Section 5.4), and writing the thesis itself, I am learning and unlearning "personal and theoretical commitments" (Kleinsasser, 2000, p. 158). The use of first person voice, instead of the objective third person or passive voice, aims to show that I am integrated in the research and that the study is written from a particular position in a specific context. I am trying to "[attend] to feelings, ambiguities, temporal sequences, blurred experiences, and so on" (L. Richardson, 2000, p. 931). I've learnt to embrace the "open-endedness" and "incompleteness" of a reflexive text (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260), for "there is no such

thing as "getting it right" – only "getting it" differently contoured and nuanced" (L. Richardson, 2000, p. 930).

Applying reflexivity also requires me to pay serious attention to the ethics of my project. I am aware of the illusory boundaries between me as the researcher and my participants (Dowling, 2006; Etherington, 2004) and the need to involve them as "*thinkers* in research […] rather than data producers" (Luttrell, 2010b, p. 4, original emphasis). In this project, the issue of ethics is of critical importance given the unequal relationship between me as the teacher and my student participants. I took this relationship into consideration not only at the stage of obtaining the consent forms but also throughout the course, keeping in mind that ethical reflexivity is "an on-going process" (Luttrell, 2010b, p. 4). I tried to develop a relationship of collaboration and convey my respect, sincerity and willingness to listen and to learn. As such, the use of reflexivity is consistent with the spirit of the practitioner inquiry tradition. I elaborate on this issue of ethics in Section 5.3 of the next chapter.

Despite the increasing advocacy for reflexivity in qualitative research, there have been some reservations concerning the use of reflexivity as well as doubts about the work possible in the name of reflexivity. One main concern raised by scholars is the risk of the reflexive work, if not done well, becoming narcissistic and self-indulgent (Denzin, 1997; Finlay, 2002a, 2002b; Okely, 1992). Another issue is what Finlay (2002a) calls "the rhetorical functions (Potter and Wetherell, 1995) of reflexivity" (p. 226); that is, the claim of being reflexive is a rhetorical strategy to disguise the partial findings (Finlay, 2002a) or to reinforce, rather than challenge, the author's voice (Finlay, 2002a; Gill, 1995). Besides these reservations, in their current review of a number of articles, Newton, Rothlingova, Gutteridge, LeMarchand, & Raphael (2011) found a lack of reflexivity in most of them and some positivist undertones in the few articles that could be considered reflexive. However, they acknowledge that there are difficulties in engaging in reflexive practice, one of which is the constraints imposed by the positivist hegemony in the publication world (see also Finlay, 2002a, 2002b). Finlay (2002b) points to the high level of self-consciousness required of a reflexive researcher and the impossibility of being fully aware of the self which is, in postmodernism, believed to be socially constructed. Etherington (2004) adds the researcher's reluctance to draw on reflexivity owing to her/his lack of confidence and fear of exposure. These reservations and doubts, nevertheless, do not necessarily mean that it is inadvisable or impossible to embrace reflexivity. In contrast, they just highlight the need to involve in reflexive

practice. To use Finlay's (2002a, p. 227) words, we are "damned" either if we practise reflexivity or not. But reflexivity helps gain deeper and richer understandings of the social reality and add rigour to qualitative research, as can be seen from the discussion above. More importantly, it is "ultimately a political act" as "voicing the unspoken" is empowering for researcher, participant and reader (Finlay, 2002b, p. 544). The challenge here is to achieve the right balance. Etherington (2004) emphasises "a judicious use of self and self-disclosure" (p. 35). The self should be exploited to the extent that it remains "purposeful" (Finlay, 2002b, p. 542) in that it has a place in the analysis and contributes to the interpretation of a wider social world (DeVault, 1997).

To sum up, adopting a reflexive methodology helps enhance the rigour and ethics of my research. It enables me to be critically aware of my position and subjectivities and make the process of knowledge construction in my project open to critique and examination. It also sensitises me to the ethical issues and power relations between me and my participants. It invites different voices and interpretations rather than establishing a 'truth'. For me, all of these lend my research trustworthiness and help it become "not a self-centred product, but a reciprocal process" (Steier, 1991a, p. 7).

4.4. Research questions

In the last section of this first methodology chapter, I explain how the research questions emerged throughout the course of the project, which I have indeed mentioned sparsely in the previous sections.

Luttrell (2010b) maintains that "*in qualitative research, questions typically evolve along the way*" (p. 6, original emphasis). And as Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) remark, "confronted by the holistic nature of practice, determining the focus of a self-study is often not a simple task" (p. 5). These comments are particularly true in the case of my study. My research questions have kept changing as I have learnt more and it took me some time to be able to identify the focus of my project, which, as I see and verbalise it, is still open enough to provide space for potential changes in accord with my growing understanding.

My PhD journey started with questions revolving around developing a negotiation-based pedagogy and exploring what would transpire when I applied the pedagogy in my classroom. These questions were "formalized versions of puzzles" about the issues of

student agency and engagement that I had been working with for some time (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 92). As the project evolved with my engagement with the literature and my growing understanding, a variety of questions concerning issues in teaching English started to emerge. Gradually I directed my attention to my self in practice, with the broad question "How can I develop my practices as an English language teacher in a Vietnamese university?" The "dynamic nature" of the question of this type has allowed me to capture "the evolution of both 'I' and context" (Whitehead, 2016, p. 2). In addition, with hindsight, I realise this question in effect underlay all of my frustrations, practice puzzles and trials with different techniques and methods in my classes since I started teaching. I believe this is also the case for other teachers. Thus, with this main research question, I do not mean my study as a self-centred project but intend to offer implications for other teachers of English, particularly in Vietnamese contexts.

To answer this fairly broad question, I provisionally divide it into three sub-questions to help focus the inquiry. The first sub-question concerns what I consider the basic question for any practitioners engaging in the educative work in the ELT-related field – that is, the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam. The answer to this key question helped provide the frame for my endeavour to develop my pedagogical practices.

The second sub-question looks closely at the development of a pedagogical framework for teaching English to tertiary Vietnamese students. It is because the ultimate goal of self-study in particular and practitioner inquiry in general is to enhance students' learning; hence, there is the need for planning new pedagogies for improving learning. This sub-question explores how a potential pedagogical framework evolved from my growing understanding (i.e., as a result of the first question) and what transpired when it was enacted in my classes. The answer to this question therefore emerged from and in turn contributed to the answer to the first sub-question, building up knowledge which is grounded in practice and at the same time linked with theories.

Lastly, as I have emphasised earlier, it is the link between biography and history that gives quality and rigour to practitioner inquiry. Self-study or autoethnographic research may begin with personal concerns but in order to contribute to the knowledge base in the field and offer implications for audience in wider settings, it is important to situate the work within the context and ethos of a time. Therefore, the last sub-question

examines the mediation of the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and my own personal history in the development of my practices.

To sum up, the research questions that have emerged throughout my project are as follows:

Main question: How can I develop my practices as an English language teacher in a Vietnamese university?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam?

2. What is a potential pedagogical framework for teaching English in my own tertiary context and how has the development of this framework helped to shape my knowledge building as a practitioner?

3. How do the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and my own personal history mediate the development of my practices?

With these questions, my study aspires to connect theory and practice and make a contribution to the larger debate of significant educational issues in the ELT-related field.

In summary, in this first methodology chapter, I have presented the philosophical stance underlying my research and the methodological traditions that I draw on for my project. I have also explained the importance of reflexivity as a dimension of my methodology and the evolution of the research questions throughout the course of the study. In the next methodology chapter, I focus on the process of generating and analysing the data.

Chapter 5: Data Generation and Analysis

In this second methodology chapter, I describe the participants, detail how the data are generated in my project, and look at some ethical issues. I also present how I analysed and interpreted the data in order to answer the research questions.

5.1. Participant students and teachers

In Chapter 2, I have described the research site of the study – that is, the English Faculty (EF) of Ho Chi Minh University (HCMU). This is the place where I had been teaching for seven years before taking a study leave to do my PhD in Australia.

For the fieldwork, I emailed the Dean of EF in November 2013, asking for the permission to teach two Language Skills 2B classes for my PhD project in the second semester of the academic year 2013-2014 (lasting from March to July 2014). The Dean welcomed me back to do research and forwarded my email to the Chair of the Department of English Language Skills, who then agreed to assign two classes to me.

In the second semester of that academic year, there were Language Skills 2A, 2B and 4A, 4B courses for first-year and second-year students respectively. I chose to teach first-year students in my project for a practical reason. Second-year students were at the stage of transitioning to a different 'phase' of their study where they were going to select some 'intermediate courses' and then a specialist stream congruent with the profession they would like to work after graduation (see the description of the programme in Section 2.3.2). From my previous teaching experience, this was normally a 'chaotic' time for the students for several factors including personal, academic and administrative. As there were administrative and academic changes almost every year related to this transition and because I had been away for two years and thus lacked information, I found it 'safer' to teach first-year students for my project. Another reason was first-year students would continue studying language skills courses in the two following semesters (i.e., Language Skills 3A, 3B and 4A, 4B). I hoped to be able to keep in touch with some student participants to see how their language skills learning progressed after the course with me. (However, as I was then mostly based in Australia engaged in the project and the students were too busy with their study afterwards, the intention of keeping in touch did not work out.)

The reason why I chose Language Skills B (i.e., Listening-Speaking) instead of Language Skills A (i.e., Reading-Writing-Grammar) was that I had more experience in teaching and researching listening and speaking skills. This project was in a way a continuation (with new understandings) of my previous attempts to improve my pedagogical practices in listening-speaking classes. In addition, as can be seen in Chapter 2, with the discontent over the Grammar-Translation Method, the pressing need to improve the Vietnamese people's ability to use English, especially orally, in the context of globalisation, and the introduction of communicative approaches, oral skills have been receiving increased attention in Vietnam. By undertaking the project in a listening-speaking class setting, I acknowledge that in a way I am partly motivated by this communicative movement and wish to generate knowledge related to the teaching of oral skills. However, the ultimate goal of the study is not to find approaches to improve students' oral proficiency but to gain insights into pedagogies for teaching English in general. Although some of my teaching plans and strategies in the study were inevitably geared to the characteristics of teaching listening and speaking skills, the overall focus is to seek answers for the question as to what it means to teach English in this context, given the complexity of teaching English in present Vietnam as discussed in Chapter 2.

As mentioned, the Chair of the Department of English Language Skills agreed to give me two language skills classes in the second semester of the academic year 2013-2014. There were several reasons why I asked for two classes instead of only one. Since the academic year 2007-2008 with the switch to the credit system, the academic affairs staff of the university administered students' enrolment in the courses (except first-year students' enrolment in the language skills courses in their first semester). Therefore, the teachers and academic affairs staff of the faculty did not know the number of students enrolled in each class until the courses were about to start. As the credit system was still new in my university, there were usually changes and problems with enrolment, especially during the first few days of each semester. When I was teaching at EF previously, one incident occurred with one of the classes assigned to me. There were not many students enrolled in that class and the enrolled students then did not seem satisfied with the arrangement of the class for several reasons. The result was that nobody turned up on the first day and it took two more weeks for the students and administrative staff to sort out the problems before the class could start. Therefore, to be on the safe side, and particularly because I had not taught in the faculty during the past two years and

was not fully aware of all the changes in the teaching and administration, I asked for two classes. The second reason was that in my ethics application, to protect the students' rights, I explained that all the signed consent forms would be put in an envelope which was to be glued and signed on by two representative students. I would not open the envelope until after I had submitted their final grades. Therefore, I would not know how many students (if any) agreed to participate in the study until the course had finished. The third reason was that I planned to have a colleague observe some of my class sessions. By the time I asked for the permission to teach, the timetables for all the classes had not been completed, so I did not know which colleague would be available on which day. Moreover, as most classes took place on the second campus, which is located in an urban district in the northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, and most teachers had to take the shuttle bus from the main campus in the centre of the city to go there, it was not easy to have colleagues come to my class to observe. Therefore, having two classes would increase the chance that I could find a colleague who was able to observe one of my classes.

The two Language Skills 2B classes were assigned to me by the academic affairs staff in my faculty after they had considered the dates and times of all the teaching staff in the semester. I was given one class on Tuesday afternoons and one class on Wednesday afternoons. The class on Tuesday (hereafter Class 2B-T) consisted of twenty-four first-year students and one third-year student who repeated the class. The class on Wednesday (hereafter Class 2B-W) consisted of thirty-six first-year students, one second-year student who had not studied the course in the previous year and two second-year students who repeated the class in order to improve their scores. I distributed the explanatory statement and the consent form on the first day of the course. All the students agreed to participate in my research. I describe this process of obtaining consent form in more detail in Section 5.3.

As mentioned above, I intended to have a colleague observe some of my class sessions, since most literature on practitioner inquiry in general and self-study in particular underlines the importance of having critical friends, which I explain further in Section 5.2.3. In mid-December 2013 (approximately two months before the fieldwork), knowing that a famous scholar was going to give a lecture on the EIL paradigm at EF, I took a short trip back to Vietnam to attend. I also meant to catch up with some colleagues in that trip and get updates on the teaching programme. I met one of my colleagues (pseudonym: Tiên) in the lecture and we decided to meet at a coffee shop on

the following day for a catch-up. Tiên was a few years younger than me and she had just started to teach at EF before I went to Australia to do my PhD. At that time, she was writing her Master's thesis and we met on several occasions and talked about teaching and research. During my first two years in Australia (i.e., 2012 and 2013), we emailed each other on an occasional basis, sometimes for the purpose of updating me on the situation at EF and at times when she wanted to share her teaching experience with me.

During our catch-up at the coffee shop in December 2013, Tiên shared some of her recent experience, I talked about the pedagogical framework that I had developed for my research, and we realised we had many more similar teaching and research interests than we had thought. Interestingly, it was Tiên who initiated the idea of her observing one of my two classes. She also recommended another colleague (pseudonym: Khuê) to be the observer of my other class. Khuê was, in fact, one of my former students. Although we also talked and emailed sometimes, we had not so far had any thorough communication regarding teaching or research. However, Tiên and Khuê had developed a collegiality between them through frequent talks and some joint work. Nearly one week after the catch-up with Tiên, the three of us met in a coffee shop to discuss my research project. I invited Khuê to observe one of my classes and she agreed. Owing to our timetables, Tiên observed Class 2B-T and Khuê Class 2B-W.

5.2. Data generation

As mentioned, in this project, I used multiple sources of qualitative data to help me seek answers to the research questions. Because of the wide range of data generated and gathered, I find it useful to summarise them in a table:

Table 5.1 – Summary of the data generated in the project

Data	Source	Time
Documents	Syllabus, lesson plans, handouts, PowerPoint slides, students' work, exchanges via Facebook	March to June 2014
Audio-recordings of class sessions	Classroom activities in the two classes	March to June 2014
Colleagues' observations and discussions	My two colleagues' written comments when they observed some sessions in Class 2B-T and Class 2B-W	March to June 2014
	Audio-recordings and notes of discussions with them	March to July 2014
Students' feedback	Students' written feedback after some class sessions, and at the end of the course	March to June 2014
	Audio-recordings of after-class talks with students	March to June 2014
	Audio-recordings of focus group interviews in Class 2B-W at the end of the course	July 2014
Research journal	My journal entries throughout the project, particularly during the fieldwork	

5.2.1. Documents

Documents or artefacts are, as Cole and Knowles (2000) suggest, one main kind of data in qualitative and reflexive research. In practitioner inquiry, they are the "tremendous paper trail" which is "naturally generat[ed]" in schools and classrooms and enables the teacher-inquirers to gain insights into classroom life (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 81). Cole and Knowles (2000) also entail nonprint material in artefact collection. In this PhD project, the two participating classes and I generated a wide range of print and nonprint materials throughout the course:

a. *Teaching materials* that I generated and gathered based on the pedagogical framework presented in Chapter 3 and what transpired over the course: the overall plan for the course, the revised syllabus based on the faculty syllabus, the lesson plans, and the PowerPoint slides, handouts, video clips and audio files used in the lessons.

b. *Students' work*: documents produced and gathered by the students including portfolios, listening learning logs, handouts for class discussions, PowerPoint slides, video clips, audio files, and role-play scripts.

c. *Exchanges with students via Facebook*: Each class created a Facebook group and during the course, we used it as a means of communicating outside the classroom and a place for sharing ideas and materials, particularly video clips on YouTube.

It should be noted that Facebook was not part of what I had planned before the fieldwork. The idea emerged from an informal chat with Khuê in the week before the course began. During the talk, I expressed my concern over the fact that the students did not keep to their semester 1 class groups when enrolling in semester 2 courses. Previously (i.e., before I went to Australia to study), first-year and second-year students tended to keep to their class groups when enrolling in new language skills courses; therefore, class members knew each other quite well when studying courses in the first two years. At the time of my fieldwork, as a result of the development of an online enrolment system, students were allowed to enrol in the courses that fitted their individual timetable. This means they no longer kept to their class group and consequently, many students in each class did not know each other, the class leader (if the teacher needed) had to be elected again for each course, and it was not easy for the class members including the teacher to contact one another after class time. During the conversation with Khuê, we both recognised that because there was no virtual learning environment at our college, we could make use of Facebook as a way of communicating and a learning platform. Moreover, since this was a listening-speaking course, the application of ICT such as Facebook and YouTube seemed to be beneficial and probably necessary. Pedagogically speaking, the use of ICT is embraced in Cummins's framework for academic language development (see, e.g.,

Cummins, 2001; Skourtou, Kourtis-Kazoullis, & Cummins, 2006). Contextually speaking, the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* by the Vietnamese government highlights the incorporation of ICT in language teaching and learning (see Section 2.2.2). And methodologically speaking, ICT has been increasingly recognised as useful data-gathering tools in qualitative studies. McNiff (2013), for example, includes live and online discussion forums and virtual worlds such as blogs, websites, Facebook and Twitter as one of the valuable sources of data in action research. Therefore, although I was not confident with my ICT proficiency, with the encouragement from Khuê (and Tiên later) and the agreement of my students when I raised the idea in class, I decided to utilise Facebook.

5.2.2. Audio-recordings of class sessions

Video-recording of classroom activities is an oft-suggested source of data in practitioner inquiry, particularly self-study methodology, as it can preserve events in a close to real-life format (see, e.g., G. L. Anderson et al., 1994; Brookfield, 1995; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Hopkins, 1985, 2008; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). However, because of the facilities at the research site and the time allocated for class sessions there, setting up a camera for recording was not easy and might interfere with the teaching (and thus researching) process. Also, the appearance of a camera might be intrusive and have an impact on students' behaviours or learning. Therefore, I decided to use audio-recording instead (see Brandenburg, 2008; Hopkins, 1985, 2008; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Apart from the inability to capture the body language and the intelligibility of the recordings in the case of silent or chaotic activities, I found audio-recording useful for me in almost the same way as video-recording. To compensate for the lack of visual record, after class I made a note in my journal of any details that might help me to visualise the related moments better when I listened to the recordings.

To record the class sessions, I used two digital recorders to make sure that in case there was a technical problem with one recorder, I still had the data in the other. I placed one recorder on my table and the other on the windowsill near my table. Since the recorders were small and placed to some extent far away from the students, I believed their presence was not visually intrusive to the students. With these two recorders in these positions, I only aimed to keep an audio record of how the session proceeded and the

interactions between me and some students or between some students in front of the whole class during activities such as presentations, role-plays or whole class discussions. They could not record (and this was outside the scope of my study) the exchanges happening within pairs, small groups or private talks among the students. Sometimes when I walked around the class during the time for group discussions, I took one recorder with me so that in case there happened to be any interaction between me and some students, it would record the exchange for me and I could engage in the interaction without worrying about taking notes.

Since the classrooms were large with windows and doors always opening to let fresh air in, it was sometimes even difficult for the students and me to hear one another, not to mention capturing the interactions clearly with the recorders. For each classroom, the university only provided one microphone which could be plugged into a socket under the blackboard by a wire. However, the wire was not long enough to reach every student in the room. Thus, I bought a pair of wireless microphones and brought them with me every time I went to class. It was easy to pass them around the class, which helped the interactions go more smoothly and assisted the recording of the utterances of the students, especially those with soft voice or sitting at the back of the classroom. At first, some students were shy when speaking into the microphone. However, over time, they got used to it, became more confident and often requested a microphone to pass to them so that they could speak to the whole class. Some students even wrote in the written feedback forms that they liked the use of the wireless microphones, for it facilitated the teaching and learning process.

With the audio recorders documenting as accurately as possible the main interactions in class, I could concentrate on my teaching and did not have to pause and take notes. The "exhaustive record" provides evidence as well as assists the analysis and interpretation process (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 133). It serves as an aide-memoir for me to reflect on my teaching after the completion of the course. Additionally, when examining the recordings repeatedly, I could "note episodes that [I] did not notice before" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 75). In short, the recordings enable me "to interrogate self and setting to explore both practice and the knowledge around which the practice emerges" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 134).

5.2.3. Colleagues' observations and discussions

As noted, one characteristic of practitioner inquiry in general and self-study in particular is collaboration, even when the research is carried out by individuals. Learning, as Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) maintain, emerges from the space between ourselves as practitioner-inquirers and the others who are involved in our practice. The process of coming to know can be viewed as a dialogue, not only with oneself and with ideas but also with others. In a similar vein, Brookfield (1995) refers to critical reflection as "an irreducibly social process" (p. 141). Among those that we practitioner researchers can interact with during the research, critical friends, who are often our colleagues, are often suggested as people from whom we can seek critique as well as support (e.g., G. L. Anderson et al., 1994; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Herr & Anderson, 2015; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011). By inviting critical friends to observe what we do, and/or by discussing with them, we can notice aspects that we often take for granted, gain alternative perspectives and thereby reframe our theories of practice. Brookfield (1995) thus refers to colleagues as a lens through which we can view our teaching. In addition to constructive feedback, critical friends can offer moral support which we need when involved in a special project. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) point to the term "friend" to highlight the importance of a caring relationship among those involved in this critical dialogue. For Brookfield (1995), an essential prerequisite for critical conversations to take place is that the participants possess what Burbules and Rice (1991) call communicative virtues. These include:

> tolerance, patience, respect for differences, a willingness to listen, the inclination to admit that one may be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that makes them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may 'have a turn' to speak, and the disposition to express oneself honestly and sincerely. (p. 411)

As presented above, my colleagues Tiên and Khuê agreed to come to my classes. They acted as my critical friends who observed and gave comments on my teaching. The observation days depended on their availability, as I was aware of their busy schedule and tried to make sure that the involvement in my project would not become a burden to them. Out of the twelve weeks (i.e., twelve lessons), Tiên observed Class 2B-T in Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11. She got sick in the middle of the semester so she could not come to my class in the middle lessons. Khuê observed Class 2B-W in Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5,

7, 8, 11 and 12. In Week 4, Khuê was busy and Tiên was willing to arrange her time to observe the first half of the lesson in Class 2B-W, for in that session I conducted some activities to incorporate the EIL paradigm.

Tiên and Khuê usually sat at the back of the class. In some activities when the students moved around the classroom, they also moved around to see what the students were doing. In general, they played the part of an observer and did not participate in the class activities. I felt that their presence in class was not intrusive to the students.

Tiên and Khuê took notes in the same notebook that I brought every time I went to class. Therefore, they could read each other's comments about my teaching and once they also commented on each other. I kept the notebook after class to read at home. I did not give them a check list for fear that it would restrict their attention and feedback. Instead, they were free to comment on the teaching and learning in my class from their own perspectives and experience, and based on my pedagogical framework, which I presented and discussed with them during the meetings.

In addition to their observations and comments in the notebook, we sometimes met (either all three of us or just one of them and me) and discussed what transpired in my classes. During the discussion, they sometimes shared their experiences and beliefs, which were also useful to my reflection on my own beliefs and practices. I audio-recorded most of the conversations. For some conversations which I did not audio-record (for example, a chat on the shuttle bus), I took notes in my journal when I came home. Audio-recording seemed to become part of our routine when we met. They sometimes even reminded me to record or asked me to send them the part where they reflected on their experience.

Our relationship, especially between Tiên and me, as noted above, allowed me to feel safe in exposing my imperfection. On the one hand, they were caring and supportive. For example, after observing my first two sessions, Tiên and Khuê expressed their concern about the way I conducted the lessons, which they suspected was due to my being away for two years. They suggested I observe some other teachers' classes to 're-learn' the ways to approach a language skills lesson and re-acquaint myself with the environment in a language skills class at EF. They expressed their willingness for me to come to their classes if I liked. Owing to the timetables and different campuses, I could only observe one of Tiên's classes in the evening.

On the other hand, Tiên and Khuê were honest and sincere in their feedback and often questioned what I was doing in class. Although I felt supported and thus safe to have them observe and comment on my teaching, I admit that it was not a completely comfortable experience, especially at the beginning. The observations and the follow-up discussions left me vulnerable and open to critique. However, over time I learnt to confidently participate in this critical dialogue, which led to new perspectives, new questions, and new possibilities.

My research project in turn has helped strengthen our connection and thereby contributed to our professional development. During the meetings, we not only discussed what transpired in my classes but also shared different aspects of our personal and professional lives. The experience in my classes helped Tiên and Khuê reflect on their teaching as well as plans for their future classes. It provided motivation for them to implement some of the plans they had been thinking of. For example, in the following semesters, Tiên and Khuê started to co-teach in order to learn from each other and together try new strategies/approaches. After I had finished the fieldwork and returned to Australia to continue with the research, we still kept in touch. Tiên and Khuê sometimes contacted me via email or Facebook to encourage me and offer help if needed. In my short trip back to Vietnam in October 2015, Tiên even invited me to observe her classes in order to get some comments on her teaching as well as to keep me 'in touch' with the teaching context at EF and the new language skills curriculum. The reason why there was less contact between Khuê and me compared with between Tiên and me was Khuê was writing up her Master's thesis during my fieldwork and she went to the USA the following year to pursue another Master's degree.

5.2.4. Students' feedback
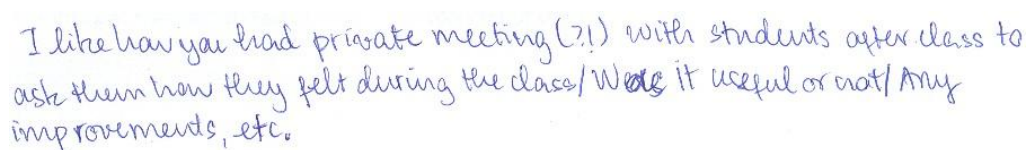
Getting students' opinions and perspectives is widely discussed in the literature on practitioner research as useful for inquiry into the educational influences in students' learning. Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009), for instance, give examples of several studies in which the teacher-inquirers used surveys to see what students had learnt about a subject matter or to get their thoughts on a teaching strategy or a lesson. A detailed discussion on different ways to "[get] inside students' heads" can also be found in Brookfield (1995, p. 92). Indeed, Brookfield proposes students' eyes as one of the four lenses through which the critically reflective teacher can view their teaching. For him, as well as for me, seeing ourselves through our students' eyes helps us to "teach more

responsively" and, more importantly, to see (and from that strive to change, if needed) the "power dynamics" that structure our interactions with students (pp. 35 & 94).

In this project, I obtained both ongoing feedback to help me adjust my teaching (if necessary) in the following class sessions, and final comments to gain insights into their learning experience over the whole course. Specifically, at the end of some class sessions when there was some time left, I asked the students for their feelings and opinions about the sessions. Anticipating that some students may not be used to giving feedback and thus may not know what to write, I gave them a feedback form with some questions as prompts for thinking (see Appendix 7). And at the end of the course, they filled in a course evaluation form (see Appendix 8). I had the students write the feedback anonymously so that they could feel free to express their opinions and feelings, which could not easily obtained otherwise given that the high respect for the teacher in the Vietnamese culture tends to prevent Vietnamese students from speaking out what they think about the teaching. Written in a Western context, Brookfield (1995) also pointed out that, anonymity is "a cardinal principle", as students are "understandably reluctant" when it comes to giving honest comments on the negative aspects of our teaching (p. 34). Over time, as he suggests, as trust has been built up between us and our students, we can get feedback publicly. In my project, I obtained comments publicly by talking with some students after the class sessions, having some feedback sessions in class when issues arose, and, for Class 2B-W, conducting focus group interviews at the end of the course. I explain the first and third ways in more detail below.

As mentioned above, I had the students write feedback anonymously at the end of some class sessions. Since the disadvantage of getting anonymous feedback is that it cannot create dialogue between teacher and students, which sometimes is fruitful in terms of ideas, I invited some students in each class to stay after the class sessions to discuss the lesson or any issues that we needed to address. I asked for their permission to record the talks so that I did not have to take notes and thus could get fully involved in the conversations. This way of getting feedback was inspired by Shor's (1996) idea of organising After Class Group as one of the strategies to negotiate the teaching programme with his students. My initial plan was to form a fixed after-class group as in Shor (1996). However, when the fieldwork started, I realised most students had various engagements after class (e.g., taking extra classes in the evening). Therefore, after each lesson, I told the students that anyone who had any questions or comments could stay

after class to have a chat with me. The students participating in the after-class talks thus varied depending on the willingness and timetables of the students. As the students did some group work during the course, occasionally I deliberately invited the group leaders (or representatives) to stay after class so that I could discuss their process of doing group work and provide support if necessary. It seems that thanks to the anonymous feedback forms and some spontaneous feedback sessions in class as mentioned earlier, the students could see my willingness to listen to them, thereby honestly expressing their thoughts, at least from my perception, in the after-class talks. Moreover, although only a few students could attend these talks regularly, most students seemed to like the ideas of having this kind of talk. One student wrote in the course evaluation form that:

Figure 5.1 – Extract 1 from Student 23's course evaluation form, Class 2B-W

To gain further insights into the students' experience and opinions, I also conducted focus group interviews in Class 2B-W after the course finished. The reason why I interviewed only one class was that it was difficult for me to organise focus groups in both classes due to our hectic and diverse schedules towards the end of the semester. As Class 2B-W seemed to be more confident about expressing their feelings and thoughts, I decided to get more of their opinions publicly by means of focus group interviews. Moreover, as focus groups were in fact originally planned as follow-up research (as explained later), it was not necessary for me to carry them out in both classes, considering the time constraints.

There were several reasons why I chose focus groups rather than one-to-one interviews. First of all, focus groups were more advantageous to me in terms of time (Manoranjitham & Jacob, 2007; Morgan, 1997). As most students were staying around the second campus, by organising focus groups, it saved me time to commute there given the limited time available for me to finish both grading for the course and the fieldwork. Second, focus groups are desirable when researchers anticipate possible reluctance on the part of the interviewees to provide information in one-to-one interviews (Creswell, 2007; Manoranjitham & Jacob, 2007; Yin, 2011). In my case, although the students had been acquainted with me seeking their comments through

feedback forms and after-class talks, considering the inevitably unequal teacher-student relationship between us, I presumed the students might feel more comfortable and confident when being part of a group than on their own. Furthermore, interaction among participants can potentially yield more information, clarified explanations and new understandings (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997; Manoranjitham & Jacob, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

My original intention was to conduct focus groups after all the grades had been submitted and I had known how many students had agreed to participate in the main research. I planned focus groups as follow-up research in case I did not have enough participants (and thus data) due to my way of collecting the consent forms (see Section 5.3). However, since this language skills course started later than the other courses in the semester, after the course finished it was also the exam time and then summer break. Therefore, I could not wait until the submission of the grades, for it would take me a long time to finish grading, and by the time I had submitted the marks, the students would have gone back to their provinces or gone on holiday. Therefore, I called for volunteers after assignments and testing had been completed but not yet graded. I made this clear to the students that grading for the students who volunteered to participate would have been finalised prior to the group discussions. I was concerned that some students might agree to participate but would not express their opinions honestly for fear of getting bad grades. I hoped by making it clear that their grades would have been finalised this would not be the case. In addition, I believed if I interviewed them in the groups that they did group work together, they might feel more comfortable taking part in the interviews and I might also happen to gain some insights related to their process of doing group work. Therefore, I suggested that they participate in the interviews with their group members. Seven out of eight groups were willing to arrange their time and participate. Six interviews were conducted on the second campus and one in the dormitory nearby.

Before each interviewing day, I sent each group member a Facebook message with the link to their mark sheets. On the interviewing day, before interviewing them I asked whether they had any questions related to their marks. Then I gave each student an explanatory statement and consent form for this follow-up research, explained verbally some main points in the explanatory statement and answered their questions (if any). I told them that they could skip any questions that they did not feel comfortable in answering, and I sometimes reminded them of this during the interviews. I let the

students keep the consent forms until the interview had finished and they could then decide whether to let me use their data during the interview or not. All of them agreed to let me use the data and returned the consent forms. The interviews lasted from one hour to one and a half hour and were audio-recorded.

These interviews were semi-structured in that I prepared some questions in advance but were flexible in skipping or adding some questions according to what the students said. I asked them to feel free to comment on each other's ideas and they could regard this as a discussion about the course. Since topic discussion was one main learning activity in class, the students had been familiar with this kind of conversation so they participated in the interviews comfortably, as least from my perception. They confidently reacted and responded to what each other said as in a discussion. Also, I did not have to worry about the issue of some participants dominating the conversation as raised in the literature (see, e.g., Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2011), for the students had got used to supporting each other to speak in a discussion.

5.2.5. Research journal

The last source of data that I generated in this project is my diary notes, or journals. Journal writing is one common research method in reflective practice and self-study (Mitchell, 2005). It is "a vehicle for understanding oneself as teacher" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 49). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) define journals as "accounts of classroom life in which teachers record observations, analyze their experience, and reflect on and interpret their practices over time" (p. 26). Journals are thus analogous to ethnographic field notes in that they "capture the immediacy of teaching: teachers' evolving perceptions of what is happening with the students in their classrooms and what this means for their continued practice" (p. 26). Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) add that teachers can include in their journals elements of their life which relate to their teaching practices. Cole and Knowles (2000) suggest that teachers can also record their reactions to important matters pervading the education such as issues of race, gender, authority and autonomy. Broadly speaking, as a form of research, journal writing is, as Cole and Knowles contend, "open terrain"; that is, "the scope of your journal writing is *only* limited by the contexts in which you are working, the time you have available, your imagination, and your energies" (p. 49, original emphasis).

One main reason why journaling is being advocated as a research method in educational research is the usefulness of the writing process itself. It is "a problem-solving or thinking process" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 49). It helps "forward thinking" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 124). And as I have discussed earlier, it aids reflexivity. To reiterate the thesis in L. Richardson's (2000) classic paper, writing is a method of inquiry, a way of knowing the self, the others and the world.

Upon embarking on this PhD project, I started to keep a journal. In the first two years, it was a place for me to 'dump' my confusions and frustrations as I was working around the conceptual framework, the research questions and the methodology. I noted down my thoughts as I engaged with the literature, and my reflections on some fragments of my previous teaching and learning experience and some moments in my life which pertained to English teaching and learning.

Throughout the fieldwork, I recorded descriptions of the class sessions, especially those details that could not be captured by the audio-recordings. Moreover, I documented all sorts of thoughts about my teaching, including reflections on my teaching practice and belief and on what happened in my classes, thoughts that came up when I was reading the students' assignments and feedback or after talking with my colleagues, and adjusted plans for the following class sessions. I also recorded the 'ups and downs' in my feelings as the course progressed. I had two diaries: one is a Word file on my laptop which I usually used while working in front of the laptop such as preparing lessons, reading students' assignments, and Facebooking with my students; the other is a small notebook which I carried with me every time I went to my university in order to note down my thoughts immediately when they sprang to mind. Sometimes I scribbled down fleeting thoughts on any pieces of paper that I could grasp and then transferred them into one of my diaries.

Because of the frenetic pace of teaching life, I did not have time to articulate my thoughts in formal writing. Therefore, most of the entries are brief notes in dot point form randomly recorded. Despite the sloppiness of the notes, they were useful in helping me reconstruct the memories later after the fieldwork. Moreover, by journaling, I was conducting a kind of preliminary analysis, which served as a useful starting point for me when I began analysing the mass of data after the fieldwork.

Throughout the course of this research, although the intensity and frequency of my journal writing varied depending on my time, energy and perceived needs to write, the

act of journaling helped me grapple with elements of my developing self as a teacher and a researcher. Further, those fragments of thoughts and feelings in the journal are helpful in contributing to the general picture of the process that I have gone through in developing my teaching practices and becoming a reflexive qualitative researcher.

5.3. Ethical considerations

I have mentioned in passing earlier some of my ethical considerations in this project. In this section, I discuss in more detail the issue of ethics in qualitative research in general and in practitioner inquiry in particular, and thus in my research.

Traditionally, ethical work involves making every effort to get free and informed consent, to protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality, and to minimise possible harm to them (Etherington, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). These matters are inscribed in the ethical codes and guidelines by most research ethics committees, from whom researchers need to obtain approval to conduct research. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) call this dimension of ethics "procedural ethics", which is often regarded as one "hurdle" in the early stage of the research process that researchers have to get over in order to be able to undertake their research (p. 263). In these authors' view, procedural ethics is useful in drawing researchers' attention to fundamental ethical issues such as respect for autonomy, respect for privacy and protection of participants from potential risks; hence, helping to enhance research integrity. However, procedural ethics cannot ensure honest and ethical conduct of the whole research process, especially during the fieldwork. It is because the ethics 'checklist' by the committees cannot cover all the possible ethical dilemmas that arise in the doing of research. Moreover, these guidelines tend to be based on scientific conventions, which presume little engagement on the part of the researcher with the participants and the research setting. Therefore, they tend to be limited and limiting in the case of studies in which researchers adopt an insider position such as autoethnography (see C. Ellis, 2007) and action research (see Zeni, 2009).

Scholars have thus called for attention to other dimensions that constitute the complex ethical work, particularly in qualitative research. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) propose the concept of ethics in practice to refer to situated ethical issues emerging in the research. It is in the dealing with unexpected "ethically important moments", rather than with the completion of the institutional application of ethics that the real ethical work of

a project is being done (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). C. Ellis (2007) highlights the importance of relational ethics in research with people whom the researcher has (or will form) some connection with such as ethnography or autoethnography[28]. Relational ethics "requires researchers to act from our hearts and minds, acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences" (p. 3). It features care and respect in the relationship between the researcher and researched, particularly in cases where there is power imbalance (Etherington, 2007).

These two dimensions of ethics are especially relevant to practitioner inquiry, where the boundary between research and professional practice is blurred. Classroom activities are at the same time research activities; data are generated from daily work; and the teacher-researcher is intrinsically involved with the practice setting and the people there before, during and probably after the research. All of these call for sensitivity towards the interpersonal dynamics between the teacher-researcher and the people involved, and ethical tensions arising in the everyday teaching - researching practice (Zeni, 2009). Moreover, it is this blurred research/practice distinction that makes discussion on ethics, which is inherently full of "struggle and uncertainty" (Weston, 2006, p. 5), in a way more complex in practitioner inquiry. As Mockler (2007) puts it, "the ethics of practitioner research lies at the crossroads of the ethics of research and the ethics of practice", so "due consideration of the ethics of practitioner research take[s] both into account" (p. 93). The teacher-researcher is first and foremost a teacher and teaching is itself an ethical practice. The teacher is professionally responsible to the people at their teaching site, including students, colleagues, administrators and community. Pedagogical planning should also take into account the larger social context and aim at "more democratic classroom communities" (Zeni, 2009, p. 264). Having said that, it does not necessarily mean that teaching ethics and research ethics are distinct. On the contrary, as Mockler (2007) argues, if the view of "inquiry as stance" is adopted, "ethical concerns which might previously have been thought to be the province of research suddenly become salient for practice and vice versa" (p. 94). They are simply an "extension of everyday ethics" into the teacher-researcher's sphere of work (p. 94). That means "everything's ethics", to use Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2007) words.

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[28] Since autoethnography involves examining the self in relation with the broader context (as explained earlier), the researcher often includes others when writing their own story; hence, the importance of paying attention to relational ethics.

The discussion so far has shown that the conduct of ethical work relies on the researchers themselves, instead of the ethical procedure laid out by any research committee. It depends on the researcher's willingness to carry out this "fundamental moral duty" (Norton, 2007, p. 162), their sensitivity to ethical complexities along the way, and their ability to respond to them. In this regard, scholars have pointed to the relevance of reflexivity (e.g., C. Ellis, 2007; Etherington, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Being reflexive means engaging in "a continuous process of critical scrutiny and interpretation, not just in relation to the research methods and the data but also to the researcher, participants, and the research context" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 275). This helps sensitise the researcher to the particularities of their research context and participants, and the evolving interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participants. For Etherington (2007), reflexivity also means transparency in relation to the interactions between the researcher and participants so that readers can see how issues related to the participants' autonomy, dignity and privacy have been tackled in the study.

My understanding of ethics changed throughout the course of my PhD project. Initially, I viewed it as a hurdle that I had to surmount before I could go back to my country to conduct fieldwork. I then came to understand through workshops and literature on research ethics that it is a moral obligation to ensure participants' anonymity, confidentiality, safety, and rights. It also aims to protect me as researcher from possible risks during the study. And the research ethics committee was there to help me conduct research with integrity. I also understood that ethical work is not done with the obtainment of approval from the ethics committee and that there might be unexpected moments which require adjustments of any plans. My understanding of research ethics was also growing with my awareness of the pedagogical, moral, ethical and political aspects of self-study in particular and practitioner inquiry in general, which I have discussed earlier.

Being cognizant of the unequal relationship between my students and me as their teacher, I paid careful attention to all ethical aspects of the study so as to ensure that I could carry out an ethical inquiry. I was particularly concerned about the consent form collection stage, when my authorial role as teacher may affect the students' decision to take part in the research. To protect non-participant students' rights and to ensure that students do not agree to participate in the hope of receiving favour from me during the course, I asked the students to place all the consent forms, whether signed or not, face

down on the front desk at the end of the first lesson. Two representative students put all the forms in an envelope, glued it, and signed on it. I kept the envelope during the course and planned to open it in front of the students at the end of the course after the submission of all the marks. Later, however, since it took me a long time to finish marking all the assignments and many students returned to their provinces right after taking the last exam, I changed the plan. The envelope was then opened in front of my two colleagues after I had submitted all the grades. In Class 2B-T, all of the students agreed to take part in the research, but three of them did not want their data in the lesson recordings to be included and one did not want the documents she produced during the course to be used in my thesis (see the consent form in Appendix 1). Similarly, in Class 2B-W, the students all agreed to participate, and only one student did not want her data in the lesson recordings to be included in my research. For these students who did not give consent to the use of part of their data, I took care not to include them in my thesis.

Despite my recognition of ethics as personal responsibility, with hindsight, I now realise that prior to the fieldwork I still regarded it as procedures. As I entered the fieldwork, I became more fully aware of how it permeated all aspects of the research/teaching process and how subtle it was sometimes. One of the things that I came to learn was "the substrate of the ethical dimensions of research practice" lay in the interactions between me and my participants, rather than in the explanation form or consent paper that had been approved by the committee (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 275). For example, on the first day of the teaching course, as I was standing in front of my students explaining my research and the procedures to ensure fairness and their autonomy and privacy, I began to sense more deeply the power imbalance between my students and me and its potential impact on my students' decisions. At the end of the day, I was the one who would grade their work and decide whether they would pass my course or not. Being afraid that they would feel forced to participate in my research, I reiterated issues such as voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, and confidentiality. I thus ended up spending quite some time on the information and consent form session. Observing the classes, my colleagues Tiên and Khuê later commented on the lengthiness of the sessions. In their views, the students might be more concerned with what they could learn in my course. Reflecting on the session, I realised that in my anxiety over informed consent I failed to adjust my talk when addressing the issue of power. However, like Etherington (2007), I felt encouraged by Josselson's (1996) remark:

I would worry most if I stopped worrying […] It is with our anxiety, dread, guilt, and shame that we honor our participants. To do this work we must contain these feelings rather than deny, suppress, or rationalize them. We must at least try to be fully aware of what we are doing. (p. 70, as cited in Etherington, 2007, p. 604)

The roles as teacher and researcher were not conflicting but sometimes resulted in some ethical dilemmas, requiring me to navigate between them. Bearing in mind that my primary role was teaching, I strived to make sure that my research was not interfering with my students' learning. As can be seen in Section 5.2, most of my data came from natural classroom practices. All research tools of generating data were also teaching tools for my pedagogical framework. The use of audio-recording might be 'unnatural' but I tried to make the presence of the audio-recorders as unobtrusive as possible, as explained earlier. The focus group interviews in Class 2B-W were conducted at the end of the course and in a way similar to my frequent talks with my students about my teaching during the course. With regard to the pedagogies, as can be seen in Chapters 2 and 3, I took into consideration the social, cultural and political forces in the broader context. The pedagogies that I drew on underscore such values as respect and social commitment in practitioner inquiry, which Zeni (2009) suggests as "the most appropriate basis of ethical decision-making" (p. 257).

Although teaching was of primary importance, at times my role as researcher had to take over. For instance, although making the Facebook groups public would potentially turn them into a community of practice with the participation of authentic audience on Facebook, which might be beneficial to my students' learning, for the purpose of protecting my participants' identities, I had to have the privacy setting of the groups set as closed. Thus, adopting such a dual role entails trade-offs in some situations. However, I suppose this is part of everyday ethics and the guiding rule for me is to "think ethically" about the consequences of my actions on my participants (Norton, 2007, p. 163).

As for my two colleagues Tiên and Khuê, as explained earlier, their participation was out of their willingness to help me with my research. Since I did not hold any position higher than them at the time, there was no issue of coercion. And as presented above, the bonds among us grew in the course of my project. However, one ethical dilemma facing me is the violation of the ethical principle regarding intellectual property as a

result of the 'golden rule' of using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities. As Somekh et al. (2005) argue, by anonymising participants, researchers fail to fully credit their ideas, which can be seen as their intellectual property. While listening to my colleagues' comments on my teaching, and the ideas and experiences that they shared with me, I was wondering whether it would be unfair to cite them using pseudonyms. Although most of their ideas presented in this thesis were in a way filtered through my views, I still feel uneasy about adopting the rule of anonymity in this case. This ethical issue can also apply to students' ideas, as discussed in P. V. Anderson (1998) and Zeni (2009).

Speaking of anonymity, another irony is that participants are still likely to be recognised, especially by those in the community (Mockler, 2007; Zeni, 2009). In my thesis, I use pseudonyms to replace the names of the participants, institutions and places and avoid any particularities that may reveal their identities. As for Facebook posts, instead of providing the links for the readers to see the exchanges in the groups, I only include screenshots of some posts with pseudonyms in place of my students' Facebook names and their profile pictures erased. Nevertheless, I am aware that there is a possibility that the participants are able to recognise one another or be identified by some readers of this research.

My awareness of the ethical complexity in the research was due to my constantly reflecting on the teaching and research process, my own role and actions, and the relationships between me and others, especially my participants. As can be seen, there is no easy solution to some dilemmas but by trying to be transparent about what happened and my feelings and actions, I hope my "work can be understood, not only in terms of *what* [I] have discovered, but *how* [I] have discovered it" (Etherington, 2007, p. 601, original emphasis). In other words, I hope it helps improve the rigour and trustworthiness of my study, contributing to the "ethical knowledge creation" in my project (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011, p. 1403).

To sum up, as the project progressed, I became increasingly aware of the moral nature of what I was doing. I also realised that there is no universal set of rules and that, instead, I needed to be sensitive to the particularities of the participants and situations. I also learnt that "struggle and uncertainty are part of ethics, as they are part of life" (Weston, 1997, p. 4). And I now know that, to quote Josselson (1996) again, "we must

at least try to be aware of what we are doing" (p. 70, as cited in Etherington, 2007, p. 604).

5.4. Data analysis and representation

5.4.1. Overview of the analysis process

In this final section of the chapter, I detail the ways I analyse and represent the data. Literature on qualitative research generally suggests that the researcher is already anticipating the data analysis while generating data and that this means the researcher is able to shape the ways that data is generated (see, e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). Herr and Anderson (2015) emphasise that while ongoing data analysis is advisable for qualitative research, it is "imperative" for action research, for it provides a basis for the decision-making and interventions throughout the data generation (p. 90) (see also Hinchey, 2008). As I explained earlier in Section 4.3, although my research was comprised of only one action/reflection cycle, there was a complex interplay of multiple 'micro-actions' and 'micro-reflections' throughout the twelve-week teaching course which helped my implementation of the pedagogical framework that I had developed. Throughout these weeks, my constant reflection on what transpired in my classes, the observation notes by and the discussions with my colleagues, and the feedback from my students had contributed to my ongoing revision and enactment of the lesson plans. This process can be considered both critical reflection on my part as a practitioner and also a form of preliminary analysis of the data at hand in my role as researcher. Part of this analysis was recorded in my journal as I noted down what happened, articulated the specific reasons for choosing one set of actions over another, and reflected on the matters for which there did not seem to be a clear or straightforward answer. Emerging from this constant reflecting and journaling were some particular issues which later served as the starting points for the data analysis after the fieldwork, and which then became important themes in my discussions of data such as the place of the Vietnamese language in these classes (see Chapter 6) and what my colleagues in the study referred to as implicit and/or explicit teaching (see Chapter 7).

The 'formal' data analysis of the research dimension of the project can be said to have commenced after the completion of the fieldwork. To 'make sense' of the massive amount of data generated during the fieldwork, I drew on thematic analysis, a common

approach to analysing qualitative data (see, e.g., Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). According to Boyatzis (1998), a theme is "a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (p. 4).

To look for themes or patterns of meaning in the data, I employed the analytic tactic called *coding* – that is, identifying segments of data of particular significance for the research and naming them. My study endorses Saldaña's (2013) view of coding as "a heuristic– a method of discovery," aiming to stimulate "*thinking* about the data" (p. 39-40, original emphasis). Coding is "not just labeling" pieces of data; rather, "it is *linking*" (p. 8, original emphasis). By coding (and recoding), I could immerse myself in the data, and was prompted "to ponder, to scrutinize, to interrogate, […], to organize, […], to integrate, to synthesize, to reflect, […], and […] to theorize" (p. 39).

While engaging in the process of reading (and re-reading) and coding (and re-coding) the data, I also kept writing analytical memos (see Saldaña, 2013). Like the research journal entries I was writing during the fieldwork, memos were the place for me to 'dump' all of my thoughts, feelings and reflections regarding the data that I was engaging with and the whole process of researching that I was undertaking. Unlike my journal entries, I arranged and categorised the memos into different Word documents such as "my assumptions and expectations", "thoughts related to EIL", "emerging codes", "process of coding", "process of doing research", "future directions" and "wonderings". In doing so, I began to organise and collate potentially significant ideas. Through memo-writing, together with the process of coding, I enhanced the reflexivity of the project. Actually, I was learning to reflect on my professional experiences, to think critically about the data, to challenge my assumptions, to raise questions, to make connections, and to search for different ways of understanding.

The process of coding and developing themes in the study was simultaneously theory- and data-driven (see Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The conceptual framework presented and discussed in Chapter 3 (particularly the emergent pedagogical framework which was enacted in the teaching course) offered a focus for me to approach the wide range of data generated throughout the research. For example, as I immersed myself in the data, I identified pieces of data (stories and other aspects of my experience) that

related to the three foci in Cummins's framework, the role of the Vietnamese language and the two approaches to incorporating an EIL perspective into teaching. At the same time, being sensitised to the rich nature, complexity and particularity of teaching and learning English, I remained open to any issues emerging from the data that might be of importance in relation to the overall focus of the study. This inductive, data-driven approach helped me to notice, for instance, stories, experiences or data that would ultimately help form two important themes concerning aspects of my teaching EIL: implicit and/or explicit teaching, and struggles and tensions in teaching for diversity (see Chapter 7).

It should be noted that I did not see these two approaches of analysis as distinct from each other. Indeed, I found myself moving back and forth between different bodies of literature and the data at hand. This kind of mobility and flexibility allowed me, for example, to probe deeper into the data related to the issue of the Vietnamese language; in particular, it allowed me to become aware of the body of literature on translanguaging (as I have noted in Section 3.2.4 in Chapter 3), and to appreciate the importance of translanguaging as a pedagogical lens for teaching English in today's globalising world. Regarding the data-driven approach, it is worth noting here that this part of the analysis was enabled through my searching for narrative-based accounts (i.e., narratives, but not just written in the form of stories; many reflections do not explicitly take a narrative structure) in discussions with my colleagues, conversations with my students, recordings of my lessons, and my prior learning and teaching experiences. In other words, the generation of themes in the study was partly enabled by my drawing on narrative as a form of representing data and also as a method of analysis. I revisit and elaborate on my use of narrative in Section 5.4.3 of this chapter.

As can be noted from the explanation above, in order to generate themes from the data, I engaged in a process of iterative coding. It is impossible for me to describe each step of the analysis because it was a "*recursive* process" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86, original emphasis). However, provisionally this process can be divided into two cycles. In the first cycle, I familiarised myself with the data through the process of transcribing the audio-recordings of the lessons and the conversations with my colleagues and students, and reading the documents generated during the process of teaching, my students' written feedback and my own research journal. While transcribing and reading, I circled, underlined, and highlighted any segments of data that seemed to capture something important in relation to the overall research purpose. I also took notes in the

margin of the documents or transcripts, and wrote memos about the process and any codes that appeared to emerge from the data.

With regard to transcription, I transcribed all of the recordings of the discussions with my academic and student participants. For the lessons in the two classes, as there were in total twenty-four recordings with each lasting approximately three hours, I made a decision not to invest time in transcribing them all. Instead, I listened and took notes of or transcribed the parts that I deemed necessary through my listening to the recordings. I delineate how I transcribed the recordings in Section 5.4.2 below. The act of transcribing and taking notes helped me develop a thorough understanding of these sources of spoken data and thus facilitated my analysis and interpretation in the second cycle of analysis.

In the second cycle, I re-read and re-coded the data in a more rigorous manner, paying particular attention to the initial codes, the marked pieces of data, and the notes that I composed in the first cycle. I listened again to the recordings of the lessons, especially the parts that I had noted previously, and transcribed some more segments as I found necessary. In this cycle, I gradually generated more codes, collated the codes into themes, and refined the specifics of each theme (including gathering relevant data). Simultaneously, I constantly related the analysis back to the conceptual framework of the study and engaged with relevant research literature in order to situate the stories emerging from the data in the broader conversations in the field. I also kept writing memos as a way to prompt me to think critically about the data. The analysis still continued with further refinement of the themes and more focused attention to particular extracts from the data during the process of writing the discussion chapters, when I started to generate narrative-based accounts to reflect on my own and my participants' experiences and understandings.

5.4.2. Transcription and translation

When engaging in the process, I was aware that transcription is not a merely technical process of translating spoken sounds into written symbols; rather, it is "an interpretive practice" (Mishler, 1991, p. 255). Mishler's conception of transcription is underpinned by an understanding of the relationship between language and meaning as indeterminant and ambiguous, and therefore sits comfortably in the social constructionist paradigm that I discuss in Section 4.1 of the first methodology chapter. As Lapadat and Lindsay

(1999) contend, "the choices that researchers make about transcription enact the theories they hold and constrain the interpretations they can draw from their data" (p. 64). This understanding of transcription offered me flexibility to approach transcription in a way that suited my research purpose, and at the same time required me to be explicit about the transcribing process for the purpose of enhancing the trustworthiness of the research.

In the transcriptions of the discussions with my colleagues, the conversations and interviews with my students and the extracts from the lesson recordings, I kept many speech elements in order to represent as faithfully as possible the meaning-making process in those dialogues. I retained most moments of phatic speech (e.g., "hmm", "err", "ah") as long as they did not impact the intelligibility of the utterances. Ellipses – "…" – were used in the middle of an utterance to indicate a speaker's brief space between words, and "[*pause*]" was used when the space is relatively long. This allowed me to show moments when speakers were hesitating, in the process of forming ideas, or searching for words to express themselves, especially when they were speaking in English. Repetitions of words or phrases were also preserved as the speakers might have wanted to emphasise the ideas or were in the process of thinking. Ellipses used at the end of a speaker's string of utterances denote the next person interjecting a comment. When I could not hear some words (because the speaker somehow lowered the voice or there were some background noises), I indicated this by "[*inaudible*]". I also noted some behaviours of the speakers in square brackets, using italics (e.g., "[*laughs*]", and "[*giggles*]"). Sometimes, I added some information or explanation to make the transcriptions clearer, and I placed all of these in square brackets (e.g., "students will be punished, will lose stars [if they speak Vietnamese]")[29]. Throughout the discussion chapters, I recounted part of the dialogues with my colleagues, my students and during the lessons. Sometimes these extracts were very long; therefore, I left out some utterances and indicated this by ellipses in square brackets – "[…]".

Since the research context is English teaching and learning in Vietnam, sometimes the participants used English and sometimes they used Vietnamese. When they spoke in Vietnamese, I provide my own English translation and indicate this by the phrase "my translation" in brackets. In some cases, where the participants spoke entirely in English, I retained their original English utterances and only made a few slight modifications

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[29] I also used this convention for extracts from the students' written feedback when I felt it might not be easy for readers of the thesis to make sense of what the students meant.

(placed in square brackets) where necessary to ensure readers' comprehension[30]. During the discussions with my colleagues or the interviews with my students, most of the time they spoke in Vietnamese. However, sometimes they switched briefly to English. When these English words/phrases/sentences reflected their particular opinions, I retained them in the translation and marked them by using italics. In doing so, I also wished to highlight translanguaging practices by bilinguals, which is an important theme emerging from my data. Moreover, in my English translation of what my participants said, I still kept some Vietnamese phrases for which there are no exact equivalents in English, and I put these in italics. I then provided the English translation of these phrases in single quotation marks and inside square brackets (e.g., "It was like *vịt nghe sấm*" ['It's all Greek to us']).

5.4.3. Narrative

In this thesis, in addition to quotes from my colleagues' and students' written feedback and extracts from my students' work, I present other data in the form of stories. These stories include: (i) autobiographical stories, in which I recall 'significant' moments in my learning and teaching life (as I have noted in Section 4.2.3); (ii) descriptions of what transpired in my classes; and (iii) narrative-based accounts of conversations with my colleagues and students. By weaving these narrative fragments and snippets of dialogues together, I reconstructed the story of my journey through which I gained insights into the role of the Vietnamese language in an English classroom (Chapter 6), came to learn how to incorporate an EIL perspective into my teaching (Chapter 7), and was able to reframe my pedagogical understandings and practices (Chapter 8). In taking this approach, I am affirming Parr, Doecke and Bulfin's (2015) view that narrative in research texts can be both a form of representation of data and a method of analysis.

In her paper in 2000, Laurel Richardson made an important point when contending that writing is "a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 923), which I have noted in my discussion of the importance of reflexivity in my study (see Section 4.3 of the first methodology chapter). She argues that an awareness of the non-neutral nature of language in poststructuralism has rendered untenable the presumed demarcation between literature and science, and between fact and fiction. Almost two decades ago, Doctorow (1983) said "there is no fiction or nonfiction as we commonly understand the distinction: there is only narrative" (p. 26). This highlights the partial and contextual

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[30] I also did so for quotes from written feedback.

nature of writing, and the inseparability of the writing process and the writing product. This awareness behoves researchers to be reflexive in their writing, and at the same time frees them to explore different styles of writing, or, in other words, different ways of knowing in order to deepen their understanding of themselves and the world.

In the field of education narrative has been advocated as a form of inquiry for teachers/practitioners to undertake and to challenge the so-called evidence-based research. As Parr et al. (2015) explain, "stories form the fabric of our everyday lives, becoming the vehicles for everyone (and not just researchers) to give meaning to their experiences, putting those experiences into perspective for socially critical purposes (p. 138). By stories, they mean "someone telling someone else that something happened" (Chambers, 1984, pp. 3-4, as cited in Parr et al., 2015, p. 139). Drawing on Rosen (1985), Doecke and Parr (2009) highlight the potential of storytelling as a model of praxis for teachers to engage in, exploring the complexities of the teaching and learning at their practice settings, critically reflecting on how their practices are shaped by the social forces, and imagining new possibilities for teaching and learning transformation.

Informed by these discussions on, to borrow Rosen's (1985) language, "the heuristic of narrative" (cited in Doecke & Parr, 2009, p. 69), I constructed narratives from the data in order to organise and analyse my own and my participants' experiences in rich detail. I described what happened, carefully contextualised the stories in terms of time and space, and situated the stories in relation to one another and in the discussion of the relevant literature. By telling the stories, I came to grips with a range of issues associated with English teaching and learning and was able to reconceptualise my teaching practices. More importantly, I understand that "the meaning of a narrative is not something fixed" (Parr, 2010, p. 46). It changes according to who the narrator is and who the reader/listener is. Therefore, in telling the stories, I wish to "stimulate further dialogue rather than to finalise or shut down the research conversation" (p. 45).

In summary, in this second methodology chapter I have described the students who participated in my classes in this research and the teachers who observed my classes. I have explained different sources of data generated over the course of the project including teaching and learning documents, lesson audio-recordings, observation notes composed by the teachers and recordings of my discussions with them, the feedback from my students and my own research journal. I have also discussed the ethical issues

facing me as a reflexive practitioner-researcher. Finally, I have justified the ways of analysing and representing data in my project.

In Part 4 of the thesis, I discuss the themes emerging from my data. The majority of the themes revolve around the two pedagogies underpinning the pedagogical framework that I implemented during my teaching course in the fieldwork – that is, Cummins's (2001) academic expertise development framework and EIL pedagogy. Regarding Cummins's framework, in addition to data relating to the three focus areas of instruction, there are particular fragments of data that prompted me to reflect on the issue of the place of the first language (i.e., Vietnamese in my context) in an English classroom. I therefore provisionally divide Part 4 into three chapters. In the first discussion chapter (i.e., Chapter 6), I recount the journey in which I have come to fully understand the role of the Vietnamese language in my class and to see the need to adopt 'translanguaging' as a pedagogical lens for teaching and learning English. Next, in Chapter 7, I present the process of my developing insights into the feasibility of incorporating an EIL pedagogy into English teaching in Vietnam. Finally, in Chapter 8, I look again at my pedagogical framework (first presented in Chapter 3), drawing together the new understandings emerging from the discussions in Chapters 6 and 7 and additional fragments of data, particularly in relation to the three focus areas of instruction in Cummins's framework. Also, in this last discussion chapter, I reflect on my whole journey of reframing pedagogical understandings and practices.

PART FOUR: DISCUSSION

Chapter 6: Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Lens

As presented in Chapter 3, Cummins's (2001) framework strongly recommends particular uses of learners' first language (L1) when learning in bilingual education contexts. This is consistent with advocacy in the research literature for bilingualism rather than the notion of 'language shift' in teaching English as an international language (see McKay, 2002). Drawing on Cummins's framework, I engaged with this literature, particularly in light of my teaching context – which is traditionally referred to as EFL. This PhD project can be considered as a journey in which I have come to better understand the role of the Vietnamese language in my teaching of English in a Vietnamese tertiary classroom. In this first of three discussion chapters, I present an ethnographic account of that journey, in which I constantly reflected on the impact of the English-only instruction in English language classrooms, the way Vietnamese was used in my classes, and my students' and colleagues' opinions about it. Through recounting this journey and reflecting upon it, I have come to see the necessity for adopting a new lens to look at the pedagogy for teaching English – that is, translanguaging.

6.1. Questioning traditions of English-only instruction

Although engaging with Cummins's framework helped raise my awareness of the importance of Vietnamese in English teaching and learning, my quest to understand the place of the Vietnamese language in my English classes can be said to have been 'kicked off' by a conversation with my colleague Tiên in the week before the course started in 2014, in which I explained the pedagogical framework for my project. It was then 'pushed' by further discussions with Tiên and the other colleague, Khuê, after they observed my classes in the first few weeks.

During these meetings, Tiên shared her own journey to understand the role of the Vietnamese language in the EFL classroom. She recalled one grammar class that she took at university in which her teacher spoke English only in the classroom. Despite her teacher's effort to explain again and again the grammar points in the lesson, sometimes Tiên could not understand and wished the teacher had used Vietnamese instead. When becoming an English teacher, Tiên sometimes switched to Vietnamese when she could not express her ideas fully in English or when she thought it would be difficult for her

students to understand in English. Later, however, she switched to English-only instruction after a few significant learning and teaching experiences. The first one was when she attended a workshop in Bali where people spoke English all the time and she did not feel confident or competent enough to respond to them. The second experience was her teaching time in a language centre, where Western teachers spoke English only in the classroom but children still understood well. And the third experience was the Spanish course that she took recently in which the Spanish teacher spoke Spanish all the time. At first she felt tired and wanted to give up the idea of learning Spanish. However, as she decided to try her very best and persevere with the course, she then felt her pronunciation and *phản xạ* ['reflex responses'] in Spanish improved. As she told me, when someone asked her something in Spanish, she could respond quickly *giống như máy* ['like a machine']. Subsequently, she decided to create an English-only environment in the classroom in order to expose her students to as much English as possible. No matter whether the class was at elementary, intermediate or advanced level, she spoke English all the time although she did simplify her English as she felt it necessary to do so. However, while there appeared to be many benefits for this approach, she came to realise one pitfall in that English-only environment assumption – that is, the approach resulted in a sense of 'distance' between the teacher and the learners.

Comparing her classes before and after her adoption of an English-only approach to instruction, she could see that the students in the latter classes also improved but not as much as she expected. Although they were still engaged, and appeared to be learning, because of this sense of distance in the relationship between her as the teacher and the students, she felt that she failed to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, and these students appeared less motivated to study further after the end of the course. Realising this pitfall in English-only instruction, Tiên decided to change her approach. In the following excerpt taken from our meeting before the commencement of the course that I taught, she is recounting what happened when she tried switching between English and Vietnamese at the start of one of her classes at a language centre:

> On the first few days, I spoke English only and the class sat silently looking at me. They felt frustrated and suppressed; they couldn't understand so they felt suppressed. They told me that in the previous course, the teacher also spoke English all the time and they felt suppressed. And that's true; there wasn't a smile on their faces on the first few days when they studied with me.

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> After they told me so, I constantly switched between English and Vietnamese. In general, I gradually reduced the amount of Vietnamese I spoke without them noticing […] For example, I would say "page 21". Then I would say "*chọn một partner đi*" ['choose a partner']. I inserted some Vietnamese and then gradually switched to English. Then sometimes I inserted some Vietnamese to make them feel comfortable. Over time I spoke mainly English but they felt fine. A relationship had been formed so they could understand me better.

> (Collegial discussion, Tiên, 7 March, 2014, my translation)

The incident above shows how the previous teacher of the class failed to connect with the students as a result of her English-only approach and how Tiên could develop a rapport with them through her use of Vietnamese. In our meetings, Tiên told me that teachers were often advised against using mother tongue in the English classroom but from her experience, she no longer agreed with that point of view. Also, as she pointed out, in order for students to improve their English, they needed to know how to learn. Thus, teachers sometimes needed to use Vietnamese in their explanations in order to help students understand the learning methods and be able to study with some degree of independence. From our conversations, I could see that Tiên's advocacy for the legitimacy of the Vietnamese language in an English class also partly originated from her concern over the development of national identity in learners. In the meeting that the above excerpt is taken from, she told me the story of a woman she knew who had her small child study at an international school[31]. The child could speak English fluently and behaved in many respects like a Western child, but she could not speak Vietnamese well and knew little about Vietnam. The mother then had to find ways to re-teach her child to be a Vietnamese person.

During that discussion about my teaching programme for the course on 7 March, Tiên sometimes questioned which language I was going to ask the students to use in some activities (e.g., to discuss a topic or to write feedback on the lessons). She stressed the importance of the use of Vietnamese if I wanted my students to discuss an issue critically. She was afraid that their limited English proficiency might prevent them from expressing their opinions fully or understanding me well.

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[31] In Vietnam, besides public schools, parents can have their children study from kindergarten to Grade 12 in international schools where most of the subjects are taught in English.

Tiên's reflection on her teaching and learning experience pointed to a need to reconsider the "no Vietnamese in the English classroom" rule, which has long been prevalent, either applied implicitly or stated explicitly, in English classes in Vietnam, particularly at language centres. In the discussion with me and Khuê in Week 2, Tiên said:

> In the other classes, [the rule is] no Vietnamese in the classroom. At [the language centre where she worked][32], students will be punished, will lose stars[33] [if they speak Vietnamese].
>
> (Collegial discussion, Tiên, Week 2[34], 21 March, 2014, my translation)

At my faculty, up until the time of my data gathering for this research, although the rule was not explicitly stated, the general tendency was to discourage the use of Vietnamese in the classrooms. I recalled my attempt to apply the English-only instruction in my earlier years of teaching at EF. During my data generation, the prevalence of this rule could still be observed at EF, as can be seen from what Đoan – a student in Class 2B-W – shared with me later during the course:

> Trân: If you get stuck, you can switch to Vietnamese [...]
>
> Đoan: Because in the other... last semester, we were encouraged to speak English. When we asked the teacher whether we could speak [Vietnamese] or not, she usually said no. Thus we are still used to [having to speak English].
>
> (After-class talk, Class 2B-W, Week 8, 16 May, 2014, my translation)

Not only Đoan's previous teacher insisted on the use of English, as can be seen in the excerpt above, but the faculty as a whole appeared to adopt this English-only approach. In the focus group interview at the end of the course, Đoan recounted her experience in the Welcoming Ceremony at the faculty:

> Đoan: The Welcoming Ceremony for freshmen. That was our first day at the faculty... to welcome new students... English was spoken from the beginning until the end of the ceremony. That was the first day that we had ever heard English to the extent that we felt dizzy. At the end, we did not understand anything at all. When other people clapped their hands, we clapped as well

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[32] One of the well-known language centres in Ho Chi Minh City.
[33] In the context that Tiên was speaking of, the number of stars represented the bonus marks the students received for their participation in class.
[34] As noted in Chapter 5 and can be seen in Appendix 4, the language skills course that I was teaching in the fieldwork consisted of twelve lessons, spreading over twelve weeks.

but did not understand what was happening. It was like *vịt nghe sấm* ['It's all Greek to us'].

<div align="center">(Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, 16 July, 2014, my translation)</div>

As pointed out by my colleague Tiên, some students' English ability was still limited, particularly in terms of oral communication skills. Listening and speaking were the skills that most students were not confident with because of the absence of opportunities for oral communication at secondary school. One of my students clearly stated in her profile (see the form in Appendix 6) on the first day of the course that:

> When studying for the university entrance examination, I was taught mainly about grammar and test-taking skills. I mainly did exercises on paper; therefore, my listening and speaking skills are very limited. I hope that I can improve my listening and speaking skills after this course.

<div align="center">(Hiếu's profile, Class 2B-T, Week 1, 11 March, 2014, my translation)</div>

At the time of my fieldwork, because of the limited time allocation, the teaching of English in almost all public schools in Vietnam was generally test-oriented with a focus on grammar and reading comprehension in order to help students get high marks in the end-of-term tests and pass the university entrance examinations. Some students from provinces were disadvantaged in this quest for high marks because, for a variety of reasons, the conditions for learning English were very poor outside major cities. Those students living in big cities tended to have better conditions and better opportunities to study and learn English. For instance, some of them attended extra English classes at language centres, where the focus was normally on oral communication skills rather than grammar, and thus, they were given opportunities to practise speaking and listening to English. From my observation during my early career as a teacher, and also in the two classes that were the site of much data generation in this research, listening and speaking classes were usually mixed-ability classes.

It was also my observation that students' English levels, particularly in terms of listening and speaking skills, had an impact on their levels of participation in the classroom. In Class 2B-T, near the end of Lesson 2, I expressed a concern to the students that the class seemed so quiet. One of the explanations for this that emerged from the students' responses was that some students did not feel confident to express their ideas in English, and so they remained silent:

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Hiếu: We want to speak, but our English vocabulary is limited and thus we can't make full sentences so we are afraid of speaking.

(Lesson recording, Class 2B-T, Week 2, 18 March, 2014,

my translation)

A similar response was found in the talk between me and some students in Class 2B-W after the session in Week 2:

Trân: But I did tell... I did tell the class several times, right? That you can express your ideas in Vietnamese, right?

Vân: We think this is a speaking class so we have to speak in English; it feels strange to speak in Vietnamese. But we don't know how to express ourselves in English and we can't speak fluently so we are afraid of speaking... me, for example [*laughs*].

(After-class talk, Class 2B-W, Week 2, 19 March, 2014, my translation)

During the course, many times I witnessed my students' frustration and embarrassment when struggling to find suitable English words to express their ideas. Tiên also noticed the impact of the students' English proficiency on their participation when she observed my class. In the extract below taken from my conversation with her after Lesson 3 in Class 2B-T, Tiên is describing how my students stood still during an activity due to their limited English capacity:

I saw some students standing like this [*Tiên makes a blank face to show me how some of my students looked during the talking points activity in which the students stood in groups in front of different discussion questions glued on the wall*[35]]. Their English was not as good as the other students so they couldn't speak. They spoke slowly so they were afraid of affecting the others; thus, they didn't speak. When I was sitting there listening to some of them, I saw that there were only a few students speaking; the others were engaged [but they didn't speak].

(Collegial discussion, Tiên, Week 3, 25 March, 2014, my translation)

I also learned that some students had difficulty in not only speaking but also listening, and this had an impact on their participation in the class activities. In her profile, one

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[35] See the description of the activity in section 2.1 in Appendix 10.

student expressed her wish that I spoke both English and Vietnamese so that she could understand the lesson.

> *What aspects of listening/speaking skills do you most need to improve?:* All of aspects of listening/speaking skills, especially that is listening. I can hardly hear what teacher say.

> *What are your expectations/suggestions for this class?:* I hope that Miss Nguyen speak Vietnamese after talk[ing in] English so [that I can understand].

<div align="center">(Dao's profile, Class 2B-W, Week 1, 12 March, 2014)</div>

From Tiên's sharing regarding the issue of Vietnamese in an English classroom, together with some feedback from some students and my own observations at the beginning of the course, I often reminded the students that they could switch to Vietnamese when they found it hard to fully express their ideas in English, either in speaking or writing. During the lessons, I also switched to Vietnamese when I felt that it may be hard for some students to understand. In the next section, I recount some instances when Vietnamese was used by me and my students in the two classes.

6.2. Examples of the use of Vietnamese in my classes

When listening back to the audio-recordings of the lessons I taught, I noted that most of the time I used Vietnamese when I sensed that the instructions or explanations I had given in English were too complex for some students to understand. For example, I switched to Vietnamese when discussing with my students the learning programme for the whole course, what tasks/assignments they could do and how. In addition, I switched to Vietnamese when explaining some listening/speaking tips or strategies, for I felt that these were what students particularly needed to improve their skills by themselves. Tien also pointed this out in our discussion on 7 March, 2014 (presented above). Moreover, in some listening sessions when the students listened to long lectures in the compact discs accompanying the textbooks as part of the efforts to learn how to take notes, I sometimes switched briefly to Vietnamese to explain some information in the lectures so that the students, especially those who were not very good at listening skills, could get the gist of the given lecture in order to follow the next parts in the lecture and take notes.

When the topic of the lesson was related to languages, Vietnamese could act as the reference point for the students to understand the idea being discussed and also as the resource for them to draw on. For example, on Day 2, I picked out one idea from the lecture that the students were listening to and tried to elicit examples in order to elaborate on the idea:

Trân: "Our native language actually determines the way we see the world". Do you agree with that statement? [*pause*] Now think about Vietnamese. Vietnamese is our native language... Huh? Is it... Does it determine the way we see the world? *Tiếng Việt nó có ảnh hưởng đến cách chúng ta nhìn thế giới hay không?* ['Does Vietnamese influence the way we see the world?'] Yes or No? [*pause*] Think of some words in Vietnamese. For example? [...] *Các em có nghĩ ra được ví dụ nào từ tiếng Việt không?* ['Can you think of some examples in Vietnamese?'] Now let's see if I hmm… in Vietna… in English we have "I" and "you". How about Vietnamese? Yeah, we have? [*Students answer softly. I write their answers on the board.*] Anything else? Huh? Hmm... How about between you and me?

Students: *"Cô"*. [A Vietnamese pronoun used for addressing a female teacher]

Trân: *"Cô"*.

Students: *"Em"*. [A pronoun Vietnamese students use to refer to themselves when talking with teachers]

Trân: *"Em"*… *Nếu mà mấy đứa con nít nó sẽ nói "cô" với "con".* ['For kids, they will say "cô" and "con"']. Alright? Does it influence the way you see the world? *So sánh giữa tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt nếu mà mình nói về cái hệ thống mình xưng hô như vậy có ảnh hưởng không?* ['Comparing English and Vietnamese, do these pronoun systems influence the way we see the world?'] Yes or No? [*pause*] Yes? What do you think?

Diệp: Err… I think the way we hmm... the way we address each other err I think will express... the Vietnamese society has a... hierarchy.

Trân: Hierar... hierarchy... hierarchy... *mình có cấp bậc ở đây* ['there are ranks'] [*I write the word "hierarchy" on the blackboard*]. What else? Anything else?

Diệp: And also express the... the relationship... hmm... whether we have known each other for a long time or not.

Trân: OK, good. The relationship, the hierarchy... So in the relationship like between you and me, show the... res... [*waiting for the class to complete the word*]... respect. The relationship, respect.

<div align="center">(Lesson recording, Class 2B-W, Week 2, 19 April, 2014)</div>

In that same lecture from the textbook, the speaker mentioned some words in English borrowed from French. To help the students understand the concept "loan word" better, I asked them to give more examples, including ones from the Vietnamese language:

Students: *Áo dài, phở, nón lá*. [the traditional formal clothes for females, popular food, and traditional hat, respectively]

[…]

Ninh: Floating market. [a kind of market in some countryside areas in the south of Vietnam which is held on the river]

<div align="center">(Lesson recording, Class 2B-W, Week 2, 19 April, 2014)</div>

During the course I was teaching, I sometimes asked the students for their feedback on the lessons, either orally or via the written feedback form (referred to in Section 5.2.4). Regarding oral feedback sessions, I felt it was crucial for me to use Vietnamese, especially at the beginning of the course. For example, on Day 2, as Class 2B-T was so quiet throughout the lesson, I spent the last few minutes at the end asking the students what might be the possible reasons for their silence. The use of Vietnamese here was helpful in two ways. First, as the focus was to get the students' opinions about my lesson, the use of Vietnamese ensured understanding between my students and me. It also saved time. Second, as the silence resulted in a tense atmosphere and since it was the second day of the course when the class and I were only just getting to know each other, I hoped the use of Vietnamese could help break the tense atmosphere, and reduce the distance between us. As it turned out, some students responded very positively to

me when I switched from English to Vietnamese; some even stayed behind afterwards to give some more comments and suggestions and to ask for some materials. This latter point relates to the issue of connection mentioned by Tiên, as can be seen in the previous section. As for the written feedback form given to the students at the end of some lessons, I let them use either English or Vietnamese as long as they could express their ideas.

On my students' part, they used Vietnamese to understand some language items, especially vocabulary in a particular field that they were not familiar with. Below is a snapshot of the handout given to the class by a group of students who were in charge of organising a discussion on cloning:

Clone (n) *BrE* /kləʊn/ *NAmE* /kloʊn/ a plant or an animal that is produced naturally or artificially from the cells of another plant or animal and is therefore exactly the same as it/ a person or thing that seems to be an exact copy of another (VNM: nhân bản)
=> **to clone sth (v)** to produce an exact copy of an animal or a plant from its cells *(Dolly, the cloned sheep)*

asexual (a) *BrE* /ˌeɪˈsekʃuəl/ *NAmE* /ˌeɪˈsekʃuəl/ not involving sex; not having sexual organs (VNM: vô tính)

Figure 6.1 – Extract from a group's handout, Class 2B-T, Week 8, 29 April, 2014

The students also used Vietnamese to mediate understandings among each other. For instance, in Class 2B-W on Day 5, when I encouraged Oanh to discuss with her group examples of competition and cooperation in real life, she said "Cold War" and then turned to her friends and translated into Vietnamese so that they could understand her example: "*chiến tranh lạnh giữa Mỹ với Nga*".

Granting students permission to use Vietnamese facilitated and encouraged some students' participation in class. For example, on Day 3 in Class 2B-T, I asked the students who Ban Ki-moon was, as a way of activating their prior knowledge before we watched a clip in which Ban Ki-moon talked about the Copenhagen deal (see section 1 in Appendix 10). Noticing that Tuấn wanted to answer the question, I gave the microphone to him.

Tuấn [*after a few seconds' hesitation, turns to me and asks softly*]: Liên Hiệp Quốc?

Trân [*speaking softly to him*]: The United Nations.

Tuấn [*speaks to the microphone to the whole class*]: Err he's the Chair of... the Secretary of err United Nations.

(Lesson recording, Class 2B-T, Week 3, 25 April, 2014)

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A similar situation happened in Class 2B-W; however, in this case, the student switched to Vietnamese while answering my question in front of the class:

Đông: He's the... Secretary of the... *Liên Hiệp Quốc*.

Trân: *Liên Hiệp Quốc*. What is it?

Danh: The United Nations.

(Lesson recording, Class 2B-W, Week 3, 26 April, 2014)

These examples show that the use of Vietnamese enabled some students to show their knowledge, which may not have been revealed had only English been allowed in the classroom. In addition, it allowed some students to raise and elaborate on their ideas, which was crucial if the aim of the class was to get the students to develop their thinking and voice their opinions. The following exchanges on Class 2B-W's Facebook suggest that had I adopted an English-only policy, the voices of some students, particularly those with limited English capacity, would probably not have been heard. The following exchange (Figure 6.2) was part of a discussion on Facebook regarding a question that I posted on 24 March 2014 (i.e., "Mosaic 1 Unit 1 Topic 1: In the lecture that we listened on Wednesday, the professor ends the lecture with the question: "If we learn one language so easily as children, why is it such a challenge to learn a second language as adults?" What do you think?"):

Figure 6.2 – Extract from a discussion on Facebook in Class 2B-W

In helping the students to raise and elaborate on their ideas, my permitting them to speak Vietnamese facilitated the process of discussing the learning programme for the course:

> Thọ: We prepare the film and we will send you the... *nội dung của* ['content of the'] film.

> [*Members of the class laugh appreciatively. Hiếu whispers to a classmate next to her: "giống như lồng tiếng* ['like dubbing a film']".]

<div align="right">(Lesson recording, Class 2B-T, Week 4, 1 April, 2014)</div>

In the above extract, Thọ was suggesting a group work activity when we were discussing what tasks and assignments to do during the course. However, he got stuck at the word "content" and decided to use Vietnamese instead. Also, another student (i.e., Hiếu) used Vietnamese to clarify Thọ's suggestion to one of her classmates.

As noted, an important element in my teaching plan (and also data generation process) was to seek students' ongoing feedback so that I might adjust the teaching and learning practices in response to that feedback. Although the questions on the forms I handed out to students (including the profile, lesson feedback and course evaluation form) were written in (simple) English (see Appendices 6-8), I always emphasised (both orally and by writing in the instruction on the forms) that they could use either Vietnamese or English as long as they could fully express their ideas. Most students wrote in English, some chose Vietnamese and some switched between the two languages. Below are some examples of their switching between English and Vietnamese in their written feedback to me:

Figure 6.3 – Extract from Diệu's profile, Class 2B-W, Week 1, 12 March, 2014

> 4. I would like to make some suggestion such as: - ~~you may be~~ bật cô cho lớp
> - ~~cho no~~ nghe thêm 1 số bài nghe ở lớp.

Figure 6.4 – Extract from Student 7's[36] feedback, Class 2B-T, Week 4, 1 April, 2014

> You are very kind & lovely. You understand what the student feel in each situation, which make me feel less shy. Thank you ☺
> You try your best to create a fun class. I love it.
> Cô cẩn thận lưu ý từng chi tiết e sửa những cái rất nhỏ. Điều đó em chưa từng được nhận ở bất cứ Gv nào trả đó (trừ g Đại học) Em rất thích những hoạt động cô tổ chức. "Cảm ơn cô" (Em muốn nói câu này bằng tiếng việt cơ ☺)
> Yêu cô!

Figure 6.5 – Extract from Student 26's feedback, Class 2B-W, Week 8, 14 May, 2014

> • I feel comfortable and interested in our topics at class. Especially, the topic about 'Field Trip' in chapter 5, I haven't ever "tiếp xúc" this field before. I thought it was very difficult and "khô khan", but after I prepared (did "porfolio") at home, I felt it was interesting and awesome.

Figure 6.6 – Extract from Student 25's course evaluation form, Class 2B-W

> I suggest that you give some topic on FB and then we can discuss at home because we don't have enough time in class. It's just my suggestion! ☺.

Figure 6.7 – Extract from Student 2's feedback, Class 2B-T, Week 4, 1 April, 2014

These samples show different languaging patterns: (i) writing part of the sentence in English and part in Vietnamese; (ii) writing some sentences in English and some in Vietnamese; and (iii) switching to Vietnamese for some words or phrases that they did not know how to express in English. Interestingly, some students inserted some

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[36] Regarding the feedback at the end of the lessons and the course, the students wrote anonymously (as explained in Section 5.2.4). Thus, the numbers were assigned to the feedback paper randomly and thus varied.

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graphics (such as a smiley face) to show their feelings (see Figures 6.5 and 6.7). These show that the students knew how to make use of a range of semiotic resources to fully express themselves. It is particularly worth noting the way Diệu (Figure 6.3) and Student 26 (Figure 6.5) utilised both languages depending on their confidence, competence and intention to use more or less English. Diệu wrote her whole profile in English but for the last question in the form, she began by writing "Cô ơi, em nghĩ ['Teacher, I think']". She then briefly switched back to English: "I think in the mid-term exam you should". Yet, she then found it hard to express fully her idea (i.e., a suggestion for the mid-term test and the reasons for that suggestion) and thus decided to switch back to Vietnamese. As for Student 26, in her/his last sentence, (s)he wrote:

"*Cảm ơn cô*" (*Em muốn nói câu này bằng tiếng Việt cơ* ◡) *Yêu cô!*

['"Thank you" (I want to say this sentence in Vietnamese ◡) Love you!']

"Thank you" is an English phrase that any English learners know but as Student 26 explained in the brackets, (s)he chose to use the Vietnamese phrase here. (S)He might have thought it could express her/his feelings (i.e., the love and respect for the teacher) better than the English phrase. Compared with English, the Vietnamese language has a more complex system of personal pronouns. Decisions about which personal pronouns to use depend on several factors including the interlocutors' ages and genders, the relationships between them, and the situation. Vietnamese students often use the word "*cô*" to address their female teachers. Thus, here, the student might have found it more appropriate to use "*cảm ơn cô*" than "thank you".

During the course, I asked the class to create some poster presentations. Seeing that most students liked this kind of activity and some groups were good at creating posters, I suggested having a poster contest in which the groups designed posters about a meaningful topic and then put them on their personal Facebook in order to spread the message to their Facebook friends. After some discussions, we decided to organise a poster contest on the topic of environment protection. In addition to posting the posters, the groups wrote a few words of text to provide important information and encourage their readers to protect the environment. The following group (Figure 6.8) wrote this additional text in both English and Vietnamese. This suggests that they were aware that some of their friends could not read English well and by using both languages, they could get their message across to a larger audience.
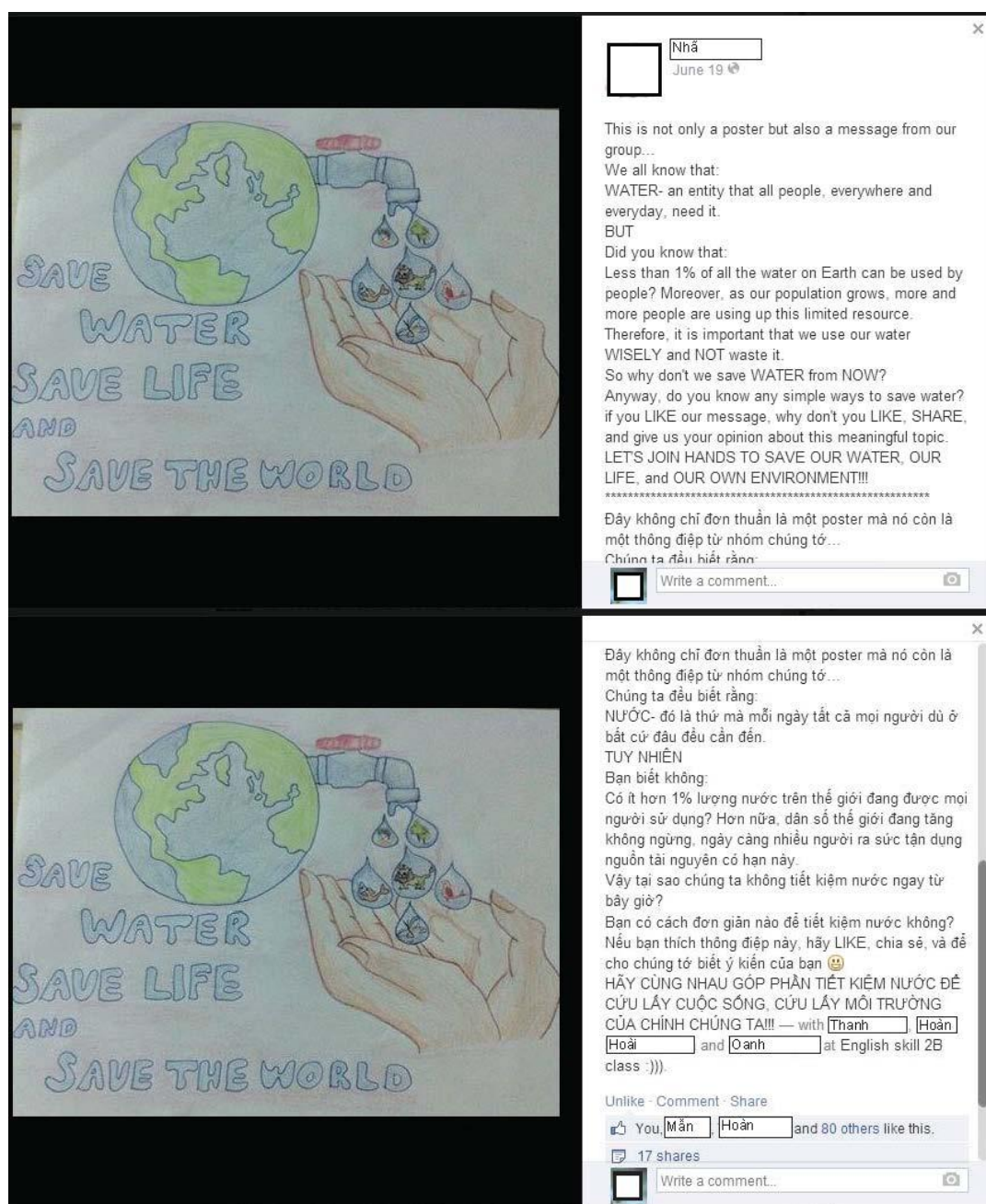
Figure 6.8 – The poster on environment protection designed by Hoàn's group, Class 2B-W

In this section, I have shown some examples of how Vietnamese was used by my students and me. In some instances, the flexible use of both English and Vietnamese (plus other semiotic resources such as graphics and pictures) not only facilitated the communication but also helped achieve other purposes such as expressing feelings, creating a connection and reaching a wide audience. In the next section, I discuss my colleagues' and students' opinions of the use of Vietnamese in my classes in particular and in English teaching and learning in general.

6.3. Colleagues' and students' opinions about the use of Vietnamese

As mentioned above, my permitting students to speak Vietnamese in my classrooms, and my use of Vietnamese myself, was partly due to my knowledge of Cummins's framework and partly resulted from the conversation with my colleague Tiên prior to the course, in which she shared with me the reasons for her support for the use of Vietnamese in the English language classroom. Her perspective on the role of Vietnamese was confirmed by her comments in the observation notebook as she observed my class session in Week 2:
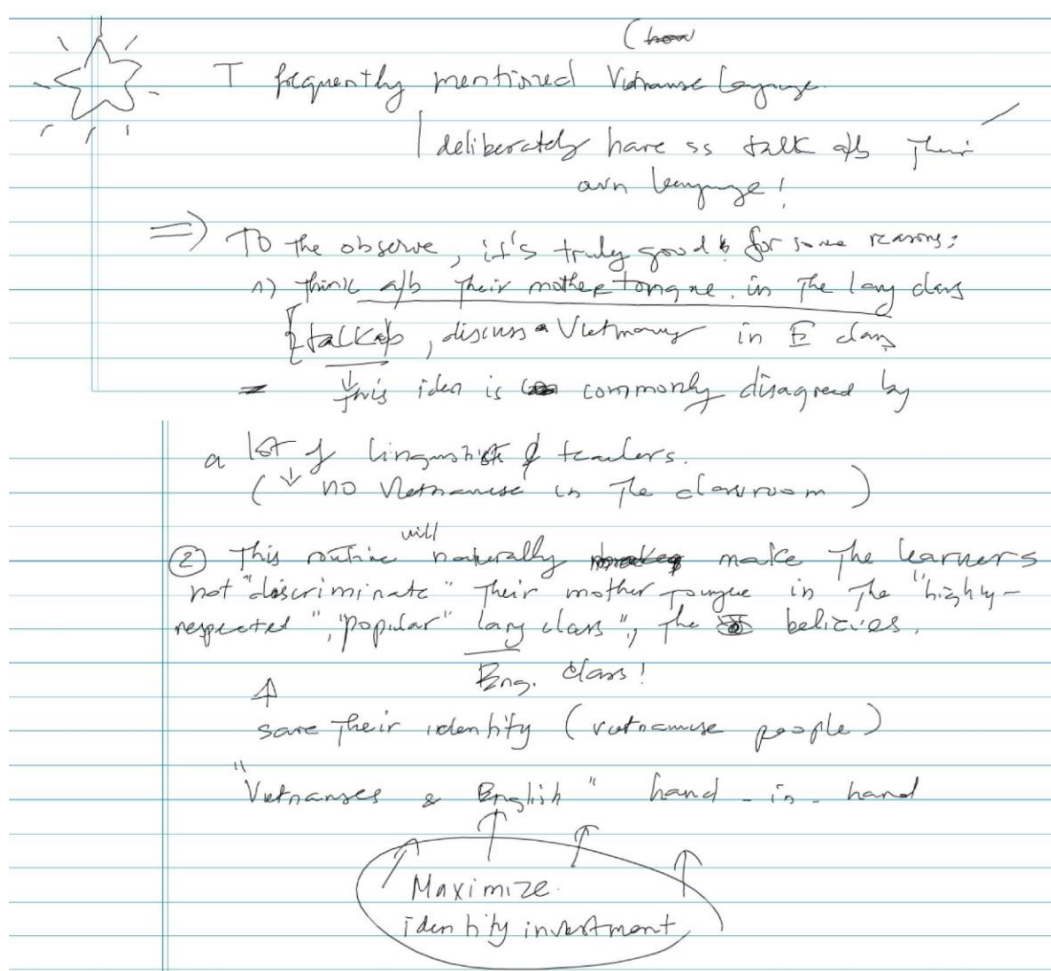
Figure 6.9 – Extract from Tiên's observation notes, Class 2B-T, Week 2, 18 March, 2014

In this class session, as the students were listening to a lecture (from a compact disc accompanying the textbook *Mosaic 1*) about languages, I had them relate some points mentioned in the lecture to the Vietnamese language (for example, see the extracts

about loan words and the system of personal pronouns in Section 6.2 above). Tiên particularly liked the idea of having students talk about Vietnamese in an English class, which was, to her, "commonly disagreed by a lot of [linguists] and teachers". It was because, as she noted, they preferred "no Vietnamese [or L1] in the classroom". She believed this "routine" (i.e., thinking and talking about L1) would prevent students from 'discriminating' their mother tongue in an English class, where English was 'highly respected'. She also thought it would help enhance their identity as Vietnamese people. In short, in her view, having Vietnamese and English go "hand in hand" would, to borrow Cummins's (2001) words, "maximize identity investment".

During a discussion with Khuê and me afterwards about the class session, Tiên reiterated some of the points made in the observation notebook:

> Tiên: Your class was good in that you talked about the mother tongue. And sometimes you spoke Vietnamese, too, which made them feel that Vietnamese was all right, but they needed to switch between the two languages […] This routine will prevent students from discriminating against the use of the mother tongue.

> (Collegial discussion, Tiên and Khuê, Week 2, 21 March, 2014)

As can be seen from the quote, she added that by speaking in Vietnamese sometimes, I helped students recognise the legitimacy of Vietnamese in an English classroom. Having said that, Tiên, together with Khuê, was concerned about my occasional switching from English to Vietnamese, which they thought was sometimes excessive or unnecessary. They were afraid that this would lead to students using Vietnamese instead of trying to use English. In that very same note, from which the extract in Figure 6.9 above is taken, despite her expressing her support for Vietnamese in class, Tiên wrote another comment wondering which language my students were using when working in some activities: "[students] sometimes open the mouth [i.e., attempt to speak and participate] but the observer [i.e., Tiên herself] not sure whether they are speaking English or Vietnamese".

Two weeks later, Tiên expressed her concern over my students' use of Vietnamese during an activity undertaken in groups (see Figure 6.10 below). She wondered whether I should be encouraging them to speak English as much as possible:

Figure 6.10 – Extract from Tiên's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 4,
2 April, 2014

As for Khuê, in addition to her concern over what she deemed my overuse of Vietnamese, she questioned the point raised by Tiên regarding the influence of English on the students' identity:
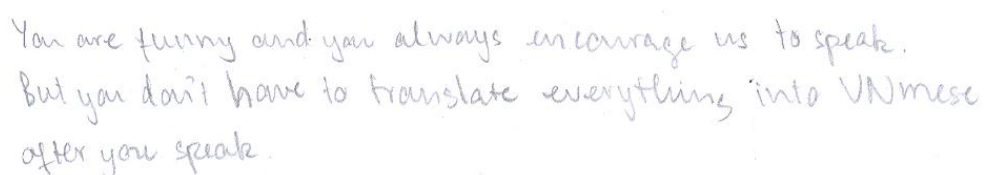
Figure 6.11 – Extract from Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 2,
19 March, 2014

The comments in the above extract show that Khuê took the position that students should only resort to Vietnamese when failing to express their ideas in English. Unlike Tiên, she did not think that using English would impact on students' identity.

Moreover, in the discussion on 21 March, Khuê and Tiên shared with me what they found out from their experience and conversations with their students – that is, whatever their levels were, students tended to prefer English to Vietnamese and some might even feel annoyed if their teacher used Vietnamese. Their remark seemed to be supported by one comment from a student in Class 2B-W (Figure 6.12):

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You are funny and you always encourage us to speak.
But you don't have to translate everything into VNmese
after you speak.

Figure 6.12 – Extract from Student 12's feedback, Class 2B-W, Week 8,
14 May, 2014

This feedback shows that some students, particularly those with strong English capacity, might not have appreciated the amount of Vietnamese I was using in class.

And yet students with more limited English ability seemed to like my liberal use of Vietnamese, since they said it helped them to understand what was happening in class, and enabled them to speak more:

> The thing I find useful is the teacher speak English first and then transfer to Vietnamese so we can understand clearly.
>
> (Student 7's feedback, Class 2B-T, Week 4, 2 April, 2014)

> I think that today is useful for me and everyone, I could understand more [than] last times. I feel comfortable [today], because you use Vietnamese, and taught slowly, I like it. Thank you.
>
> (Student 13's feedback, Class 2B-W, Week 5, 16 April, 2014)

> Teacher always encourage us to tell, to talk in class (even in Vietnamese). I like this.
>
> (Student 24's course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

As discussed in Section 6.1 earlier, up until the time of my fieldwork, since listening skills were so often neglected at secondary schools in Vietnam, many students struggled in an English-only environment. The written feedback given by some of my students during and at the end of the course (as shown above) revealed that by using Vietnamese and allowing the students to use Vietnamese, I appeared to be able to more successfully include those with limited English capacity in the teaching and learning.

During the focus group interviews with Class 2B-W students at the end of the course, on the one hand, there was an overall positive attitude towards the role of Vietnamese

language in my class in particular and in English teaching and learning in general. On the other hand, there emerged concerns as to the amount of Vietnamese as well as who should use Vietnamese and when. Initially, the question about Vietnamese was not on my interview question list. However, one student in the third focus group (including Ái, Diệp, Ngôn and Cát) raised this issue herself during the interview:

Ái: In other classes, the teachers… gave some err… rules… for example, they said… like… "I teach this way so you have to study this way". Some students followed but some didn't. And some quit the class in order to study with a different teacher in the following semester. In your class, in general you are very flexible. You are lenient in your teaching, to the extent that... for example, when we asked whether we could discuss in Vietnamese, you said Vietnamese was fine but English was advisable. But, you know, I realised one thing. I don't know how much Vietnamese each group spoke when discussing in their groups, but whenever a member held the microphone, (s)he always talked in English. That's what I found interesting. I like it. So all discussions in our class could help practise English. I think this is a good point. In the other classes although the teachers always came to us and insisted on us speaking English, we ended up not knowing what to say. Then we just mumbled to one another in Vietnamese…

Ngôn and Cát: [*speaking softly in agreement with Ái*] Still in Vietnamese…

Ái: And then the class kept silent. So I think that's the best point in our class compared with the other classes.

(Focus group interview 3, Diệp's group, Class 2B-W, 11 July, 2014,

my translation)

It should be noted, here, that Ái actually started university three years before entering this course. However, for personal reasons, she quit university for some time and now returned and repeated the first year. Therefore, she had had learning experiences in a number of language skills classes. When reflecting on the experience in my class and the other previous classes, she found it interesting that the permitting of Vietnamese did not prevent the students from attempting to use English. On the contrary, it was her impression that the students seemed to speak more English in my class, compared with other classes where Vietnamese was discouraged or prohibited. To Ái, the permitting of

Vietnamese was one of the things she enjoyed most about my class compared with her experience in other classes. As Ái mentioned the issue of Vietnamese, I shared with the group similar observations from my reading of their logs, portfolios and Facebook posts – that is, all the students wrote a lot in English and just used Vietnamese at times. Diệp said that it seemed that everyone was well aware they should use English if they could. Diệp's comment reveals the importance of student agency and this echoes what Ái was trying to explain in her comment on my flexibility earlier. As Ái recounted, in some classes, the teachers set out some rules and insisted on the students' following them, which resulted in negative reactions in some students. This points to students' desire for some agency or control over their learning and the need for teachers to trust their students and to be willing to share the 'control' in the language classroom.

Prompted by Ái's comments, I proceeded to ask the group (and the other groups in the following interviews) several questions regarding the use of Vietnamese. Ái confessed that although in my course most of the time the students used English when presenting at the front of the class, she found out that they spoke more Vietnamese than English when working in small groups. However, as she explained, they were trying to brainstorm and gather ideas during group discussions. After that, they started to think of how to express those ideas in English before speaking into the microphone to the whole class. However, within their own group (i.e., Ái, Diệp, Ngôn, Cát, and Cúc[37]), according to Diệp and Cát, they tried to speak mainly in English during group discussions; nevertheless, whenever anyone did not know how to say something in English, they would use Vietnamese to seek help from the other group mates. After the brief insertion of Vietnamese words, they would proceed with their conversation in English. That is, the use of Vietnamese helped them to move beyond the moments when they were momentarily 'stuck', and they were able to continue conversing freely in English.

Overall, the interview with this third group revealed two points: (i) the value of Vietnamese in an English classroom; and (ii) the importance of students' capacity for self-regulating when deciding which language to use and how to use it. These two points also emerged in the interview with the fourth focus group (including Nga, Liên, Mẫn, Châu, Trà and Trinh). According to Châu, when switching to Vietnamese in order to express her ideas, she was able to get her friends' help in terms of English translation. Liên added that when discussing in small groups, she herself would switch to Vietnamese in order to express her ideas if she got stuck with English; however, when

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[37] Cúc was interviewed on another day with the seventh group owing to her schedule.

she arrived home she would continue to search for the English translation. Switching to Vietnamese did not necessarily mean that she would stop using English:

> Liên: I had the ideas in my mind but could not think of the English words… So I used Vietnamese to be able to… express… hmm… express my ideas. I would search for the English words when I came home because if I could not find them out…I would feel very frustrated… [*The other group members giggle*]… I was motivated to search for the words… It was not that… not using English would be… it did not necessarily mean that using Vietnamese would result in me not using English. In some tricky situations, we have to use Vietnamese.

> (Focus group interview 4, Nga's group, Class 2B-W, 11 July, 2014,
> my translation)

Liên's comment here highlights what the previous group said about students' self-regulation with respect to their language learning.

Regarding the important role of Vietnamese language in the English classroom, the interview with the seventh focus group (including Đoan, Vân, Dao, Thu and Cúc) disclosed more arguments against the English-only environment assumption. Đoan, for example, was in no doubt about the value of using Vietnamese when she "got stuck" in oral conversations.

> Đoan: I extremely like it when we could speak Vietnamese if we got stuck with English. In my Language Skills 1B class [in the first semester] my teacher didn't allow Vietnamese in class and I felt very bored. When I talked with my classmates and I didn't know how to express in English, I had to try to think and speak for a while and I might end up talking about something else or something contrary to what I wanted to say. Or it took a long time before I could express my ideas and it was tiring.

> (Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014,
> my translation)

From what Đoan shared, it seemed that the English-only policy did not facilitate the learning process for some students, at least. On the contrary, it may have resulted in ineffective or limited interaction in class. Meanwhile, she felt Vietnamese could help

the students maintain a higher level of interaction, and this helped their understanding and may have helped lighten the atmosphere in the class. For instance, Đoan recounted an anecdote in her Language Skills 2A class. One of her classmates was presenting in front of the class and did not know how to translate the word "*đại cương*"[38] into English. He decided to use the Vietnamese word. The class burst into appreciative laughter and everyone seemed to understand.

Another student, Thu, shared the experience of one of her friends who attended a special programme with English-only instruction at another university:

> Thu: Hmm, he studied a major in economics taught in English. He said he always had to use English-Vietnamese dictionaries when reading the materials at home. Still, he couldn't understand anything in class. He already studied one year… all in English... but his English wasn't improved. Thus, I reckon only when our English is good enough should we study like that [i.e., study in English only].

> (Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014,
> my translation)

The programme mentioned in Thu's account is an example of English medium instruction (EMI) programmes promoted in *Project 2020* by the Vietnamese government as I have noted in Section 2.2.2 of the Context Chapter. In an EMI programme, the discipline content (e.g., Business, ICT, and Tourism) is taught in the English language. This kind of programme is gaining in popularity in Vietnam in particular and in the Asia-Pacific region in general (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017). One reason was the assumption that it can help students develop their English language proficiency in the process of gaining content knowledge. However, researchers have cautioned that if students' (and teachers') English capacity is inadequate for such a programme, their language as well as content learning may suffer (see, e.g., Hamid, Nguyen, & Baldauf, 2013). This issue is well illustrated in Thu's account of her friend. This suggests the need for Vietnamese in the process of both knowledge acquisition and language development in such programmes, especially for students who were still developing their English language practices.

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[38] In any curriculum at universities in Vietnam, there are some compulsory subjects providing general knowledge supposedly necessary for all students (e.g., Basics of Marxism and Leninism, Psychology, and Sociology). (See, e.g., the description of the curriculum at EF in Section 2.3.2.) These subjects are called *đại cương* and offered in Vietnamese.

Dao felt the same:

> Dao: I also share Thu's opinion. People often say that we have to speak a lot a lot... [*inaudible*]. In general they mean when we are in an environment where everyone speaks English, we can improve. However, now I see it differently. Generally, teachers should use Vietnamese when necessary so that we can understand.

> (Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014,
> my translation)

Dao was the student who shared with me in her profile at the beginning of the course her concern about listening skills (see Section 6.1 earlier). At that time, she told me that she preferred me to translate into Vietnamese after speaking English so that she could understand the lessons. The quote above shows that at the end of the course she still appreciated the use of Vietnamese in the process of teaching and learning.

Cúc explained the pressure she felt with English-only instruction and expressed her wish for the use of both languages to help with her learning:

> Cúc: In fact... I think if only English is used [*inaudible*]… the weak point is... we… we will be afraid of speaking. Or for some complicated issues in the lessons, teachers explain but we cannot get them. Indeed, particularly for… us who come from remote provinces. Our listening proficiency is limited compared with classmates in the city or those who have better opportunities…. When I started university, I was afraid that doing this major, we would communicate only in English. In general, I felt a lot of pressure and was very afraid. If possible [*inaudible*]… when necessary teachers should speak Vietnamese so that we can understand and feel comfortable. On the other hand… if we practise English in an English environment we can improve. Therefore, I think... both languages should be used in an appropriate, judicious manner… not necessarily English only.

> (Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014,
> my translation)

Cúc's opinion relates to an issue that I mentioned earlier – that is, the different English levels of students in a single classroom, particularly in terms of listening and speaking.

It is worth remembering that these students come from different regions in Vietnam and thus some have better opportunities to improve English than the others. As a result, in using (and allowing) English only in the classroom, teachers may unintentionally exclude some students from the teaching and learning process.

In the fifth focus group interview (with Đan, Âu, and Diệu), Đan also stated the need to switch to Vietnamese when lacking vocabulary or wishing to express an idea clearly so that the others could fully understand the issue. However, she and the others in the group emphasised the need for teachers to encourage students to use English as much as possible, especially when students were discussing in groups and with close friends. As Đan said, students had a tendency to speak in Vietnamese rather than in English when they sat with their close friends.

> Âu: I suggest changing seat arrangement more frequently. […] We tended to sit with our close friends. Thus, we inclined to like those…
>
> Đan: So we spoke Vietnamese more than English. For example, we were too close. If we were too close with one another, we mainly spoke in Vietnamese. […] As far as I could see, most of us spoke English when speaking in front of the whole class. However, within groups, many somehow spoke Vietnamese, not using English all the time. Thus, students should be encouraged to speak English when discussing in small groups.

> (Focus group interview 5, Đan's group, Class 2B-W, 14 July, 2014,
>
> my translation)

The need to encourage more English among students was also one of the points raised in the sixth focus group interview. This group (including Hoàn, Thanh, Nhã, Oanh, Hoài and Nhiên) discussed for quite a while who should use which language and when. The level of discussion was really quite sophisticated and insightful. Nhiên thought that in general teachers should use English all the time while students can switch to Vietnamese when they get stuck. She thought teachers should know how to adjust their English to ensure students' understanding. Meanwhile, since students still have limited English proficiency, she appreciated that they sometimes find it difficult to express their ideas in English; hence, the need to switch to Vietnamese. Hoài added that if these students are not allowed to use Vietnamese when they get stuck, they may feel frustrated and will stay silent. Another student, Hoàn, however, believed that teachers

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should use both English and Vietnamese in order to help students understand, whereas students should try their best to speak in English in order to improve their ability. Oanh, while acknowledging that students may improve their speaking skills if they try their best to find a way to express their ideas in English, pointed out that it depends on the students' ability because some may be completely stuck and unable to express their ideas. Interestingly, Thanh pointed out that which language to use depends on the focus of the session; that is, if the focus is on the development of skills, English should be encouraged, whereas if the focus is on the content, Vietnamese should be allowed when students do not know how to express their ideas in English. She recounted an experience in her other class when one of her classmates wanted to debate an issue with their teacher but failed to do so as he could not express himself fully in English. Despite the necessity of Vietnamese in English teaching and learning that could be seen in this anecdote, the group then pointed out that a possible pitfall in the permitting of Vietnamese in an English class is students may be encouraged to be lazy and thus may not bother trying to speak in English. Nhiên therefore emphasised that there should be a rule as to when students can use Vietnamese; for example, only when they get stuck or when they do not know the English words. At the end, Oanh and Thanh pointed out that it depends on learners' ability to self-regulate their use of languages:

Hoài: In our class some of us spoke Vietnamese, but not much…

Oanh: It depended on *ý thức* of the learners so… ['the learners' conscious use of languages'] [*laughs slightly*]

Thanh: It depended on the learners. Your permitting of Vietnamese in class was fine. It was the learners…

Hoàn: It was due to their English capacity…

Oanh: In general, it was due to their conscious use…

Thanh: Their self-consciousness.

(Focus group interview 6, Hoàn's group, Class 2B-W, 14 July, 2014,
my translation)

The emphasis on the conscious use of languages as raised by some students in this group resonates with the point about students' self-regulation in regard to their language practices in the interviews with the third and fourth groups earlier.

From my colleagues' and students' feedback, it can be seen that despite an overall acceptance of the value of the Vietnamese language in the English classroom, a general feeling of unease can be detected among my colleagues and students. This points to the need for teachers to have a better knowledge or fuller conceptualisation of the relationship between Vietnamese and English in English language teaching. In the next section, I delve deeper into this issue through reporting and reflecting on some autobiographical narratives and narrative fragments.

6.4. Coming to appreciate translanguaging as a pedagogical lens

I have presented above my colleagues' and students' opinions regarding the use of Vietnamese in English classrooms in general and in my class in particular. On my part, reflecting on the process of teaching throughout the course, I can recall my initial confusion as to whether and how Vietnamese could be used in my classes and my inability to monitor my own languaging practices, particularly in the first few weeks of the course. After the first class session with Class 2B-W, I recounted in my journal an incident in which while the class was filling in their profiles and I was walking around the classroom, one student asked me very quietly something in Vietnamese. I started answering in English but then decided to switch into Vietnamese. As I wrote in the journal, since I was attempting to increase the legitimacy of Vietnamese in my class, I was wondering which language I should have used in that situation. In the following week, after a discussion with my colleagues Tiên and Khuê regarding the second session in my classes, I wrote the following:

> I feel confused now. I am not sure how to control the amount of Vietnamese
> in my class. I don't know how much is enough and when is appropriate. And
> how can I control how my students use Vietnamese?

> (Research journal, 21 March, 2014)

The recordings of the lessons in the first few weeks of my teaching show there were not only times when I overused Vietnamese but also moments when I failed to switch to Vietnamese to ensure understanding on my students' part. Although in the following weeks my students and I switched between the two languages more fluidly and just used Vietnamese when necessary, there was still some uncertainty in our understanding of the position of the Vietnamese language and the ways we could language in an English classroom, as can be seen in Section 6.3 above. Through my going back and forth between the relevant literature and the above pieces of data, together with some additional fragments of data that I am going to present shortly, I have come to see that this uncertainty reflects the lingering of the monolingual ideology (referred to in Chapters 2 and 3) that we had all been used to.

Traditionally, the multilingual/bilingual student/teacher is viewed as "two monolinguals in one body" (Gravelle, 1996, p. 11) and their language practices are regarded as two autonomous language systems separated by boundaries (García & Wei, 2014). This "two solitudes" assumption (Cummins, 2007) underlies monolingual instructional approaches which are still prevalent in many language teaching contexts today, including Vietnam (see V. C. Le, 2014). The other two assumptions behind these approaches, as Cummins (2007) explains, are the "direct method" assumption (i.e., "instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language without recourse to students' L1") and the "no translation" assumption (i.e., "translation between L1 and L2 has no place in the teaching of language or literacy") (p. 222). These three inter-related assumptions lead to an over-emphasis on the use of the target language in instruction, aiming at encouraging learners to think in the target language so as to avoid "cross contamination" (Jacobson & Faltis, 1990, p. 4). This monolingual principle has prevailed from the time when the direct method was popular, until the emergence of audiolingual and audio-visual approaches (Cummins, 2007). It still continues in CLT today. CLT, in advocating learning a language through using the language (Creese & Blackledge, 2011) and stressing the authenticity of the 'native' speaker and of the language used by the 'native' speaker (Creese, Blackledge, & Takhi, 2014), adds weight to the arguments for this monolingual principle. Cook (2001), in discussing the role of L1 in CLT and also task-based learning approaches, comments that "most descriptions of methods portray the ideal classroom as having as little of the L1 as possible, essentially by omitting reference to it" (p. 404).

This monolingual principle has historically been long favoured in Vietnam, as noted earlier. Reflecting on my own learning experience, I am surprised to realise that this principle has been around for a long while and teachers like me have come to accept it as something obvious without remembering that bilingual instruction did play a positive role in our own learning process. I remember my very first encounter with English-only instruction was back when I was in lower secondary school. My English teachers at school used both English and Vietnamese in their pedagogies. One day, there was a group of pre-service college students coming to teach in my class for their practicum. One student in the group gave a teaching demonstration that day and the other students, together with my English teacher, sat at the back of the classroom observing him. He used English only during his teaching period. At one point, he picked me as an example student as I was sitting in the front row and nearest to him. He tried to explain something to me. However, as it was the first time in my life that I had heard such a lot of English without the mediating assistance of any Vietnamese, I could not understand what he was saying. After a while, my classmates sitting around me whispered something in my ears to help me out, and I mechanically repeated what they told me, pretending I understood what he was saying. Looking back on this experience, I can see that this pre-service teacher tried his best to avoid using Vietnamese and felt relieved when finally I could say something in response. Whereas my English teachers during my four years at lower secondary school had used Vietnamese in their teaching, this student took great care not to switch to Vietnamese in front of his peers and my teacher. This relates to Cook's (2001) point above of an "ideal classroom" being one where there is "as little of the L1 as possible" (p. 404).
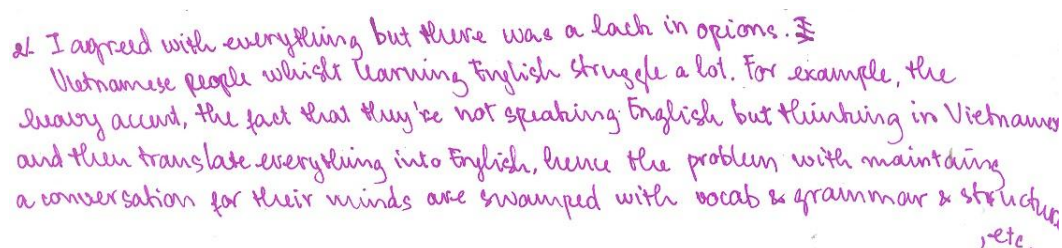
As I proceeded to upper secondary school, the amount of English in English class sessions increased, as it then became my major. However, Vietnamese was still used to facilitate learning. In some classes, it was the well-judged use of Vietnamese by my teachers, when it was most needed, that helped me understand many complex and/or interesting points in the English language. Particularly, I still remember the enthusiasm of our class when we were waiting for the grammar sessions in Grade 10. Our teacher somehow made dry grammar lessons come to life. With clear and insightful explanations in both English and Vietnamese, he helped us explore multiple dimensions of English grammar, seeing the roots of each grammar point and this helped us come to love the beauty of the English language. As I entered university and majored in English

Linguistics and Literature, English became the main means of communication in classes; however, even then, Vietnamese was still sometimes used.

Despite the role of Vietnamese in the development of my English ability, throughout my years at university and later on, I started to believe that using English was the best way to learn English. Apart from translation courses, we students were encouraged to use as much English as possible. Monolingual dictionaries were strongly recommended as it helped us to think in English. In my third year at university, in my first and main course in teaching methodology, the main textbook used was *Teaching English through English* by Jane Willis (1981). From that course and the other courses later in the Master's programme in TESOL, the idea of teaching English via using English became ingrained in my mind without question, in effect blotting out all my previous memories of appreciating teachers who used Vietnamese from time to time when students needed it most to stay engaged and connected. In many professional contexts in Vietnam, it seems to me that the principle is taken for granted. I remember myself doing teaching demonstrations all in English when applying for teaching positions at language centres and at universities without being asked to do so. However, on becoming a teacher, I often felt the need to switch to Vietnamese sometimes and so did my students. Nevertheless, deep inside, I told myself (and probably so did my students) that it was not good practice for an English class, especially a listening speaking class. Studies on codeswitching have often reported that teachers and students do switch between languages in class and that they often do so with a feeling of guilt. This way of languaging is sometimes viewed as "careless language habits" (Shin, 2005, p. 18), or "bad practice" (Martin, 2005, p. 88). In my PhD project, the negative feelings about the switch to Vietnamese can be detected in my colleagues' desire for maximum exposure to and use of English, and some students' concern over the use of Vietnamese in group discussions (as I have presented in the previous section).

While advocates of monolingualism stress the importance of helping learners to think in the target language, other researchers remind us that learners always have L1 available in their minds (Cook, 1999). As Cook (1999) remarks, "every activity the student carries out visibly in the L2 also involves the invisible L1" (p. 202). Based on a multicompetence perspective, Cook continues his argument by emphasising that "all teaching activities are *cross-lingual* […]; the difference among activities is whether the L1 is visible or invisible, not whether it is present or altogether absent" (p. 202, original emphasis). Thus, the question is whether we view L1 as "a negative factor to be
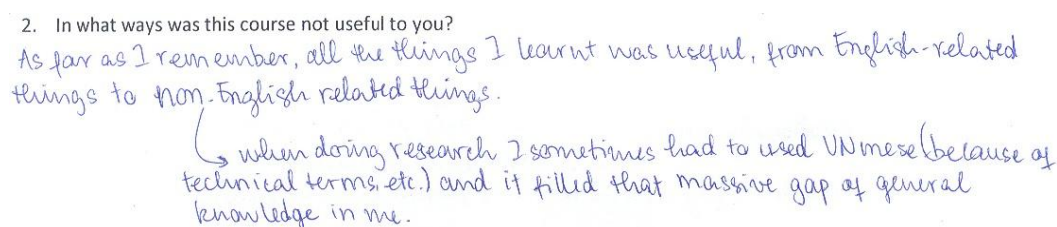
endured", as illustrated in the following comment by a student in Class 2B-W on Day 4 (Figure 6.13):

Figure 6.13 – Extract from Student 24's feedback, Class 2B-W, Week 4[39],
2 April, 2014

or "a positive factor" (Cook, 1999, p. 202), as manifested in the following remark that I received at the end of the course (Figure 6.14):

Figure 6.14 – Extract 2 from Student 23's course evaluation form, Class 2B-W

The comment in Figure 6.13 reveals the student's unfavourable attitude towards the imprint of the Vietnamese language (e.g., pronunciation and ways of thinking) on English learning. On the contrary, the extract in Figure 6.14 shows the student's appreciation of the value of the knowledge that (s)he had acquired in Vietnamese for the process of learning English. This remark demonstrates the usefulness of L1 in L2 learning as argued by Cummins (2007). Drawing on various theoretical perspectives, Cummins (2007) highlights the benefit of students' prior knowledge encoded in their L1 in the learning of L2, the normal nature of the occurrence of cross-lingual transfer, and the development of bi- and multilinguals' overall multilingual system, including the L1, through the L2 learning process. He thus underlines the potential favourable impact of L1 on L2 learning. In fact, he argues for the mutual beneficial impact of the languages on the development of one another and stresses the complexity of the psycholinguistic system of the bi- and multilingual.

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[39] In Week 4, one of topics in the discussion session was the role of the Vietnamese language and culture in English learning. This was part of the activity designed for EIL teaching (see sections 2.2 in Appendix 10)

Given the interdependence of literacy-related skills and knowledge across languages as pointed out by Cummins (2007), why is it difficult for some learners to transfer the knowledge and skills encoded in their L1 to their L2? Tiên also raised this question in our discussion on 21 March 2014. She wondered why there were accommodation strategies in the Vietnamese language, and in fact in all the languages, but learners tended to struggle to transfer these strategies when they learned a new language, specifically English in our context. Her assumption was that it was due to learners' mindset. Taking pronunciation as an example, she reflected on her own learning experience. She said she used to struggle to acquire the various English intonations, for she was told that they were different from the Vietnamese intonations. However, once she realised that attitudes are an important aspect of intonations and there are similarities in the way people from different countries express attitudes, she developed a better 'ear' for reproducing English intonations. Tiên's experience illustrates the sociolinguistic view of "language as fluid and changing, with permeable boundaries" (Creese & Blackledge, 2011, p. 1196) in opposition to the long-established view of languages as nation-bounded things, as discussed in Chapter 3. It also points to the need to adopt a new lens to look at languaging practices.

Drawing on Cummins and other significant researchers in bilingual education, Creese and Blackledge (2011) suggest the notion of *flexible bilingualism* to replace the traditional view of autonomous languages or, in their words, *separate bilingualism*. Flexible bilingualism is "a view of language as a social resource (Heller, 2007a, b) without clear boundaries" (p. 1197). They argue that it "places the speaker at the heart of the interaction [...] stresses individual agency and understands language use as predicated on using all available signs (themselves socially constituted) in the performance of different social subjectivities" (p. 1197). This is in many ways similar to the concept of 'translanguaging' (García & Wei, 2014) that I discussed in Chapter 3. In proposing flexible bilingualism or translanguaging as a pedagogical lens, scholars such as Creese, Blackledge, García and Wei are calling for a move away from the traditional goals of language acquisition and development. The focus, they propose, should be on how students use all their semiotic practices, linguistic as well as non-linguistic, in the service of critical thinking and deep comprehension.

As can be seen in Section 6.1, in the discussion on 7 March 2014, Tiên's learning, teaching and living experiences have led her to advocate for the positive impact of the Vietnamese language on cognition, connection and identity development of language

learners in English learning. In other words, she had to some extent conceptualised the Vietnamese resources as cognitive, affective and social affordances. The notion of *affordance* was proposed by van Lier (2000) to replace the common concept of *input* in SLA. van Lier adopted an ecological perspective, which views "the learners as immersed in an environment full of potential meanings" (p. 246). According to her, the environment or context "is not just there to provide input (linguistic models or objects) to a passive recipient" (p. 252) but "full of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablements and constraints − in short, affordances" (Shotter & Newson, 1982, p. 34, as quoted in van Lier, 2000, p. 253). Drawing on van Lier (2000), Kibler (2010) presents the student' first language as a potentially "*productive* affordance" (p. 122, my emphasis). The students in Kibler's study made use of their first language to handle writing tasks (cognitive affordance) and negotiate expert-novice positions in relation to their teachers and the other students and assert their multilingual identities (social affordance). In my project, I draw on Kibler's conception of 'cognitive affordance' and 'social affordance', and add 'affective affordance' to refer to the potential of the first language (or any semiotic resources) to be a means of expressing emotions and feelings, and to enhance the interpersonal relationship between the student and her/his peers and teacher. It is worth noting that these concepts are closely related as affirmation or enhancement in one aspect also positively impacts on the others.

These roles of cognitive, affective and social affordances can be seen to some extent in the findings presented in Section 6.2 above. For example, I sometimes switched to Vietnamese to scaffold instructions, tapped into the students' knowledge encoded in Vietnamese (cognitive affordance), and used Vietnamese when asking for the students' feedback in order to reduce the distance between us (affective affordance). As Tiên commented when observing Class 2B-T on Day 2, my talking and having my students talk about the Vietnamese language in my English class appeared to support and promote their identity investment. She believed that if this practice was maintained, it would "make the learners not "discriminate" their mother tongue in the [...] English class" (see Figure 6.9 in Section 6.3 earlier) (social affordance). I have reflected earlier on how my students occasionally used Vietnamese vocabulary to make sense of some specialised terms in English, and switched to Vietnamese among themselves to mediate understanding (cognitive affordance). By switching to Vietnamese, some students with limited English capacity could participate in class by raising and elaborating on their

ideas. As García and Wei (2014) say, commenting on one of the examples presented in their book, allowing "students to translanguage in the dialogue means that the voices of emergent bilinguals who otherwise would have been silenced are released and heard" (p. 103). These students could share their knowledge and understanding, and their self-esteem could be enhanced (social affordance). Moreover, the example of the student who chose to say "Thank you" in Vietnamese (see Figure 6.5 in Section 6.2 above) shows that this student felt Vietnamese helped her express her gratitude and respect better than English and thus she was better able to connect with me, her teacher (affective affordance). In addition to Vietnamese, some students used emoticons like smiley, grinning or sad faces when communicating via Facebook or writing feedback on the lessons. This suggests that they knew how to make use of semiotic symbols and codes other than English and Vietnamese to express their meanings, and, in this case, to express their feelings (affective affordance).

However, at that stage in my study (i.e., during the teaching course and also my fieldwork), as can be seen in the previous section, despite the overall positive attitude, my colleagues, my students and I tended to frame the role of Vietnamese in a negative discourse. We tended to talk about Vietnamese more as a last resort rather than a resource – that is, students were resorting to Vietnamese when they got stuck in expressing themselves in English, and the teacher was resorting to Vietnamese as a way to scaffold students' understanding and learning when things were going badly. Moreover, my colleagues and I tended to pay more attention to the amount of each language rather than the functions of each language in the classroom. In such situations, translanguaging tends to be regarded as a constraint rather than an affordance (Paulsrud, 2015). My colleagues and some of my students were concerned about the use of Vietnamese in group discussions, and I myself sometimes reminded my students to switch back to English when hearing them speak Vietnamese in group discussions. The long discussion in the interview with the sixth focus group regarding who should use which language and when confirms Cook's (1999) remark that "use of the L1 is seen not as desirable but as a necessary evil" (p. 202). In general, our attitude was more oriented to "acceptance or tolerance" of the Vietnamese language rather than "cultivation" of languages (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 103). This shows that we were still clinging to the mindset of separate bilingualism. More importantly, although my colleagues and I often talked about thinking and learning skills as teaching goals, our reactions to what happened in my classes in terms of the presence of Vietnamese

show that, at some points, we switched back to focus on language acquisition and development. In other words, we were swinging back and forth between the goal of linguistic communicative skills and the goal of skills to learn and think. Cummins (2007) says, "when we free ourselves from exclusive reliance on monolingual instructional approaches, a wide variety of opportunities arise for teaching languages by means of bilingual instructional strategies that acknowledge the reality of, and strongly promote, two-way cross-language transfer" (p. 222). My presentation and discussion of different data fragments so far suggests the need for some of this 'freeing up' that Cummins is talking about.

A final issue regarding the use of Vietnamese in my class that emerged from the interviews with my students is student agency. The fragments of stories and responses that I have related in this chapter have shown that some students were positive, whereas some were negative towards their own ability to self-regulate their language practices, particularly in group discussions (see the responses of the third and fourth groups versus those of the fifth and sixth groups in Section 6.3). Their responses – sometimes positive, sometimes negative – often reveal their awareness of the importance of self-regulated learning. This relates to the emphasis on individual agency in using all available signs for the meaning-making process in Creese and Blackledge's (2011) conception of 'flexible bilingualism'. García and Wei (2014), when discussing translanguaging as pedagogy, also highlight bilingual learners' self-regulation as to when and how to language. As students take control of their language practices and thus learning, teachers then give up their authority role. Instead of being teachers or language police, they become facilitators, setting up affordances for students to engage in their own learning. Thus, translanguaging as pedagogy involves the development of a high sense of self-regulation on the students' part and a high sense of trust on the teacher's part. Therefore, together with the shift in educational goals, translanguaging as a pedagogy entails a change in teacher and student roles – an issue which has been receiving increased attention in the Vietnamese context (see Chapter 2).

In this first discussion chapter, I have recounted the journey in which I have come to appreciate the place of the Vietnamese language in an English class. My presentation of the ways Vietnamese was used by me and my students, and the comments from several students and my colleagues show that Vietnamese (and other semiotic repertoires) can serve as cognitive, affective and social affordances in the process of teaching and learning. However, an uncomfortable feeling about the presence of Vietnamese in my

class at that stage in my critical inquiry into my practice can be detected in the way some students, my colleagues and I myself talked about its role. This reflects the indelible imprint of the monolingual ideology, which has historically been dominating the stage of English teaching and learning in Vietnam as well as elsewhere in the world. My discussion of the data suggests the potential and necessity for adopting translanguaging as a pedagogical lens for teaching and learning English. In highlighting some instances in which my students' flexible use of their semiotic repertoire enriched the meaning-making process, I have shown that I was heading toward a time when I would appreciate that translanguaging can help focus the attention on deep learning rather than merely language acquisition. It can also help facilitate a change in the teacher and students roles by encouraging students to take more control of their languaging practices and language learning. I elaborate on the value of translanguaging in Chapter 8 when I reconceptualise my pedagogical framework. In the next discussion chapter (i.e., Chapter 7), I look at another journey in which I have learnt to incorporate aspects of another pedagogy – that is, EIL pedagogy.

Chapter 7: English as an International Language

The previous chapter discusses stories constituting my journey to understand the place of learners' L1 in English classrooms as underscored in Cummins's framework for developing academic expertise. I continue to explore other dimensions in Cummins's framework in the third discussion chapter when I look at my overall pedagogical framework. In this second chapter, I narrate the process of my developing insights into another pedagogy that I drew on for my project – that is, English as an International Language. Whereas some elements of Cummins's framework could be found in my previous teaching practices, EIL is a new component in my pedagogical framework. As I had been taught from secondary school to university and then had taught for seven years prior to this PhD project in the paradigm which was based on the so-called 'standard' British and American Englishes as models, this was the first time that I had ever engaged with and in this new perspective. In this chapter, I present and analyse stories gleaned from the two lessons particularly designed with an EIL pedagogy, and from my discussions with my two colleagues. I also include some feedback from my students and what I see as the possibilities and tensions of adopting an EIL pedagogy. But first, I would like to begin this chapter by a narrative fragment of my encountering a multitude of English varieties in my first few months in Australia.

7.1. My first few months in Australia

When I knew that I had been awarded a scholarship to study in Australia, one of the first thoughts that came to my mind was my anxiety of encountering Australian English. Being aware that Australian English was very particular, I searched for video clips with Australian accents to acquaint myself with this variety. I also searched for information about Australia to get prepared for the life there. One of the things I learnt was that this is a country of diversity owing to massive flows of people from different countries such as international students, tourists, and migrants. However, not until I set foot in Australia did I fully understand what diversity meant.

As part of my scholarship, I first had to attend a five-week course designed for all the scholarship holders enrolling in the institution where I commenced my PhD project. The course was called Introductory Academic Program (IAP) and aimed to equip scholarship awardees with a range of skills necessary for academic programmes at the

institution. On the first day of the course, as I was sitting in the lecture hall with the other awardees waiting for the lecturers to come, I started to hear all sorts of different English varieties, many of which I hardly made sense of. Apart from thirteen Vietnamese students including me, there were eighty other students from twenty eight countries. Throughout the first two or three weeks, I could catch most of what my lecturers said but missed most of what my international classmates said. While the majority of my international classmates could enjoy the discussions in class, I struggled to understand them. As time went by, I started to get used to some varieties and was able to communicate with more classmates. However, overall the encounter with the diversity of Englishes in the course was a shock to me. And that was for two reasons.

First of all, I had never anticipated communicating more with people from other countries who spoke with different accents than with people speaking the so-called 'standard' British, American and even Australian accents. Even after the course finished, I also had more contact with people from countries such as China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Iran, Bangladesh and Nigeria. They included my housemates, my IAP classmates, other PhD students, and students in the classes in the master's programmes that I audited. The experience was consistent with one remark in the literature which I later came across during my PhD project and which I have noted in Chapter 2 – that is, the so-called 'non-native' speakers outnumber the 'native' speakers; hence, more communication occurring among the former (Crystal, 1997, 2012; Graddol, 1997, 2006). The experience made me rethink the language skills programmes at my faculty in Vietnam, which centred around communication with people using the 'standard' British and American varieties.

Second, the experience called into question the IELTS[40] scores that I attained as part of the requirements to get the scholarship and be accepted into the PhD programme. With the highest band (i.e., band 9) for the 'Listening' component of the test, I had never thought listening would be the aspect that I would struggle most when studying in Australia. At the same time, with an IELTS test score of 7.5 for the 'Speaking' component, I had not been confident in terms of speaking and had never considered myself as a legitimate user of English. However, when I was studying in Australia, I could easily get my message across most of the time. This prompted me to question the reliability and value of international standardised English tests such as IELTS and reconsider the way I had studied English throughout those years at university and later

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[40] International English Language Testing System

on my own. With the goal of attaining 'native'-like standards, my teachers (and I myself) only used materials with British and American accents. Exam papers were based on international standardised tests such as IELTS and TOEFL[41] which feature British and American accents. A lot of effort went into pronunciation practice with 'native' speakers as models. There was no attention to the diversity of Englishes out there in the world and its implications for real-life communications. This had resulted in a real handicap as my ears were only familiar with 'standard' British and American accents and I suffered from a lack of confidence in my own accent. As I reflected on my experience in the IAP course, I realised the same 'mistake' was repeated in the classes that I had taught before coming to Australia.

7.2. Students' perceptions of EIL

With my encounter with diverse varieties of English in Australia and later my awareness of the discussion about the English as an international language context in the literature, I decided to draw on the EIL paradigm for my pedagogical framework in this PhD project. I have presented the approaches that I drew on in Chapter 3, and briefly summarised the activities and materials used for the teaching of EIL in Appendix 10. My expectations when incorporating the EIL paradigm were, as noted in Chapter 3, to raise my students' awareness of the diverse landscape of Englishes nowadays, and to promote recognition of the legitimacy of different varieties, particularly the Vietnamese variety of English. In this section, I look at different attitudes that I (and my colleague Khuê) could observe in my students during the EIL lessons, in their feedback in the course evaluation form, during the talks after class, and in the focus group interviews. As there were multifarious voices from the students, for ease of presentation and analysis, I roughly divide them into three sub-sections: (i) an overall impression of the students' awareness of EIL; (ii) their attitudes towards listening to varieties of English; and (iii) their opinions with respect to pronunciation.

7.2.1. Students' awareness of EIL

As presented in Appendix 10, the core activity in the EIL lessons was the whole class discussion of questions regarding the status of English as an international language, the problematic notions of 'native' speaker and 'standard' English, the role of Vietnamese in English learning and the elements that can facilitate international communications. In

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[41] Test of English as a Foreign Language

order to facilitate the discussion in the core activity, I designed several small activities. One such aiding activity was the 'talking points' as a way for the students to activate (and share with one another) their prior knowledge and experience before a whole class discussion. As the students were walking around the talking points in groups and discussing the questions, I also joined some groups and listened to them. Although I was unable to join all the groups or listen to their whole discussions, I could sense that some students were to some extent aware of the diversity and fluidity of English (or languages). They seemed to have what my colleagues and I called 'EIL attitudes' (which I elaborate later). Below is my narrative-based reconstruction of what I heard in some snippets of their conversations that I noted on a scrap of paper as I was walking around and listening to them:

> In Class 2B-T, the students seemed to be engaged in the discussion in their groups. I was walking around, offering help when necessary such as clarifying the questions, asking facilitating questions to prompt some students to talk, and helping some students to express their ideas in English. At some points, I stayed a bit longer to listen to some students. The questions "What is 'standard' English to you? Who speaks 'standard' English?" seemed to be invoking interesting thoughts in students. Some students mentioned "native speakers" or "BBC", just as I could guess based on my previous learning and teaching experience. However, some other students surprised me with their thoughts, although these thoughts were understandably not clearly expressed and fully developed yet at this stage. For example, in one group, Hậu, when discussing the question as to who speaks 'standard' English, mentioned "the teacher". In another group, Tuấn said there was no point determining 'standard' English because a language is created by a society. Some people may not be 'native' speakers, he continued, but can speak English well such as linguists and teachers of phonology.

> Interestingly, I heard some of the same views expressed in the equivalent session with Class 2B-W on the following day. While some students immediately said "native speaker", "VOA", and "British" upon seeing the question regarding who speaks 'standard' English, other students raised some interesting points. Hải, for instance, pointed out that there had been changes in vocabulary and grammar in English spoken in other countries: America, for example. In answering the question as to the 'standard' English, he

mentioned British as the original variety, and then expanded his conception to American English. When Mẫn mentioned the English in dictionaries as 'standard', Hải drew her attention to the differences between Oxford and Longman dictionaries. He also raised an interesting question as to whether Singaporean and Australian English could be considered as 'standard'. He said people in Singapore speak English as their "secondary mother language". Later, in another group, as someone mentioned "Vietnamese", the group members collectively burst into laughter. As I joined the group and asked whether they could give examples of Vietnamese people who spoke 'standard' English, one girl said "teacher".

(Research journal, 28 March, 2014)

These snippets of conversations that I heard in the group discussions show that some students were holding onto the 'traditional' paradigm that uses 'standard' British English, which is referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP), and American English, which is referred to as General American (GA), as the models. This is understandable, for the English textbooks used at most schools in Vietnam and particularly at my university until the time that I conducted the fieldwork were based on these varieties. As for my students, they had also just finished a course in pronunciation with RP and GA models in the first semester. The snippets of conversations above also show, however, that some students were aware of different varieties of English. Some seemed to be looking beyond RP and GA for models of English such as teachers or other varieties of English like Singaporean English.

Observing the talking points activity in Class 2B-W, my colleague Khuê also moved around the groups and listened to some groups' discussions. She expressed similar surprise in her observation notes (Figure 7.1):
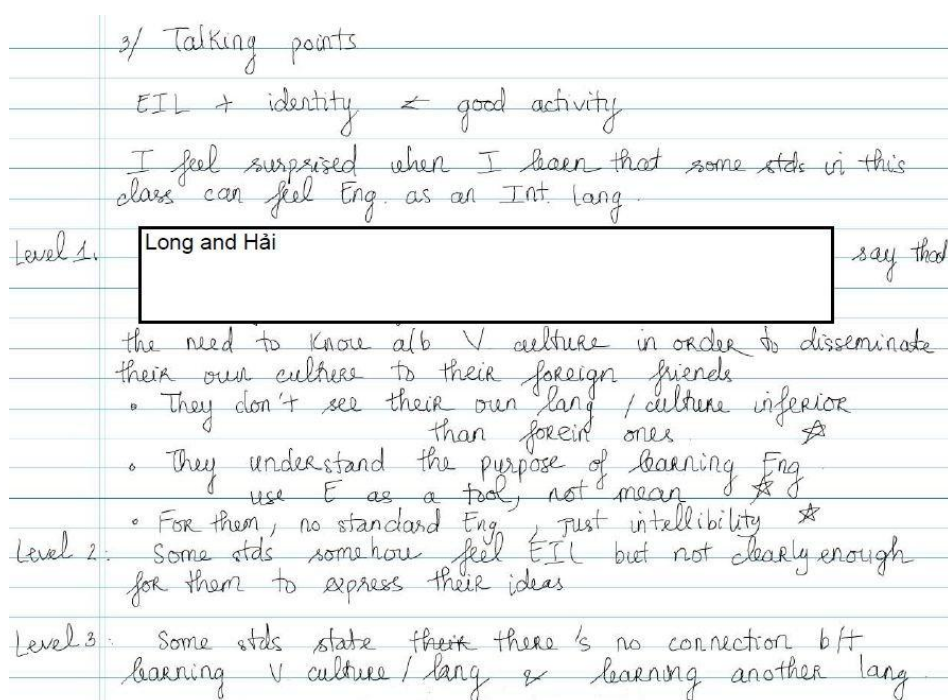
Figure 7.1 – Extract 1 from Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 3, 26 March, 2014

From these notes, it seems that Khuê had listened to the discussions regarding the question as to the role of the Vietnamese culture and language in English learning. Her comment on Long and Hải reflects what she, Tiên and I often roughly called EIL attitudes when discussing my research. These include (1) viewing English as a tool rather than an end in itself in English learning, (2) not regarding Vietnamese language and culture as inferior to Western cultures, (3) using English particularly to talk about Vietnamese culture with friends from/in other countries, (4) not focusing too much on grammar and pronunciation as long as they can get their message across, and (5) switching fluidly between English and Vietnamese as long as they can communicate their ideas. The last point relates to the idea of bilingualism rather than 'language shift' in English teaching and learning as discussed in McKay (2002). It also refers back to the concepts of 'translanguaging' and 'flexible bilingualism' discussed in the previous chapter. It is my colleague Tiên's understanding of EIL and relates to the first point in the list above – that is, English as one of the means for communicating. According to Khuê's observation, some students in Class 2B-W, such as Long and Hải, could appreciate the implications of English as an international language. Some other students also sensed them to some degree although they were unable to articulate their thoughts as clearly as Long and Hải at that stage. Yet, some others could not see the role of Vietnamese language and culture in English learning. This last group's perception can

be said to indicate the separate bilingualism mindset (Creese & Blackledge, 2011) that I discuss in the previous discussion chapter.

The awareness of the EIL context and the EIL attitudes that my colleague Khuê and I noticed in some of my students in the talking points activity – a kind of activity to activate their prior knowledge before the core activity in which I discussed with them the EIL questions – affirmed for me the potential, and perhaps necessity, for introducing the EIL paradigm into my teaching. Although most teaching materials and programmes in Vietnam were restricted within the RP and GA models, some students might have developed (though unconsciously) an EIL perspective themselves. One possible explanation is the impact of globalisation, as discussed in Chapter 2. With the development of ICT and the global flows of people and ideas, students might have been cognizant of the diverse landscape of English and might have encountered it themselves due to the increased availability of information and more opportunities to interact with people from other countries, either virtually via the Internet or in person along the streets. Take Long as an example. In the focus group interview at the end of the course, Long shared with me his experience and opinions. The following excerpt of this conversation begins as I was asking the students about what worked and what did not work in the course and Quế began talking about the EIL lessons:

> Quế: Firstly, you encouraged us to listen to outside materials at home… different varieties […] They provide a… a new perspective… and are also useful resources… websites. Secondly, you discussed 'foreigner'… who is foreigner…. I like that part […].

> Hải: Me too…. In this course, yes, I... like the part on Englishes in different countries most... because it is fairly new. I've never... it has never been discussed so far.

> Quế [*speaking to Long*]: Perhaps it's not new to you, right?

> [*Hân laughs softly*.]

> Long: It's not new to me at all... because... I've met many foreigners... Indians [...]. I've often met Indians, and Filipinos. The Filipinos who teach English may even receive higher salaries than [*inaudible because he laughs at*

the same time]. They speak English sometimes even better than the Americans. The Filipinos... speak English very well. I really admire them.

Quế: English is their official language.

Long: Two languages…

(Focus group interview 2, Đông's group, Class 2B-W, 8 July, 2014,

my translation)

Just prior to this excerpt, Long mentioned his attempt to improve English one year ago by wandering in the parks in the city to meet foreigners and practise English. Since he grew up and went to school in a province where there were inadequate conditions for English studies, his English capacity was limited. However, from my observation throughout the course, he was fairly confident when communicating in English, perhaps thanks to his experience in meeting with people from different countries in the parks. What can be seen from the extract of the interview above is Long's awareness of different varieties of English and his recognition of their legitimacy.

In this section, I have presented some of my students' initial perceptions of EIL before my conduction of the core activity designed for the EIL lessons. In the next two sections, I discuss two themes that emerged from the feedback I received from my students – that is, their attitudes towards listening to different varieties of English and the practice of pronunciation. The issues of listening and pronunciation were also part of my foci when drawing on the EIL perspective for my teaching plan and received attention in my conversations with my colleagues during the teaching course (as will be seen throughout the discussions in Section 7.3).

7.2.2. Students' attitudes towards listening to varieties of English

As can be seen in Appendix 10, throughout the course, I had my students listen to various Englishes during some activities in class and in some tasks/assignments completed at home (e.g., ceremony poster presentations and listening learning logs). Anticipating that some students might never have been exposed to varieties other than RP and GA, for the activities used in class, I tried to facilitate students' comprehension by using video clips rather than audio recordings when possible, having them work in groups and share what they could hear, and asking some questions to help focus their listening. For the listening learning log, I asked the students to choose the materials that

they were interested in and found suitable for them. However, some students still found it difficult to listen to other Englishes. In response to the question about the teaching content and materials in the course evaluation form, several students mentioned the difficulty of listening to different varieties:

> Outside matirial [materials]: not effective ([e.g.,] recording with Indians, Malaysian,…) because I think we should master listening to US, UK people first.
>
> (Student 33, course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

> It's useful and necessary to distinguish different accents but it's also too difficult.
>
> (Student 18, course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

Student 33 particularly referred to the recordings about ceremonies that I had the class listen to in Week 7 (see section 3 in Appendix 10). During the previous weeks, I noticed some students had been exposed to some varieties elsewhere such as watching video clips on YouTube or cable TV at home. Therefore, I designed a small activity in which I let the students listen to several recordings and asked them to match each speaker with particular varieties of English I had listed. The students worked collaboratively in groups, helping each other to make judgements. Although the listening was done in groups and designed mainly as a fun way to expose the students to several varieties of English, it seemed that some students, particularly those with limited listening skills, did not enjoy the activity. One possible reason was that I had not provided adequate support for these students when designing this activity. The struggle in the activity seemed to have discouraged some students from listening to other varieties of English.

Different from these students who did not feel motivated to listen to different Englishes, some students seemed to find it very useful and perhaps even necessary. In response to that same question in the evaluation form (i.e., "What do you think about the content we studied and the materials we used in this course?"), some students gave positive remarks on this issue:

There was a variety of materials we used in this course including textbooks and clips, extra real listening materials which helped me to get used to listening to many different English accents. And that also encouraged me to learn more.

(Student 6, course evaluation form, Class 2B-T)

I think the topics on weeks 3 and 4 very related to our department. It's not just about learning English (and other languages), it's also about teaching English (for one who wants to become teacher later). It's a hot topic. It's useful. It helps us to know more. It's also useful for us in the future (for job too). We will meet many people from other countries, they speak English but they are not from English-speaking countries.

(Student 24, course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

The clips are very useful, b/c [because] our country is a developing country [and] many investor come and find employee. English is an international language; this can help me adapt more quick [when communicating with people with] other accents like China English, Indian English. It gives me more chance.

(Student 31, course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

As can be seen in the first response, Student 6 in Class 2B-T expressed favourable attitudes towards the materials with different accents. (S)he also stated that these materials gave her/him motivation for studying further. In Class 2B-W, the comments by Students 24 and 31 show that they were aware of the EIL context and found the EIL lessons and the listening to different varieties beneficial to their future. Student 24 even pointed to the relevance of the EIL topic to the faculty, since a number of students would choose to become teachers of English after graduation.

In one focus group discussion at the end of the course, when I asked the group whether their view of teaching and learning listening and speaking had changed after the course, one student talked about listening to different voices with appreciation:

Ái: Secondly... I didn't think of it much previously; that is accent. You told us to... practise listening to different accents [...] I wrote in my notebook that I

needed to search for different sources to practise, but I couldn't find any. Then, I happened to go to one of the websites that you suggested in the syllabus; that is elllo. I listened to the mix part, and realised it was very interesting. I think that's the big change. That is, I realised that learning English isn't only about listening to British or American English; it's not about choosing to learn British or American, but it's important to be able to understand people from other countries. Because English has become an international language, we have to be able to understand many people.

(Focus group interview 3, Diệp's group, Class 2B-W, 11 July, 2014,

my translation)

As Ái said, her view of learning listening had changed as a result of the course. She realised the need to listen to different voices, rather than only British or American English. She particularly liked the elllo website, which provides short audio and video recordings in which people in different countries spoke in English about common topics. A few months after this interview, at the beginning of the third semester, Ái wrote me an email (as I was in Australia). In the email, she expressed again her interest in the elllo website, among other things:

[...] as well as when you reminded us to practise listening to different accents (I really love the web elllo.org that you suggested. Actually I had come across this web previously when I was searching on the Internet, but I soon forgot it because I did not understand what it was for. The listening parts are very short as well as they are about common topics... now I realise it is really useful. I consider it my own treasure).

(Ái's email, 1 September, 2014, my translation)

As can be understood from what Ái shared in the email, although the recordings in the website are short and about ordinary topics, they helped her gain familiarity with various Englishes. And she regarded it as a valuable resource for practising listening.

The website that Ái mentioned several times was one of the resources that I recommended to the students for the extensive listening section in their listening learning log (see Appendix 5). Since most teaching materials available in the bookshops in Vietnam used British and American Englishes, in the syllabus and the guidelines for

the log, I suggested some materials with other accents so that the students could practise by themselves. Speaking of resources for listening, I remember that during the course, some students even asked me to provide more materials so that they could practise listening to varieties other than British and American. In Week 8, in my talk with some students after class, when I asked for their opinions about the content and materials in the course so far so that I could make changes if necessary, Diệp suggested:

> Diệp: Hmm… can you give us more… materials… clips with different accents?
>
> Trân: Mhm.
>
> Diệp: We are still weak in that aspect. Last week you had us listen to some recordings near the end of the lesson, the recordings of different people. It was like *vịt nghe sấm* ['It's all Greek to us']. When I went home, I listened again and felt better.
>
> Liên: I have tried to search for clips myself on the Internet but those that I found were all using American accents. It is difficult to find different voices.
>
> Diệp: I have also tried to search but haven't found any.
>
> Trân: Mhm, not many, right? So you mean there should be more materials of this kind?
>
> Diệp: Yes.
>
> Trân: Err, I will let you listen more in class or post them on Facebook so...
>
> Diệp: Post on Facebook.
>
> Trân: Mhm, and then you can use them in your listening learning log if you like? Hmm....

> (After-class talk, Class 2B-W, Week 8, 14 May, 2014, my translation)

Since they had difficulty searching for materials with different accents, Diệp and Liên suggested I recommend more materials for the class to practise. From what Diệp said, it can be seen that although she hardly understood the recordings about ceremony in Week 7, different from the students that I mentioned earlier in this section, she was still

motivated to listen more. For the listening learning log, the extensive listening was only part of the requirement and I encouraged them to listen to different voices but did not set a high demand for it (see Appendix 5). Moreover, the students were well aware that the tests (particularly the final exams) in my faculty were designed based on international standardised tests with American and British accents. Considering all of these factors, the positive attitudes in some students suggest that they might have come to realise the EIL context today and the necessity to get familiar with different accents. This is encouraging indeed.

7.2.3. Students' opinions about pronunciation

For speaking skills, from my experience and observation until the time when I conducted the fieldwork, students and teachers at my faculty tended to pay much attention to pronunciation. And in this respect, many often regarded 'native'-like accents (i.e., RP and GA) as the goal for learning. This can be seen in some of the profiles that I gathered in my classes at the beginning of the course. For example, in response to the question as to the goals of studying listening and speaking skills, Chung in Class 2B-T wrote that she hoped after the class she "can listen and understand what foreign people say in the news and can also speak English as well as the way native speaker do". By 'foreign people' or 'foreigners', she (and most students in my classes) tended to mean 'native' speakers. Similarly, in Class 2B-W, Mẫn wrote that one of the aspects of listening/speaking skills she most needed to improve was "achieve native voice".

During the EIL lessons, I discussed with the students the possibility of attaining what is called a 'native'-like accent and proposed the notion of 'intelligibility' (see Smith, 1981/1983). Instead of the goal of 'native'-likeness, I highlighted two factors contributing to successful communication – that is, clear pronunciation on the part of the speaker, and the responsibility to negotiate meaning on the part of the speaker and, more importantly, the listener. From the feedback I received from some students during and at the end of the course, the discussion seemed helpful for them to set their goal of learning English. For instance, in the talk after Lesson 3 in Class 2B-T, Thọ expressed his agreement with what I had discussed:

Trân [*speaking to the students*]: What do you think about what we have just discussed in the lesson?

Thọ: After you have said that, I realise that's true. I can keep my learning method but should change the goal.

(After-class talk, Class 2B-T, Week 3, 25 March, 2014, my translation)

It should be noted that in Thọ's profile in Week 1, one of his goals of studying listening and speaking skills was to be able to use English "as a second mother-tongue". After the lesson, he agreed with me that it was an unrealistic goal. Similarly, at the end of the course, one student in Class 2B-W wrote in the course evaluation form that:

I changed my point of view of learning English as a foreign language. To have an American accent is not necessarily advisable – too high a goal to achieve. It was pretty useful. Now I stop practising American accent and started to focus more on other more necessary skills.

(Student 17, course evaluation form, Class 2B-W)

For this student, as (s)he realised it is impractical and unnecessary to achieve an American accent, (s)he had started to direct her effort to other essential skills.

In the focus group interviews, some students also expressed their agreement with what I discussed with them regarding pronunciation. For example, in response to my question about the change in their view of learning English, Diệp said:

The change that I see most clearly is… hmm… American accent, native…. Students often learn to imitate an accent, but…. I haven't practised like that so far but as people on the Internet say so and as everyone practises that way, I felt a bit worried about the pronunciation. However, after you said it was not necessary, I have felt much more comfortable.

(Focus group interview 3, Diệp's group, Class 2B-W, 11 July, 2014,
my translation)

It should be noted that in my perception, Diệp's pronunciation was very clear and easy to hear, though not 'native'-like. However, as she said in the excerpt above, she used to

feel anxious since people often talked about American accents. The EIL lessons had helped free her from the pressure of attaining a 'native'-like accent.

In another focus group interview, a student, Đoan, also talked about a similar change in her view of learning English. In the following extract, Đoan starts by reminding me that she used to share the shift in her perspective with me in an after-class talk during the course:

> Đoan: As I told you previously, before studying in your class, even until the time I studied the 1B course [in the first semester], I always thought that I should try my best to be able to speak like foreigners. And that's what I called 'success' in studying English. But now after this course, I think differently. That is, people in each country have their own particular accent. Therefore, as long as people can understand me when I speak, that's enough.
>
> (Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014, my translation)

As Đoan says in the extract, her previous goal (or conception of 'success') in English learning was 'native'-likeness. Nevertheless, after the EIL lessons, she has come to recognise the legitimacy of all varieties of English, and accept intelligibility as the criteria for pronunciation in successful communication.

However, not all students shared this view of pronunciation. For example, another student in Đoan's group had a different opinion and we talked for quite a while about this issue in the focus group interview. In the following excerpt, as Đoan is speaking of her changing views, Thu begins by slightly disagreeing with Đoan:

> Đoan: So now I don't care whether I can pronounce… one hundred per cent as native speakers do… Clear pronunciation is enough.
>
> Thu: But if one hundred per cent is not possible, I think we should try to reach ninety per cent.
>
> [*Đoan laughs softly*]
>
> Trân: I think ninety per cent is still high [*laughs softly*]
>
> Đoan: That's true. Ninety per cent is high.

Thu: Because I think if we are interpreters, for example, but our pronunciation is not up to standard, people don't trust us.

Đoan: I think as long as we pronounce clearly and people can understand us, that's fine.

Trân: Hmm…

Thu: Because I think… hmm… the Turkish students speak English like they speak Vietnamese. We can understand them all. But people still laugh, because [*inaudible*]. If we pronounce like foreigners, people will trust us.

Trân [*hesitating*]: Hmm… people will trust us… hmm… [*Đoan laughs softly*]

[…]

Thu: So as I said, if one hundred per cent is not possible, we need to reach ninety per cent, or eighty something. If a student is said to be good at English but when (s)he speaks, her/his pronunciation is not up to standard, I will not think (s)he's good. But if a student… For example, a student in my previous class got seventy something[42] in the university entrance examination but he spoke English very well so my class really admired him. That was my 1B class. We admired him because he spoke English very well. Everyone thought he was very good at English.

[…]

Thu: Last semester, Mr [name of a teacher] told my class that… people always base on the way we speak to assess our English proficiency… Even when our writing is very good, people don't think that we are good at English if we don't speak well. However, if our writing is bad but our speaking is good, people will really admire us [*laughs*]. That's what he told my class. I think that's true [*laughs*].

(Focus group interview 7, Đoan's group, Class 2B-W, 16 July, 2014,

my translation)

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[42] The student was talking about the raw mark of the English subject in the university entrance examination in Vietnam. The highest mark is one hundred.

It can be seen from the conversation that Thu's belief in English learning is to achieve at least near 'native'-like pronunciation. As she explains, such an accent will help one gain other people's confidence in their English abilities, particularly in jobs such as interpreters. She takes as an example the Turkish students who are studying English at my faculty and Vietnamese at the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies. She retells how people laugh when hearing these students' English because they speak like the Vietnamese speak English. Just prior to this excerpt, Thu expressed her lack of confidence in her own pronunciation although in my perception, her speaking is overall intelligible. She compared herself with a friend of hers who often communicates with foreigners in the neighbourhood and thus speaks English very well. In the extract of conversation above, Thu also quotes a teacher in the faculty who contends that one's pronunciation affects the way other people assess their English capacity.

Thu's belief in the focus group interview echoes her opinions in Lesson 3 when I discussed with the class the notion of 'standard' English. During the discussion Thu related to the way Ban Ki-moon spoke in the video clip that the class watched in an activity earlier in the lesson. She thought that Ban Ki-moon "doesn't speak English very well" and "his voice is not very clear" (her words). To her, 'standard' English was the English spoken by the Americans or British, or people who live in these two countries for a long time. Like Thu, Ca in Class 2B-T thought that Ban Ki-moon's accent was "strange" (her word). During the discussion on what to learn in order to be a good English communicator in Lesson 4, Ca remarked that it was important to have a 'native' accent. She also told that she used to communicate with some Singaporean people and to her, their accent was strange. She admitted that she did not want to talk with them because they could not help her practise English. Earlier in the course, in her profile, Ca stated that one of her goals of studying listening and speaking skills was "having American accent". Unlike Thu, she was more confident in her pronunciation. She knew that one of her strengths was she can "imitate accent of the American".

Different from the issue of listening to different varieties, the importance of which the students were likely to recognise due to the EIL context today, pronunciation seemed to be a fairly controversial aspect in English learning. Some students preferred developing 'native' accents as the goal for study and did not seem to recognise the legitimacy of all Englishes, particularly the Vietnamese variety of English. This behoved me to reconsider my assumptions when drawing on the EIL paradigm and the way I approached different issues of English learning with an EIL perspective, particularly

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with respect to the criteria of clear pronunciation or intelligibility. I discuss this in the next section of the chapter.

7.3. Pedagogical issues in incorporating EIL

In the previous section, I have presented my students' initial perception of EIL as observed by me and my colleague Khuê, and their different perspectives on listening to different varieties of English and the issue of pronunciation – two foci in my teaching plan for EIL. The awareness of EIL in some students and the positive feedback that I received suggest the potential for introducing an EIL perspective into my teaching context. However, the reservations expressed by some students suggested to me that I should look again at how I approached the concept of EIL in my teaching of English. In this section, I discuss some pedagogical issues emerging from my colleagues' comments on my EIL lessons and my own reflection on what happened during the course.

7.3.1. Implicit and/or explicit teaching

Despite their support for the EIL component in my pedagogical framework, from the beginning until the end of the course, my two colleagues were unsure about the approach of teaching explicitly 'about' EIL. They preferred teaching EIL implicitly through exposing the students to different varieties of English. In the discussion regarding my framework in the week before the start of the course, Tiên suggested using interesting video clips with different accents to engage the students' attention:

> Tiên: You have to use clips with interesting content or news that they like to listen to so that they will forget that they are listening to other Englishes [...]. They will have to try to listen in order to get what those *brilliant people* are saying [...] I think your biggest difficulty is how you can get them to listen to different Englishes *unconsciously*[43], and then make them like it *consciously* and recognise the differences. In the first stage, it has to be *unconsciously*. Take my case, for example. When I watched PSY-Gangnam style, I no longer despised Asian accents. I no longer paid attention to languages. Previously I

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[43] During the discussions with my colleagues or the interviews with my students, most of the time they spoke in Vietnamese. However, sometimes they switched to English. For some English words/phrases/sentences that reflect their particular opinions, I keep them in the translation and indicate them by using italics (as I have presented in Section 5.4.2 of Chapter 5).

tended to listen to Westerners only. I mean British or American people speaking RP or GA, not all Westerners. It was not only me. The majority of students tend to do so. Therefore I think the interesting content will make the students forget that they are listening to other varieties. They will concentrate on the content.

(Collegial discussion, Tiên, 7 March, 2014, my translation)

According to Tiên, when watching video clips of "brilliant people" or with "interesting content", the students will be drawn to the clips and over time "unconsciously" come to accept and appreciate accents other than RP and GA. Explicit teaching should, as she proposed, come later. What can be seen from the above extract of conversation and our discussions in the following weeks was Tiên's suggestion of implicit teaching was partly due to her own experience with EIL. Besides her attendance in the EIL lecture given by the guest scholar at my faculty in December 2013 (as noted in Chapter 5), Tiên's support for the EIL paradigm stemmed from her watching video clips on websites such as TED Talks, American Got Talent, and British Got Talent. At first, Tiên only selected video clips with RP and GA in order to improve her pronunciation. However, over time, as she was so interested in the content of some clips and/or so fascinated by the talents of the speakers in the clips, she no longer paid attention to accents. She came to appreciate the diversity of English and realised that it was not necessary to achieve a 'native'-like accent in order to be able to communicate.

In the discussion in the first week of the course, when I presented to Tiên and Khuê my detailed plan for teaching 'about' EIL, they both expressed concern regarding the academic content that I included in the activities such as Kachru's circles, and the two false assumptions about communication in Smith (1981/1983)[44]. Since this was a language skills course rather than a content-based course such as culture or communications, they preferred transferring everything into activities and situations, and posing questions to stimulate the students' thinking about EIL. More importantly, they were afraid that I might impose a particular EIL perspective on my students. As they said:

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[44] According to Smith (1981/1983), "the basic problem in miscommunication is caused by two false assumptions: (1) if a person has native or native-like grammar, lexis, and phonology, appropriate communication will automatically flow; and (2) ways of speaking and discoursal patterns of all fluent speakers of English are the same" (p. v).

Tiên: It seems that you are going to put them into a frame. Not completely like that but you seem to...

Trân: You mean I impose my opinions, right?

Tiên: You overload the students with information. They are like a sheet of blank paper.

[...]

Khuê: For example, you can give them these situations. You don't need to explore much but naturally something will remain in their mind. And then in the following lessons there will be something else and so on...

Tiên: It's like *mưa dầm thấm đất* ['Rome wasn't built in a day'].

Khuê: [...] You start with an activity, but perhaps don't highlight anything in the activity. But from that you can discuss with the students. For example, ask them 'Do you think this situation is funny?', 'what's happening to him?'. And stop there. It's better not to conclude anything.

[...]

Tiên: *You have them watch a lot of movies, a lot of movies in which the main characters are not native, and then you can have them watch a lot of clips like Ban Ki-moon [...] I'm sure they will forget about English the native... hmm.... They don't try to be native-like any more but what they think is what these persons have that make them so successful. So their English are not good but it could do a lot of things. They can become famous. They can help a lot of people. And they can be themselves... and... I don't think that if we try to tell them that I believe this I believe that people believe that you should believe that. I don't think that is a good way.*

(Collegial discussion, Tiên and Khuê, 14 March, 2014, my translation)

Although my intention was to share with my students some debates about EIL in the literature through the activities that I had designed, Tiên and Khuê were concerned that there was too much information for a language skills class and that I might be imposing these ideas on my students. Tiên, in particular, was afraid that I was shaping my

students by telling them what I believed or what was discussed in the EIL literature. They both suggested that I engage my students in some activities and give them some situations to discuss and that I should not provide any theory. Khuê believed these activities and situations might prompt the students more and more to reflect on these issues. She thought that with further activities in subsequent lessons, the students would eventually form some ideas about EIL by themselves. Towards the end of the discussion, Tiên repeated her preference for teaching EIL by exposing the students to a range of Englishes, especially by using video clips of successful 'non-native' speakers.

As I have presented in Chapter 3, exposing students to varieties of English was one approach that I drew on for my teaching. And I had collected movies, and video clips and websites with famous people just as Tiên was suggesting (see Appendix 10). However, in addition to this approach, I believed it was necessary to teach explicitly 'about' EIL. Nevertheless, taking into account Tiên's and Khuê's comments, I made some slight changes to the EIL activities that I had planned such as adjusting the methods of conducting the activities to make them more interactive, preparing more focused questions to ensure my students' comprehension and participation, and avoid including much literature on EIL. Take Kachru's circles, for example. Instead of me presenting Kachru's circles and invoking the discussion in the literature, I prepared a list of countries for the students to first categorise in their own ways and then place into Kachru's circles. Rather than using the concentric circles which are debated in the literature, I used three separate circles and presented them horizontally with the outer circle bigger and the expanding circle even bigger to denote their different populations (see the Power Point slides in section 2.5 in Appendix 10). The use of these circles and numbers was to facilitate the discussion of the questions in the core activity, rather than to focus on the issue of terminology, which I considered, in light of my colleagues' comments, was beyond the scope of my teaching in this project.

Having observed my EIL lessons in Weeks 3 and 4, both Tiên and Khuê expressed more positive attitudes towards the EIL activities for the discussion of the first three EIL questions. Tiên liked the way that I incorporated issues about EIL into a speaking frame and had my students watch some famous people speak different varieties of English. However, they both thought I was starting to impose my perspective on EIL on my students in the discussion of the last two questions, when I moved from the notions of 'standard' English and 'native'-likeness to the concept of 'intelligibility'. In her

observation notes (Figure 7.2), Khuê recounted a situation when she felt I was starting to impose my own views:

Figure 7.2 – Extract 2 from Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 3, 26 March, 2014

As Khuê noted, one student, Long, was talking about the possible failure in communication when people speak different accents; hence, the need to practise a standard accent. To Khuê, the idea was reasonable. The way I responded to Long was, according to Khuê, a kind of imposition. Reading her comment, I listened to the recording of the session to examine my response in that instance:

> Trân: So you mean it will be easier for people to understand if people speak the same accent, the same standard, but if we have different standards or different accents, it's difficult to understand, to communicate. But you have watched Ban Ki-moon clip [...] Can you understand to some extent? Can you understand him? [*pause*] So when you say if we have different accents, people will not be able to communicate?... Now back to the question. Do you think that it's easy to reach the goal of native speaker accent? [*pause*] Can we reach that level, native speaker accent? Hmm... another question. Is it really necessary to do so?... If you don't speak native speaker accent, can you communicate with other people? So is it really necessary?... Hmm... This is what happens in Japan and Korea [*showing the Powerpoint slide about tongue surgery*]. They want to have native accent so they go to the doctor to

have tongue surgery, to cut some little part in the tongue so that they can speak native accent, I mean English...

Students: Oh dear...

Trân: Do you want to do that if you want to have native accent?

Students: Nooo...

Trân: Do you think it's effective?

Long (and some other students): Nooo...

<div style="text-align:center">(Lesson recording, Class 2B-W, Week 3, 26 March, 2014)</div>

What can be seen from the recording was that in response to Long's comment, I referred back to the clip of Ban Ki-moon that the class had watched in a previous activity. I also asked a series of questions and showed them the picture of tongue surgery that some Japanese and Koreans went through in the hope of achieving a 'native'-like accent. On reflection, all of these might be interpreted (as Khuê did) as me imposing on my students the idea that it was not necessary to have 'native'-like accents in order to be able to communicate in English. In addition to Khuê's comment, this particular incident bewildered me during the data analysis and interpretation as I came to learn that Long used to interact with people speaking different varieties of English and thus had what my colleagues and I called EIL attitudes (see Section 7.2.1 above). His advocacy for 'native'-likeness in this particular moment was thus interesting and worth exploring. I return to this point in Section 7.3.2. For the moment, reflecting on this particular incident and what was discussed between my colleagues and me throughout the course has helped me better understand issues related to the approach of teaching 'about' EIL explicitly, as I now present and discuss below.
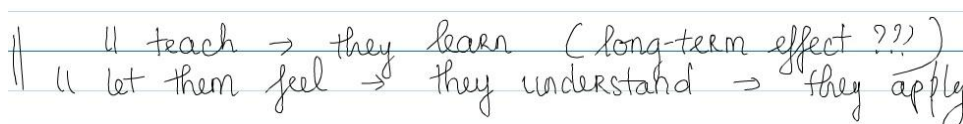
As noted earlier, one first reason for Tiên's and Khuê's preference for teaching EIL implicitly through exposing the students to a variety of Englishes was consistent with Tiên's personal experience. Another reason was their emphasis on this course as a course for developing language skills, rather than a culture or communications course. A third, and most important, reason for their objection to teaching 'about' EIL explicitly was their own belief in teaching in general. In one conversation, Tiên shared with me her agreement with what she read in a study:

<div style="text-align:center">221</div>

In the research, they emphasised that first you need to let them experience a lot of problems and let the students themselves try to overcome that. Finally, the main thing is that we should let them know which way is the best way for them to get out. So after a lot of failures, they see the suggested way from the teacher.

(Collegial discussion, Tiên, 24 March, 2014)

For Tiên, one way of teaching was to let the students experience first and give them guidelines later. Taking this approach, Tiên asserted in our discussion on 4 July (i.e., at the end of the course) that if she and Khuê taught listening and speaking skills in the following semester, they would introduce different varieties to the students "implicitly" (her word).

As for Khuê, in one observation note, she wrote:

Figure 7.3 – Extract from Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 5, 16 April, 2014

Her comment here, together with her suggestion about using situations and activities to raise the students' awareness over time (presented above), reflects her belief in giving the students the chance to come to understand issues by themselves rather than telling them what to think. In a sense, Tiên's and Khuê's teaching beliefs point to their objection to the 'traditional' transmissive teaching approach in Vietnam (see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 in Chapter 2). They reflect the advocacy for pedagogical practices that encourage a more active role on the part of learners in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills.

On the one hand, I appreciate Tiên's and Khuê's objection to the transmitting of knowledge to students and their support for active learning. On the other hand, I hesitate to take their perspective of teaching EIL implicitly first, or only. In my view, it may be interpreted in a sense as a kind of implicit 'imposition' on the students. Through situations, activities and the act of having students listen to different varieties, the teacher can be seen to be indeed transmitting their beliefs and assumptions. However, since this is done implicitly, students may not be fully aware of the teacher's purpose.

Consequently, some may get confused; others may see the point but perhaps not understand the full implications in order to develop their own perspectives. Therefore, the more I reflected on this issue, the more I believed that it is necessary to teach explicitly 'about' EIL from the beginning. With explicit instruction, students are more likely to develop deeper understandings of English and their use of English, and perhaps challenge 'traditional' or assumed beliefs and assumptions.

As I have presented in Chapter 3, in Cummins's (2009b) categorisation of pedagogical orientations, transformative pedagogy builds on and expands both transmission and social constructivist approaches in order to achieve the aim of developing students' critical literacy. It draws on explicit instruction in transmission pedagogy for effective teaching and learning and at the same time co-construction of knowledge between teacher and students in social constructivist orientations. Cummins stresses elsewhere that the framework for developing academic expertise highlights "not just explicit knowledge of how the linguistic code operates but also critical awareness of how language operates within society" (Cummins, 2009a, p. 264). In light of Cummins's (2009a, 2009b) framework, an explicit approach to teaching EIL is essential to help raise students' awareness of the implications of the English as an international language context today.
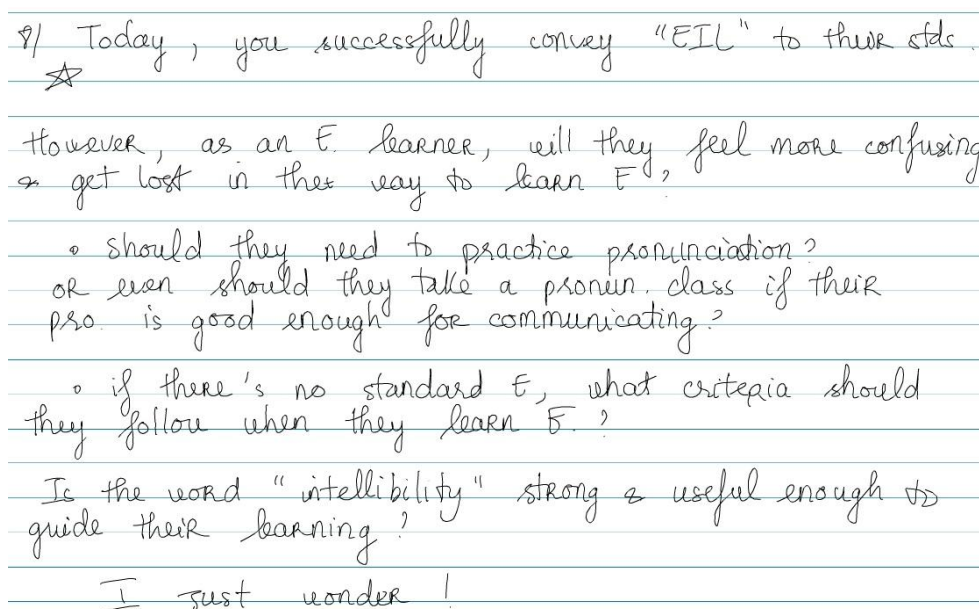
However, I wish to return briefly to the issue of Tiên's and Khuê's concern over what they regarded as my imposing ideas about EIL on my students. My closer scrutiny of the recording of the incident above showed to me my failure to dialogue with Long so as to better understand his position regarding the issue. By taking the approach that I took, I was not encouraging the co-construction of knowledge or critical collaborative inquiry in which I, together with my students, could analyse the social realities (see Cummins, 2009b). I revisit this issue of dialogue and discuss it further in the next section.

To conclude this section, Tiên's and Khuê's support for exposing students to the diversity of English and the favourable feedback from some of my students as presented in Section 7.2 point to the feasibility and usefulness of this approach to EIL in my classroom. As for teaching 'about' EIL, Tiên's and Khuê's positive comments on the way I conducted the activities designed for the discussion of the first three questions suggest the potential of this approach in a language skills class. However, reflecting on their feedback on the way I discussed the last two questions with the students, I began to

appreciate that this could be done in a more dialogic manner to avoid suppressing students' voices and imposing an EIL perspective on them.

7.3.2. Struggles and tensions in teaching EIL

In this section, I discuss the struggles and tensions when incorporating an EIL perspective into my teaching, particularly around the issue of pronunciation. Empowering though this anti-normative paradigm may be in embracing the diversity of English, it is indeed pedagogically challenging. The following questions from my colleague Khuê when she observed the EIL session in Class 2B-W in Week 3 show that there remain several unclear matters with this paradigm in terms of pronunciation teaching:

Figure 7.4 – Extract 3 from Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 3, 26 March, 2014

Khuê anticipated the possible confusion on the part of my students in terms of the goal for practising pronunciation now that I had problematised RP and GA as 'standard' Englishes and celebrated indigenous varieties of English in general and Vietnamese English in particular. Most importantly, she questioned the usefulness of the notion of 'intelligibility' in guiding students' learning.

The issues raised by Khuê to some extent were demonstrated when quite a number of students in my classes were still concerned about their pronunciation. Take Long, for example. As I have presented in Section 7.2.1, Long was one of the students identified

by my colleague Khuê as having EIL attitudes. This was due to his frequently spending time wandering in the parks to talk to people from different countries. Despite his confidence in communicating in English, he was always worried about his pronunciation. As he shared with me in one of our chats via Facebook, he was always afraid that people could not understand him, not only in English but also in Vietnamese, for he came from a province in Vietnam with a particular accent. Although he recounted one occasion when he could get his message across to his friends very well in his Reading-Writing-Grammar class by speaking slowly and clearly as I used to advise, he was still concerned that his accent was too strong for others to understand.

In addition, some students wrote in their feedback at the end of the lessons that they expected me to correct their pronunciation. I should point out that from my observation, some students' pronunciation was indeed not clear enough for others to understand. Seeing the need for them to improve their pronunciation and considering the limited time in class, I suggested forming a pronunciation group meeting on a day other than the class session. (I put forward the idea in Class 2B-W first to see how it worked before deciding whether to do the same in Class 2B-T. After the experience in Class 2B-W as will be seen shortly, I decided not to try the idea in Class 2B-T.) Surprisingly, although I made it clear to Class 2B-W that this group was intended for students whose pronunciation was not intelligible enough, some students whose pronunciation was fairly clear still joined the group. Đoan, for example, was one of the students who wholeheartedly welcomed the concept of 'intelligibility' as analysed in Section 7.2.3 above. In my perception, her pronunciation was good enough for communicating with most people. Nevertheless, she was eager to join the pronunciation group. This justifies my colleague's doubt about the term "intelligibility". Useful though the concept is at the theoretical level as proposed by Smith (1981/1983) to argue against the 'native' speaker standards in the EIL context, further research is still needed into its practical implications for teaching and learning English. Even in Nelson's book in 2011, *Intelligibility in World Englishes: Theory and application*, which comprehensively discusses Smith's concept and the relevant frameworks by other scholars, few practical guidelines can be found. As intelligibility partly depends on the listener's perception and it is increasingly difficult to predict with whom the students will communicate in today's globalising world, the concept seems to be a vague base for them to practise pronunciation.

The issues relating to the concept of 'intelligibility' as analysed above and the preference for 'native' or near 'native'-like accents by some students as discussed in Section 7.2.3 have prompted me to rethink the assumptions underlying my pedagogical choices in terms of EIL. As presented in Section 3.5.2 in the Conceptual Framework Chapter, with the two selected approaches, I hoped to help raise my students' awareness of the EIL context and promote equal recognition of different varieties of English. I also hoped this would help enhance their confidence in their own way of speaking English. Although I was aware that with a short 'intervention' into a language skills course, I would not be able to change the perspectives of all of my students, the way I articulated the assumptions when drawing on the EIL paradigm reflects a linear or positivistic view of teaching and learning – that is, if I applied the EIL paradigm, there would be some changes, at least in some of my students. The moments when I struggled to convey the EIL perspective, which were remarked by my colleagues as moments when I was imposing (such as the incident with Long as noted in Section 7.3.1), suggest I needed to re-think some aspects of my approach to EIL issues.

Reflecting back now on those moments and some of the comments from my colleagues and students, I came to realise I had perhaps overlooked the impact of what Bakhtin or Medvedev (1978/1991) calls the *ideological environment* that my students and I were working in. As Bakhtin/Medvedev (1978/1991) contends, "human consciousness does not come into contact with existence directly, but through the medium of the surrounding ideological world" (p. 14). This ideological environment – including the family, the school, the workplace and other communities or networks – "mediates a person's ideological becoming and offers opportunities that allow the development of this essential part of our being" (S. W. Freeman & Ball, 2004, p. 6). This environment is "a heteroglot world of competing discourses in which [one] must find their way" (Doecke & Kostogriz, 2008, p. 77). As I have explained in Section 3.2.2 of the Conceptual Framework Chapter, Bakhtin (1981) uses the concept of 'heteroglossia' to refer to the dynamic interaction among multiple voices and discourses from the past and in the present. In teaching and learning, when students enter the classroom, they bring in with them discourses and routines that they have been exposed to and have internalised through their previous learning and living experience. When they encounter different discourses and routines in the classroom, they will invariably experience struggles and tensions, and this is an essential part of the process of developing their own ideological beliefs.

Through close scrutiny of the conversation between me and the two students Đoan and Thu as presented in Section 7.2.3, I have drawn attention to the tensions between different discourses operating in the conversation. While Đoan and I were talking about 'intelligibility', Thu expressed her preference for 'native'- or at least near 'native'-speaker accents. The small stories recounted by Thu brought to the foreground the native-speakerist discourses by other people around her, including her previous classmates and one of her former teachers at EF.

The incident with Long as recounted in Section 7.3.1 also reveals the impact of the old discourses of native-speakerism. Despite having developed some EIL attitudes out of his own personal experience, Long nonetheless expressed his advocacy for practising 'native'-like accent in order to communicate successfully. The discussion of the notion of 'intelligibility' earlier in this section discloses his lack of confidence in his own way of speaking English. Interestingly, in that incident with Long in Section 7.3.1, the observation notes by my colleague Khuê also reveal her support for Long's view (see Figure 7.2 in that section). Admittedly, we teachers also experienced a similar tension in our views and routines.

In one discussion, my colleague Tiên also disclosed that in spite of her awareness of EIL, she still practised pronunciation based on 'native' speaker standards. For my part, when correcting the pronunciation of some vocabulary during the class sessions or when reviewing the English sounds with the pronunciation group, I too found myself basing my 'correcting' rigidly on RP, which I had been trained in and which I had been practising and teaching for many years. Reflecting on these moments, I realise that I spoke about these pronunciations as if English is "a monolithic and static one" rather than a "pluralistic and dynamic entity" (Matsuda, 2012a, p. 169). There was one particular incident during the review of the English sounds with the pronunciation group which struck me how deeply entrenched the old discourses, and in this case, practices could be. Below was my account of the incident in my research journal in the evening of that day:

> There was one critical incident in the pronunciation session this morning which startled me to find myself subconsciously clinging to my old practices of teaching pronunciation. I was reviewing the consonant sounds with the group. When it came to the sound /l/, I tried to help the group see the difference between dark /l/ and clear /l/. As I was getting the students to

practise dark /l/, Nhiên suddenly asked, "Teacher, is it really necessary to get it right? If we speak it the same way as clear /l/, it's still OK, right?". I was genuinely taken aback by the question and said to myself, "Gosh".

<div align="right">(Research journal, 16 May, 2014)</div>

In the incident, Nhiên's question made me realise that I was trying to get the students to pronounce exactly as the British people would say. In doing so, I was practising against the notion of 'intelligibility' that I discussed with the student. Overall, reflecting on what transpired during the two EIL lessons and the review session with the pronunciation group, I came to realise that I had been trying to convey (sometimes to the extent of being dogmatic) to my students the new discourses (i.e., of EIL), but at some points I would subconsciously switch back to the old discourses and routines, based on the 'native'-like model. This shows the tensions that I experienced when shifting ideologies.

What has been shown so far in the discussion is the lure of the old language of native-speakerism that my students and I had been exposed to in tension with our intention to work with the new ideology of EIL that I was introducing into my classes. This tension between these discourses mediated how we developed our understanding of the world. For my students, the tensions between different discourses were likely to continue into their future learning experiences, as anticipated by my colleague Khuê when she observed my review with Class 2B-W of the main points discussed in the EIL sessions:

> What if their next speaking teacher pulls them back again to the idea of "speaking standard English"? Will your students confidently argue for EIL trend with their teacher?

<div align="right">(Khuê's observation notes, Class 2B-W, Week 5, 16 April, 2014)</div>

In my discussion thus far, it might appear that I am casting a negative light on the notion of tensions. However, in Bakhtin's view, "the social interactions that are most effective in promoting learning are those that are filled with tension and conflict" (S. W. Freedman & Ball, 2004, p. 6). To understand tension and conflict and hence to come to new understandings, an "ongoing dialogic process" is needed (p. 6). In the context of teaching and learning, Doecke and Kostogriz (2008) insist that "to challenge ideology can never be a matter of simply persuading people to think otherwise" (p. 82). Drawing

on Giroux's (1988) concept of *transformative intellectuals*, they suggest teachers "enable their students to critically engage with the conditions of their lives and thereby achieve a better sense of their possibilities as human beings and members of a larger community" (p. 82). Adopting this proposal for the teaching of EIL, Marlina (2013) highlights the need to "inquire into, bring forward, or discuss openly the range of discourses that have prompted students to experience" struggles and tensions (p. 336). In light of the work of these scholars, reflecting on the EIL sessions in my classes and my colleagues' comments, I have come to realise the lack of space for an open discussion where my students and I could reflect on and inquire into the discourses underlying our perspectives of teaching and learning English. Such a dialogue might have helped each of us to better find our own way in this heteroglot world of competing discourses.

To sum up, in this chapter I have presented and discussed what transpired when I endeavoured to incorporate elements of an EIL pedagogy into my teaching during the fieldwork in Vietnam. On the one hand, some comments from my students and colleagues, together with my own observation of the teaching and learning process, suggest the possibility and necessity of introducing the EIL paradigm into my teaching contexts. On the other hand, my reflection on different fragments of data point to the need to reframe some aspects of the two approaches that I drew on – that is, exposing students to varieties of English, and teaching 'about' EIL. Regarding the first approach, the support from my colleagues for and the positive feedback that I received from several students on the listening of Englishes other than RP and GA show the feasibility of this approach. However, the struggle on the part of some students indicates the importance of providing sufficient support to these students when designing and conducting activities. As for teaching 'about' EIL, reflecting on the ongoing discussion with my colleagues throughout the course regarding implicit and/or explicit teaching and the struggles and tensions that my students and I myself experienced, I have come to appreciate the need to adopt a more dialogic approach and encourage my students to engage with me in an inquiry into different discourses that are shaping our teaching and learning process.

In the next and last discussion chapter, I reflect on the whole journey of developing my practices and reconceptualising my pedagogical framework for teaching English in my particular context.

Chapter 8: Reframing Understandings and Practices

In the previous two discussion chapters, I have narrated my journey of coming to understand the pedagogical values of the Vietnamese language in an English classroom and the possibility of incorporating an EIL perspective in my teaching context. In this final discussion chapter, I reflect back on my whole journey of reframing my pedagogical understandings and practices, drawing together the stories in the previous two chapters and some other fragments of data. I divide the discussion into three sections focusing on:

i) my reframed pedagogy based on the pedagogical framework developed in Chapter 3 and the understandings which emerged through the PhD journey;

ii) my growing understanding of the knowledge base for teaching English in Vietnam; and

iii) the process of developing my practices as an English teacher in a Vietnamese university.

I emphasise that this division into sections is provisional only; the sections serve usefully as interconnected units of analysis. Across the sections I weave in discussions of the mediating influence of various social, cultural, historical and institutional contexts and my own personal history. These sections address, though they do not completely correlate to, the research questions as presented in Chapter 4. At this point in the thesis, it is worth reiterating those research questions, before I begin my discussion of each section:

Main research question: How can I develop my practices as an English language teacher in a Vietnamese university?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam?

2. What is a potential pedagogical framework for teaching English in my own tertiary context and how has the development of this framework helped to shape my knowledge building as a practitioner?

3. How do the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and my own personal history mediate the development of my practices?

8.1. Emergent pedagogical framework

This first section looks at the pedagogical framework that I have presented in Chapter 3. I provisionally structure the section around the two dimensions in Gore's (1993) conception of 'pedagogy' – that is, a social vision and the particular types of instruction required to realise the social vision. For the second dimension, I begin my presentation and discussion by looking at the three focus areas in Cummins's (2001) framework for academic language learning: focus on language, meaning and use. I then incorporate into the framework the new understandings which emerged from the previous discussion chapters – that is, the need for a dialogic approach to teaching EIL and the value of translanguaging as a pedagogical lens.

8.1.1. Social vision for language education

In starting my discussion of this emergent framework, I want to focus on the crucial extended discussion between Tiên and me before the beginning of the course I was teaching, in which I discussed with her my pedagogical framework and teaching plans. In that conversation, Tiên shared with me her views on the role of the Vietnamese language and the incorporation of EIL in an English class, which I have presented in the previous two chapters. In the course of that one-and-a-half-hour conversation, Tiên reflected on different incidents in her learning, teaching and personal life through which she came to find for herself an answer to the question: what is the purpose of teaching/learning English? In the extract below, she starts her reflection by reading aloud the definition of identity in Cummins's framework, which I was showing her. She proceeds to narrate some of her experiences which pertain to this framework:

> Tiên: '*Identity, how people understand their relationship to the world.*' When I was at university, I just studied what the teachers gave me. […] I tried to get good marks but I didn't have a clear purpose in learning English. I learnt English as an end, not as a means. […] When I attended international conferences, I realised my pronunciation was good but I could hardly communicate. After those conferences, I asked myself why on earth I learnt English. What is my purpose of learning English? Afterwards, I realised that English helped me… thanks to English I could access knowledge. For example, thanks to English I knew what global child is. Thanks to English I learnt new teaching methods from the website that I had read. Thanks to

English I knew lots of things. I realised English helped me see the world. I then realised my responsibilities as an English learner and a language teacher. I now feel a strong sense of responsibility towards my students. […] Now learning English is, for me, not simply learning grammar or attaining good pronunciation. Learning English is to use English to obtain more knowledge, to explore the world out there. […] I wish my previous teachers directed me that way. For them, English was an end, not a means. I can see that many teachers now do not realise this issue. If they do, it's just a vague idea from their personal experience. They may say that they not only teach English but also help students develop as a whole person. But it seems that it is just a spontaneous thought. […] After listening to that speaker [in the CamTESOL conference that she attended earlier in the year] we [i.e., she and Khuê] realised that the trend now is English as a means, not an end… and the purpose is very clear. It helps bring people closer to understand one another better. It helps enhance national pride, like you just said […].

(Collegial discussion, Tiên, 7 March, 2014, my translation)

In this extract of the conversation (and throughout the whole discussion), Tiên keeps repeating the question regarding the purpose of teaching/learning English. The question in many ways resonates with the social dimension in Gore's (1993) conception of 'pedagogy' that I have presented in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3. It concerns what social vision the teacher is holding, and how this vision informs the kind of instruction that (s)he is using in the classroom. To borrow Cummins's (2001) words, it is the "image of our own identities as educators", the "image of the identity options we highlight for our students" and the "image of the society we hope our students will help form" (p. 17). For me, this goes to the heart of what it means to teach English, which underpins so much of the conceptual work of this PhD project.

What can be seen in the extract is a change in Tiên's view on the purpose of learning English; she came to regard English as a means rather than an end in itself. With this shift in her perspective, Tiên starts to realise different goals of teaching in addition to the development of English in learners. They include, as can be seen partly in the extract above and also throughout the discussion of her opinions regarding the role of Vietnamese in Chapter 6, enhancing the students' national identities, teaching them how to learn, promoting critical thinking and developing them as a whole person. These

teaching goals resonate with the discourses by the Vietnamese government and scholars researching into ELT in particular and education in general in Vietnam which I have presented in Chapter 2. The Vietnamese government on the one hand embraces multilingualism and multiculturalism, but on the other, is trying to preserve Vietnamese national identity. This is also a pressing issue discussed among scholars researching into the Vietnamese context in light of the current status of English as an international language. In the recent reforms in ELT in particular and in education in general in Vietnam, increased attention has been paid to such qualities as active learning, critical thinking, responsibility, and citizenship. These goals are also reflected in my discussion of the educational philosophy *Giáo dục toàn diện – Khai phóng – Đa văn hóa* (Whole person – Liberal – Multicultural Education) at Ho Chi Minh University, and the mission of educating lifelong learners and global citizens at the English Faculty – the research site of this project.

Interestingly, despite these discourses, it seems, as can be inferred from Tiên's remark, that most teachers tend to neglect these goals in the process of trying to help learners develop their English capacity. I return to this point later in Section 8.1.2 and discuss it in light of my analysis in Chapter 6 regarding translanguaging. I now commence exploring the particular types of instruction that help attain these educational goals by looking at the three focus areas in Cummins's framework first.

8.1.2. Instruction

In this section, I present and discuss the instructional practices useful for realising the social vision of language education mentioned above. As indicated earlier, I provisionally divide the section into three sub-sections: (i) focus on language, meaning and use; (ii) EIL and a dialogic approach to teaching and learning; and (iii) translanguaging as pedagogy.

Focus on language, meaning and use

In developing the teaching programme for the whole course, in addition to the attention to the students' L1 (which I have discussed in Chapter 6), I drew on other dimensions in Cummins's (2001) framework in order to construct (with my students) the activities and tasks. These are the three focus areas of instruction: focus on language, focus on meaning and focus on use (see Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3). These three foci had, in fact, been incorporated to some degree in my previous pedagogical practices for teaching

listening and speaking. In my previous teaching years, drawing on my knowledge and the activities/tasks in the textbooks, I also created opportunities for students to, for example, build up their vocabulary (and grammar, where necessary), activate their prior knowledge and connect it with the lessons, and use the language through interacting with one another in pair work, group work, and whole class activities. However, looking back on those teaching years, I realise that most of the time I mainly aimed to help students to listen or speak as much as possible in order to improve their language fluency. I gave only sporadic attention to the formal aspects of the language in some activities/tasks. With hindsight, I have come to realise that this unbalanced attention to language forms and meaning/use in my previous classes seemed to reflect the concern over Vietnamese learners' limited capacity to communicate in English, as I have discussed in Section 2.2.2 in Chapter 2. It is partly the need to improve communicative competence in Vietnamese learners of English and the discontent with Grammar-Translation Method that have led to the popularity of CLT in Vietnam. This emphasis on language as a skill and the development of oral fluency can still be seen fairly recently in N. H. Nguyen's (2013) presentation on the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* by the Vietnamese government.

This unbalanced focus seems to be due to a misconception of CLT, as analysed by Spada (2007). In her review of the myths and misconceptions of CLT, Spada (2007) points out that the approach was originally developed to "*include communication*", rather than to "exclude form" (p. 276-277, original emphasis). However, in practice it has come to be interpreted as exclusively focusing on meaning (and use), which has led to the ambiguous place of language forms in the teaching and learning process. Spada, however, highlights the increasing attention to achieving a balance between forms and meaning in the language classroom. In his instructional framework, Cummins (2001) draws a close connection between focus on language and focus on meaning and use. More importantly, in situating the framework in transformative pedagogy, Cummins stresses critical awareness of how language works, deep understanding of content, and opportunities for students to use language in powerful ways in these three focus areas. In this PhD project, drawing on Cummins's framework, I took into consideration these areas of instruction and paid closer attention to the critical aspects in the instruction when adapting my previous teaching practices and the activities/tasks in the textbooks, and designing some new activities/tasks for the teaching course. I now present and

discuss some of these activities/tasks and provisionally structure them around the three focus areas.

Focus on language

In light of the 'focus on language' component in Cummins's framework, during the course I tried to create opportunities to develop the students' awareness of how language works as a system and in society. The students were encouraged to consult different dictionaries for the meanings, pronunciations, word families, synonyms/antonyms and uses for any words that they did not know or were unsure of. They were also encouraged to reflect on words and structures that they came across in their listening (and reading) and everyday experiences.

Below is an extract from the portfolio of one student in Class 2B-W in which she noted down, in preparation for the lesson on ceremonies, the definitions of "ceremony", "celebration" and "ritual" in an Oxford dictionary, her personal understanding about the differences between these three words, and another use of the word "ritual" that she observed elsewhere:

Figure 8.1 – Extract 1 from Miên's portfolio, Class 2B-W

Another example of focus on language forms is the assignment I set the students on loan words[45] as a follow-up to the listening task that the students did in Week 2. In that task, they listened to a lecture in which the speaker identified some words that have come into English from other languages. I then asked the students to search for more examples of loan words and calques. Here is an extract from the portfolio of a student in Class 2B-T:

Language	Borrowing	Calque (Loan translation)	Meaning	Example
Vietnamese		Sticky rice cake	traditional Vietnamese rice cake which is made from glutinous rice, mung bean, pork and other ingredients	Vietnamese people eat sticky rice cake at Tet
Vietnamese		Rice paper	food includes white rice flour, tapioca flour, salt, and water	Rice paper is used as wrapper for spring roll
Japanese	bonsai		A small tree that is grown in a pot and prevented reaching to its normal size	Bonsai is a type of art in Japan
Chinese	mahjong		A Chinese game played with small pieces of wood with symbols on them	Mahjong is a fun game

Figure 8.2 – Extract from Thắng's portfolio, Class 2B-T

The assignment aimed to help the students appreciate the ways in which languages change and how different languages borrow words from one another. Indeed, this awareness can be seen in the following comment by Miên in her self-assessment log[46] at the end of the lesson:

Think about the topics and activities in this chapter and complete the statements.
In this chapter, I learned something new about *English* words that originated from other countries and I found out that there are quite a number of words called "untranslatable words."

Figure 8.3 – Extract 2 from Miên's portfolio, Class 2B-W

During some listening sessions in class, and particularly for the intensive listening section in the listening learning log[47] that the students completed at home, I encouraged them to analyse the listening texts after they had finished the listening exercises. This

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[45] The activity was adapted from Siemund, Davydova, & Maier (2012).
[46] At the end of each unit in the textbooks, there is a self-assessment log for helping students reflect on what they have learnt. I encouraged my students to complete it for their portfolio.
[47] See the explanation of the listening learning log in Appendix 5.

was not only for them to learn about the formal aspects of the language, but also to come to understand the construction of standardised listening tests. Although my focus in the course was to involve students in meaningful meaning-making process through such activities as role-play, discussion and interviewing, there was still space for attending to how to deal with standardised tests. I was conscious that my faculty drew on these to assess the students' proficiency in English in the final exams. I felt obliged to help the students prepare for these tests, and I also wanted to prepare them for future endeavours which involved taking standardised tests when applying for a scholarship or a job. In a sense, standardised tests can be regarded as one particular genre of language which learners need to be familiar with for their academic success, especially at school (Cummins, 2001). By analysing these texts, the students could develop better awareness of the conventions of this genre. In the extract below, Mộng – one student in Class 2B-W – commented on the way the IELTS test designers used synonyms/paraphrases in the questions and the listening text:

Figure 8.4 – Extract from Mộng's log, Class 2B-W

For the extensive section of the listening learning log, my students were allowed to freely express their ideas after listening rather than doing some exercises as in the intensive section. Although most of the time my students tended to summarise what they had heard and/or write about their feelings about the content that they had listened to – and this was a valuable part of the task – they sometimes noted down some formal

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aspects of the language that they found interesting. In the following example, the student was interested in the speaker's accent and tried to find out what it was:

Figure 8.5 – Extract from Cát's log, Class 2B-W

The website noted in the extract was one of the websites that I recommended to the students for listening to different varieties of English. Interestingly, Cát used the archive in the website to find out what accent the speaker in the YouTube clip was speaking with. She seemed to enjoy comparing the speaker's accent with the Indian English accents in the archive and planned to practise listening to more varieties in her log.

Speaking of the diversity of the English language, the EIL sessions discussed in Chapter 7 were also an attempt to help raise my students' awareness of how language works in their everyday life. In addition to the EIL sessions and my encouraging them to listen to different Englishes as part of the extensive listening section in the log, one of the options that I suggested for group work in my syllabus was choosing a particular variety of English for a small research project (see Appendices 4 and 5). One group of students in Class 2B-W chose this option. The group conducted a search on the Internet and then gave a presentation in class regarding the history of the English language in India and the peculiarities of Indian English. Below is one slide in their presentation (Figure 8.6):

Figure 8.6 – A Powerpoint slide from the presentation on Indian English by Ninh's group, Class 2B-W

As Cummins (2001) suggests, for effective development of academic expertise, focus on language forms needs to be linked with the other two aspects of instruction, namely focus on meaning and use. In my classes, I sought to give the students ample opportunities to process meaningful language and to use the language in varied oral and written modes.

Focus on meaning

For focus on meaning, one particular important activity/task I set for the students was to activate their prior knowledge. This activation of the students' existing cognitive schemata was crucial for them in the process of interpreting the new information in a listening text or participating in the discussion of a given topic. I was encouraged by Cummins's argument that it helped "[increase students'] cognitive engagement and [enable] them to function at an intellectually and linguistically higher level" (Cummins, 2001, p. 129).

Techniques such as diagrams, KWL[48] charts, and free-writes were introduced to my students in Weeks 2 and 3. The students were then encouraged to practise activating their knowledge in their portfolio when preparing for the lessons. This was to give the students, particularly those with limited English capacity, more time to think when they did it at home, and more time to share their knowledge with their friends in class. Also,

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[48] "K", "W" and "L" stand for "What I know", "What I want to find out", and "What I have learned and still need to learn" respectively.

this permitted them to take more control of their own learning. In the example below, Thi, a student in Class 2B-T, brainstormed vocabulary/ideas related to the topic "Money matters". As can be seen in the extract, when activating her prior knowledge at home, Thi could search for the English equivalent of the Vietnamese phrase *khủng hoảng kinh tế* by herself:

Figure 8.7 – Extract from Thi's portfolio, Class 2B-T

Another example was Nhã's use of KWL chart to brainstorm what she already knew (K) about the topic "Cooperation and competition" and what she would like to know more (W):

Figure 8.8 – Extract 1 from Nhã's portfolio, Class 2B-W
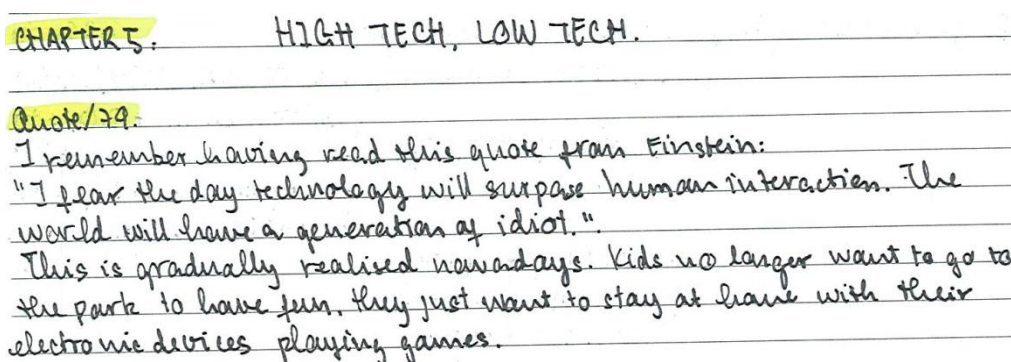
When completing the self-assessment log, Nhã stated what she had just learnt about the topic (L) after completing the portfolio for that unit and attending the lesson in class (Figure 8.9):

In this chapter, I learned something new about: Should we have competition in every situation or we should combine cooperation and competition.
I especially liked topic: How to cooperate and compete in an effective way.

Figure 8.9 – Extract 2 from Nhã's portfolio, Class 2B-W

In addition to using diagrams and KWL charts, the students were also allowed to free-write what they thought about a given topic. Miên, for instance, recalled a quote by Einstein in relation to the topic "High tech, low tech" and linked it with one negative impact of technology that she could observe:

CHAPTER 5.   HIGH TECH, LOW TECH.

Quote/79.
I remember having read this quote from Einstein:
"I fear the day technology will surpass human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiot."
This is gradually realised nowadays. Kids no longer want to go to the park to have fun, they just want to stay at home with their electronic devices playing games.

Figure 8.10 – Extract 3 from Miên's portfolio, Class 2B-W

As importantly, in addition to activating their prior knowledge, the students were encouraged to search for more information if they knew little about a particular topic or issue. Long, for example, made use of the Internet to build up background knowledge regarding how to maintain the happiness in the family. The way he organised the information on a website into a diagram (see Figure 8.11) shows that he was not merely learning the language but trying to process the ideas in a meaningful manner:
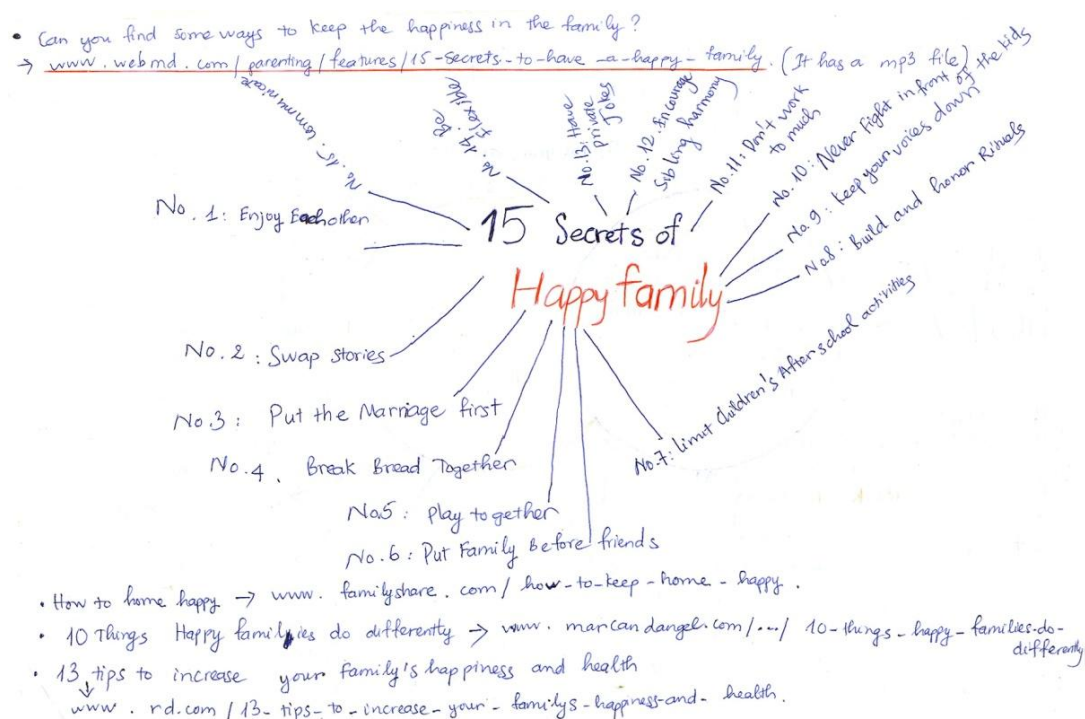
Figure 8.11 – Extract from Long's portfolio, Class 2B-W

The second emphasis in the process of developing critical literacy in Cummins's framework is the critical analysis of the information in the (reading) text. Since the focus of instruction in the teaching contexts where Cummins developed his framework was reading and writing in English, he emphasised the importance of going beyond literal comprehension of the reading text to a deeper level of cognitive and linguistic processing. However, as the course in my PhD project focused on listening and speaking in English, I tended to encourage students to use higher-order thinking in speaking activities, particularly in topic discussion – one main activity in class – rather than in analysing the listening texts. This was because most of the listening materials in class were the lectures in the textbooks and listening tasks in IELTS/TOEFL materials. As these texts were designed with the aim of helping students develop note-taking and test-taking skills, they tended to be factual in nature and thus did not offer much material or potential for analysis.

Another emphasis in Cummins's discussion of focus on meaning is the important role of extensive reading in the development of reading comprehension. In my listening and speaking course, the students were encouraged to listen to a great number and variety of English language examples for the extensive listening section in the listening learning log. For this section, they were free to choose the materials (and thus topics/content) appropriate to their interests and levels. Instead of answering some fixed questions after

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listening, they could freely write their thoughts about what they had listened to, as can be seen in the example below:
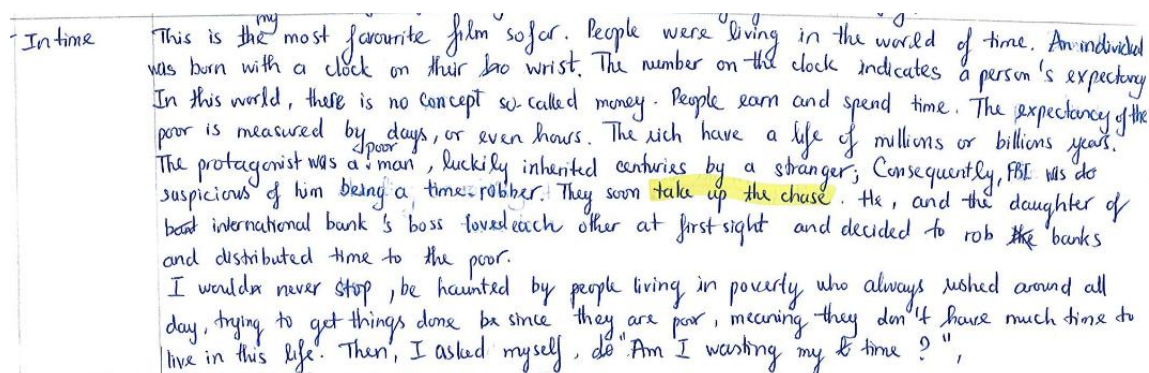
Figure 8.12 – Extract from Diệp's log, Class 2B-W

As the extract illustrates, in extensive listening, the students had opportunities to process language which was meaningful to them. Furthermore, everything they listened to could become input for their language learning. In the above example, Diệp learnt to use the phrase "take up the chase" when summarising the film she had watched. Last but not least, it can be seen that there was not only a focus on meaning or messages but also an opportunity for the students to learn to express their understanding, thinking, and feeling through language. I continue with this benefit of the listening log in the discussion of 'focus on use' below.

Focus on use

Although the main purpose of extensive listening was to help develop the students' listening comprehension, some students used this as a time and place to interact with me. For example, in the first extract in Figure 8.13 below, instead of analysing the TOEIC[49] listening test that she had just done for the intensive listening section, Trinh wrote about her experience of interviewing foreigners for the group work. It seemed that she wanted to share her feelings about the encounter with me. In the second extract, she asked me to recommend some materials for practising and developing reading skills.

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[49] Test of English for International Communication

Figure 8.13 – Extracts from Trinh's log, Class 2B-W

I chose to see the listening learning log as being like a dialogue journal, which Cummins (2001) suggests as a way to encourage learners to write in a communicative manner. The log offered a space for "personal interaction" between my students and me where my students were inspired to express themselves and where I could offer "affirmation and guidance" (p. 147). I found out later that this was indeed one reason why many students liked the log. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the focus group interview with Mộng's group when I asked them what they liked best in the course:

> Mộng: Hmm… the learning log. I like the learning log 'cos I can set time to listen and hmm… sometime I can watch film. Sometimes when I write and then someone can read it… for example, teacher [you][50] [laughs. *The other group members laugh as well*].

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[50] In the Vietnamese language, students address female teachers as *Cô* and male teachers as *Thầy*, the literal English translation of which is "teacher". In this extract, instead of addressing me as "you" in English, the students used the word "teacher".

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Trân: So you have... readers?

Mộng: Yes.

Hương: And the comments from you [*laughs. The other members laugh as well in agreement*]. Because I… hmm… we have… many problem in learning listening. The teacher [you]… often don't have enough time in class… to listen our problem. Hmm we write on the paper… just like a secret [*laughs, again, together with the other students as before*]. And the teacher [you] read.

(Focus group discussion, Mộng's group, Class 2B-W, 2 July, 2014)

It is worth noting here that the interview with this group was mostly conducted in English although the students freely switched to Vietnamese whenever they found it hard to express their ideas in English. They told me that they wished to talk with me in English, which was interesting given that most of the members in the group had limited speaking skills and used to be fairly shy whenever it came to speaking. In the extract, the group expressed their appreciation of the two-way communication via the log, especially because they could share their problems in learning and I could read and give comments and suggestions.

In addition to the listening learning log, I set various activities/tasks to involve the students in more extended uses of English. One example was the poster presentations, where students freely moved around the classroom, looked at the poster prepared by each group and talked with the group's representatives about the content in the poster. An example is given below (Figure 8.14):
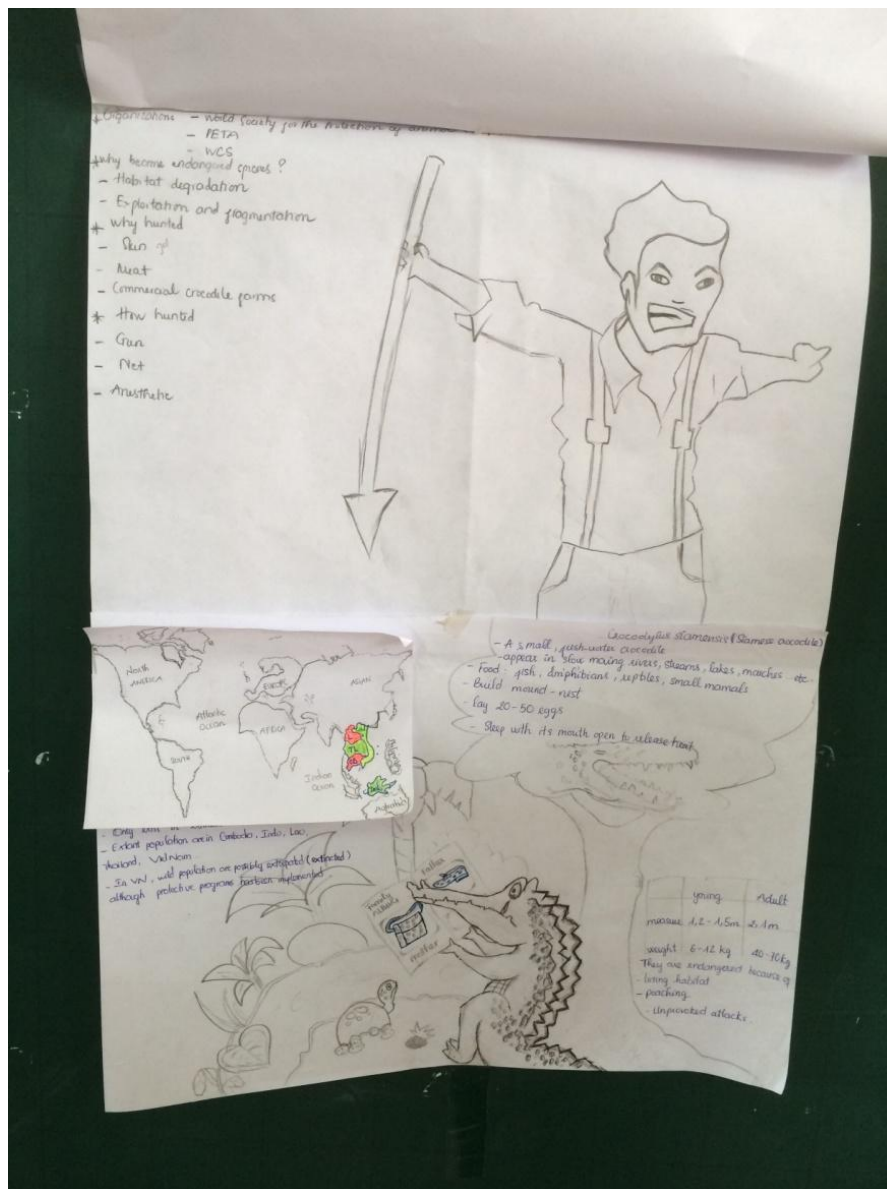
Figure 8.14 – The poster on the Siamese crocodile prepared by Nga's group, Class 2B-W

In place of the speaking activity about the topic of whale hunting in the Unit "Cooperation and competition" in the textbook *Mosaic 1*, I suggested that each group of students search for information about an endangered species in Vietnam and prepare a poster about that species to share in class. With this task, the students undertook different activities such as searching and synthesising information, drawing, speaking and listening to one another. They created multimodal texts and engaged in multimodal communication, as advocated by Cummins (2009b). To put it differently, they made full use of their linguistic and non-linguistic repertoire to get and share knowledge. Miên – a student in Class 2B-W – called the poster session "an art exhibition", whereas Đan referred to it as *hội chợ kiến thức* (a knowledge fair). Another student, Hương,

commented in the focus group interview that "the content of the poster is very useful" and "it's related to the important problem in our world".

Another example of activities that involved active and authentic language use was those the students did for their group work, including acting as tour guides and introducing different tourist attractions in the city, interviewing people from other countries about a topic, conducting a discussion in class about a topic based on the themes of the units in the textbooks, drama/role-play, and researching a particular variety of English (which I have mentioned earlier). The students (in groups) were allowed to choose (with my guidance) the activities that suited their preferences and abilities (a summary of these activities is provided in Appendix 5). As in the poster presentation mentioned above, in the preparation and conduction of these activities, the students made use of their developing repertoire of language practices to get and analyse information, and to create numerous texts in multimodal form - written, spoken, visual, or dramatic. For instance, the first extract in Figure 8.15 below shows how a group of students in Class 2B-W built up their background knowledge for the interviews about street children. And in the second extract, they are synthesising the information obtained from the interviews in preparation for the presentation in front of the whole class:
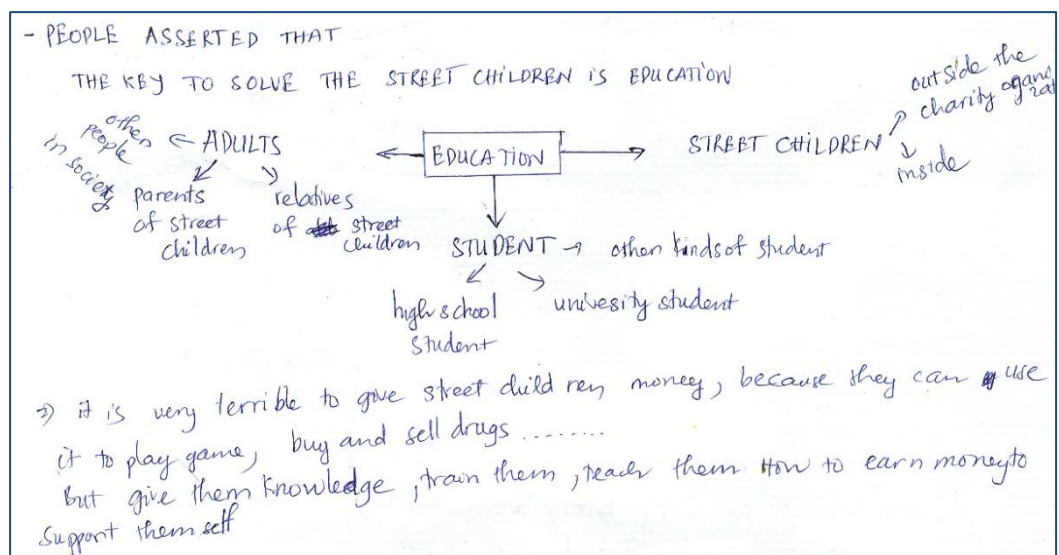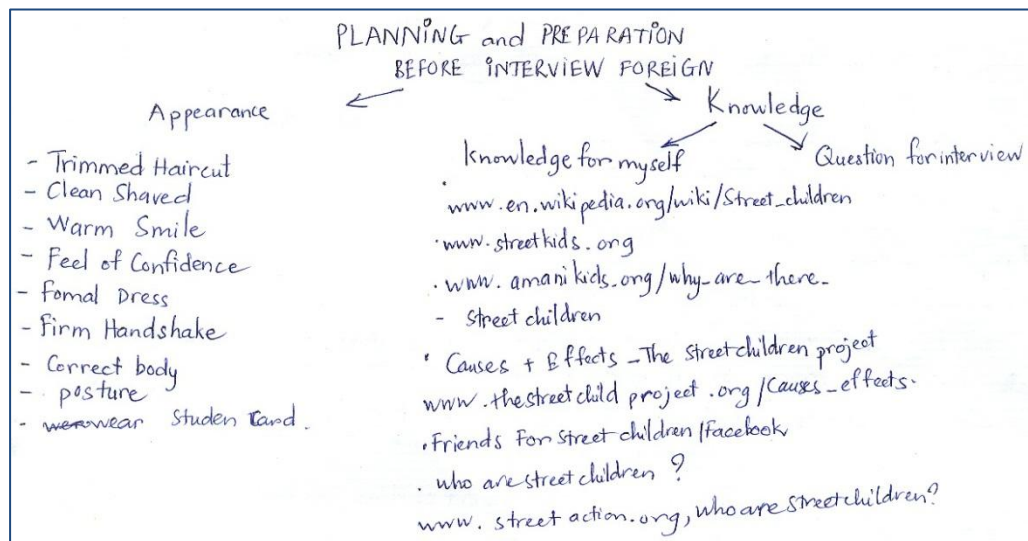
Figure 8.15 – Extracts from the documents generated in the interview activity
by Đông's group, Class 2B-W

Concerned about the issue of street children in Vietnam (and elsewhere), the group later
wrote a play based on the story "The little match girl" by Hans Andersen and performed
it in front of the class. They ended the play with a note to their classmates that there
were still many street children around in the city and all over the world. Below is an
extract from the play (without corrections) (Figure 8.16):

Boy1: Hey, do you think she is still here?

Boy2: Like hell she is, I bet she has gone crying somewhere hahaha.

Boy1: Uwah!!!

Boy2: What the… wahh!!

Boy2: this is bad, let's call the police

Relized what happened, the two hurrily run to the police nearby to report to him. Without delay, the police ignore his "duty" and follow them.

What he see there

Lying on the ground

Is a small, moveless firgure

A tiny hand that is holding on to something.

The innocent face, turned pale due to the cold, hidden behind the tangled hair

Stunned. He know this face, he has just chased it away, for the smooth of his "duty".

Sit right down, he check her pulse, hoping for an unsure thing. However…

Police: Oh no, this is… she has already…

Look at the two boys who are standing still, speechless, he doesn't need to continue, he knows, they know.

He then takes off his coat and put it onto the figure.

Police: Look what we have done to this little girl, to this frail body. Tonight is christmas night, everyone ought to be having fun, having happy time together around the fire.

Pick up the matches in that hand, he continues.

Police: Yet, this girl, abaddoned, wearing such filthy, thin cloth in this winter night. Desperately try to warm herself with these matches, and finally lost to the cold. How could fate… how could I have been so cruel?

Reach his hand out, he pulls her hair to the side for a better view of her face.

Police: And look, lonely did she pass away, but isn't it a smile on her face? I wonder what she saw in her last moment?

Cannot find anything else to say, all fell into silent.

The silent seem to be endless, suddenly the police stands up, carrying her on his hands

Police: What done is done, we couldn't treat her well when she lived, then at least, let's us find her a warm place to rest in peace.

That night, the police burried the poor girl on top of a hill outside the town, where the sun would shines on at day, where the grass and flowers would cover her in cold nights, where a big tree will be her roof from rain and snow.

But then, people tend to forget, will there be anyone remember about her? No there won't be any, not those who live in the town, not those two boys, not that policeman, not even that cruel father. What is left about her is just a fairy tale of a poor nameless match selling girl on a cold Christmas night.

Figure 8.16 – Extract from the play written by Đông's group, Class 2B-W

In short, these varied activities offered opportunities for the students to be "stretched cognitively" and at the same time "affirmed as individuals with something important and interesting to contribute" (Cummins, 2001, p. 131). They simultaneously helped to develop the students' language and also to "amplify [their] intellectual, esthetic, and social identities, contributing to student empowerment, understood as the collaborative

creation of power" (pp. 144-145). It is worth noting that the data that I have presented so far in this chapter reveals an overlap, or to be more exact an interconnection, between the three focus areas of instruction. Overall, the presentation and discussion of the activities/tasks shows the potential of these three areas to "stimulate linguistic growth, cognitive development and affirmation of identity" (p. 144); and I show how such activities/tasks contribute to the realisation of the educational goals in teaching and learning English that I discussed earlier in Section 8.1.1.

It is also worth noting the valuable contribution of the students' L1 to the completion of these activities/tasks and thus to the realisation of these education goals. I have presented in Chapter 6 how, for example, the use of Vietnamese in small group discussions or the students' prior knowledge encoded in Vietnamese helped to facilitate the students' active participation in class and to enrich the teaching and learning processes. I revisit the educational values of Vietnamese later in the discussion of translanguaging. I now move on to another dimension in my developing pedagogical framework – that is, the incorporation of an EIL pedagogy.

EIL and a dialogic approach to teaching and learning

I have mentioned in passing the teaching of EIL in the above presentation and discussion. Indeed, the activities that I designed for teaching EIL also entailed elements of focus on language, meaning and use. They helped the students see how language (or, to be more precise, the English language) works as a system and in society and promote their cognitive development and identity investment.

To speak specifically of my teaching of EIL, these activities were designed based on my emerging understandings of the EIL paradigm [specifically, of two approaches summarised in Hino's (2010), namely to teach 'about' EIL and to expose students to some varieties of English other than RP and GA] and my colleagues' comments and suggestions. As I have analysed in Chapter 7, the EIL attitudes that my colleagues and I could observe in some students during some of these activities, and what some students shared with me about their experiences suggest the possibility and indeed the necessity of incorporating the EIL paradigm into an English classroom in my context. In addition, considering the small-scale efforts on my part to introduce EIL into my classes, the positive feedback that I received from some students and their request for more materials with different accents indicate the feasibility of the two approaches that I had adopted. However, the difficulty that some students experienced in listening to different

varieties of English has prompted me to see the need for more careful selection of materials and adequate scaffolding to help those with limited listening skills. Also, my colleagues' comments on my planned activities for teaching 'about' EIL point to the necessity for careful design and implementation of activities to make them interactive and provide sufficient support to ensure students' understanding and participation.

There is another important way in which my conversations with my colleagues have shaped my emerging pedagogical understandings and the knowledge I am generating in this PhD. I have reflected on my colleagues' concern over my dogmatic manner when teaching 'about' EIL. That, together with the struggles and tensions emerging from my reflection on some incidents throughout the teaching course, has helped me appreciate the inevitability and the pedagogical necessity of struggles and tensions when teaching and learning with and in the EIL paradigm, and the importance of approaching them in a dialogic manner. Informed by Bakhtin/Medvedev's (1978/1991) notion of 'ideological environment', I have come to understand that my students, and even my colleagues and I brought with us into the classroom the discourses and practices in the traditional paradigm which promotes the supremacy of 'native' speakers of English. We had all been (and still are) frequently exposed to and socialised into these discourses. Such discourses and practices unavoidably clashed with the newer ones that endorse diversity and equality in the EIL paradigm, resulting in confusion and conflict in the process of teaching and learning. I have come to view, though, that these struggles and tensions were essential for us to develop new understandings of the world. In light of my developing appreciation of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I have come to see the importance of creating more space for inquiry into and dialogue with students about these struggles and tensions and the discourses underlying them. The adoption of a dialogic approach to teaching EIL can encourage voices and perspectives to be heard and valued in the classrooms.

Translanguaging as pedagogy

As I have noted in Section 8.1.1, despite the increasing attention to other educational goals such as active learning, critical thinking and whole person development, many English teachers in Vietnam have tended to develop their instructional practices around the focus on language acquisition, as observed by my colleague Tiên (and also from my own professional experience). This orientation towards language development can also be seen in my colleagues' comments and my own practices as I have analysed in

Chapter 6. I have shown that despite our recognition of the educational values of the Vietnamese language in an English classroom, my colleagues and I tended to speak of Vietnamese as a last resort rather than another resource. It appeared that we were swinging back and forth between the goal of language acquisition and the other educational goals. This mindset, as I have analysed, seemed to link with the monolingual paradigm, which has historically been dominating the field of English language teaching and which emphasises maximising the use of the target language to help learners acquire the language.

My analysis of the role of the Vietnamese language in my English classes in Chapter 6 suggests the potential of the concept of 'translanguaging' for helping to shift the focus away from the goal of language development. To be more precise, it can help shift the attention from the acquisition of the target language based on 'native'-like models to the development of the ability to language flexibly. At the same time, it contributes to the attainment of the aforementioned educational goals.

Translanguaging refers to both bilinguals' complex discursive practices and pedagogical approaches which value those practices. As García and Wei (2014) put it, translanguaging is "the ways in which bilinguals use their complex semiotic repertoire to act, to know, and to be" (p. 137). As such, it broadens the traditional conceptions of autonomous languages and highlights the other educational goals. With translanguaging, students can maintain their existing language practices while developing new ones. They can make full use of their semiotic repertoire for making meaning, connecting, thinking deeply, creating and acting on the world. Translanguaging also enables the voices of students with emergent target language practices to be heard. All of these can be seen to some extent in the examples of how Vietnamese was used in my classes as I have presented in Chapter 6. In addition, the discussion in that chapter suggests that when a translanguaging approach is adopted, students can be encouraged to take control of their language practices, and thus of their own learning. Moreover, advocates of translanguaging contend that by encouraging students to shift flexibly between different semiotic practices, linguistic as well as non-linguistic, teachers are preparing them to become global citizens. As García and Kano (2014) argue, "in today's globalized world what is needed is the ability to engage in fluid language practices and to soft assemble features that can 'travel' across geographic spaces to enable us to participate fully as global citizens" (p. 261).

In addition to the aforementioned educational values, what is most significant about translanguaging as practice and pedagogy is that, in transcending traditional national boundaries between languages, the notion "[interrogates] linguistic inequality" in the context of education (García & Kano, 2014, p. 261). While in monolingual approaches, students' first languages are regarded as an "evil" in the process of learning (in) the target language (Cook, 1999, p. 202), translanguaging promotes equal and legitimate recognition and cultivation of their first languages. This interrogation of linguistic inequality is particularly valuable in contexts where the target language is English, which has become an international language in this globalising world. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have expressed concern over the global dominance of English over the other languages, which Phillipson (1992) called 'English linguistic imperialism'.

Linguistic inequality occurs not only among languages but also among varieties of one language with some varieties regarded as 'standard' compared to the others. Again, this is especially noticeable in the case of English. As a dominant vehicle of communication in international settings, English has been mixing with other languages and become a heterogeneous language with diverse forms, users and uses. In this diverse sociolinguistic landscape of the English language, some particular varieties used in the so-called 'native'-English-speaking countries still enjoy the privilege of being called 'standard' varieties. It is this native-speakerism that has led to negative attitudes towards learners' indigenous varieties of English and the advocacy for teaching English monolingually, particularly by 'native' speakers, in ELT. The discussion on translanguaging so far prompts me to believe that a translanguaging approach, which highlights the language users' agency and creativity in using their full repertoire, linguistic as well as non-linguistic, to make sense of the world, can complement the EIL paradigm in inspiring learners of English to give legitimate recognition of diversifying varieties of English in general and their own way of using English in particular. Q. T. Nguyen (2012), in his study into English-Vietnamese code-switching in a tertiary educational context in Vietnam, also thinks that the use of code-switching can "[pave] the way for the development of Vietnamese English once called Vietlish by Do (1999)" (p. 22). Here in this thesis, on the basis of my analysis of the data I have presented, I advocate for translanguaging, together with EIL, because it can help students to "learn to construct an equitable and generous meaning-making space" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 137). In light of the multilingual conditions in this globalisation era, it can be argued

that translanguaging and the EIL paradigm can contribute to teaching for a socially just world.

In this section of the chapter, I have presented my reconceptualisation of the way I teach English. I began by setting out the educational goals other than the acquisition of the target language based on 'native'-like models. These educational goals emerged from my conversation with my colleague Tiên and also from my discussion of the national and institutional contexts in Chapter 2. They include the promotion of multilingualism, the enhancement of national identity, and the development of critical thinking and lifelong learning ability. I then looked at my reframed instructional practices based on the three focus areas as discussed in Cummins's framework for developing academic expertise. These also included the activities that I constructed from my emerging understandings of the two approaches to teaching EIL. The data presented in the section, along with some of those analysed in the previous discussion chapters, to some degree show the potential of these instructional practices for enhancing students' languaging practices and at the same time attaining the aforementioned educational goals. My reflection on the place of L1 in an English classroom as advocated in Cummins's framework suggests the potential of translanguaging as a pedagogical lens to contribute to the realisation of these educational goals in the teaching and learning of English. In addition, my reflection on some aspects of my teaching EIL has prompted me to see the necessity of a dialogic approach in the process of teaching and learning to be in a world of diversity. It is worth noting that I view this reframed pedagogical framework as "emergent" – that is, it is still open to adaptation in accordance with the changes in the contexts that I will be working in after the completion of this thesis.

My reframing of the pedagogical framework reflects and builds up the knowledge base of teaching English in Vietnam that I have discussed in Chapter 3. In the next section of Chapter 8, I elaborate on my growing understanding of 'knowledge' for teaching English.

8.2. Knowledge base of teaching English in Vietnam

My discussion of the knowledge base of English language teaching in the Conceptual Framework Chapter (i.e., Chapter 3) shows the diverse and complex landscape of knowledge for teaching in general and English teaching in particular. The rich and dynamic nature of this knowledge base was attested during the process of framing and

reframing my pedagogical framework for teaching English in my context. What can be seen is the complex interplay between linguistic knowledge and pedagogical knowledge with the mediation of the practice contexts. By contexts, I mean the classroom setting with the particular groups of students that I was working with, my personal history, the culture at my institution conveyed in the textbooks, curriculum and educational philosophy, the debates about English teaching in Vietnam as well as the policy by the Vietnamese government, and the wider context of globalisation today. From my analysis of the data in this study, and my whole experience in this PhD project, I have gained a deeper appreciation of the interconnection among all of these dimensions of knowledge. Indeed, my knowledge building throughout the journey of teaching the course and undertaking this PhD research has shown me that a knowledge base for teaching is ever-evolving. It eludes neat and tidy efforts at codification, as has been raised by many scholars in their critique of attempts to standardise and thus stabilise professional knowledge (see, e.g., Doecke et al., 2004; Parr et al., 2013).

The discussion of the conceptions of language and the English language in Chapter 3, and the analysis of data regarding translanguaging and EIL in the previous section and the two preceding discussion chapters have shown the inseparability of the theorising of pedagogy and the disciplinary knowledge. Moreover, they reveal the different, and conflicting, discourses and ideologies in different scholarly communities in linguistics and in language teaching. This is at odds with more traditional conceptualisations of knowledge as fixed and final in work that aims to demarcate professional knowledge into categories. Shulman's (1986) model is one example of such an objectivist perspective, as I have discussed in Chapter 3. His concept of PCK projects a view of teachers' professional development as creating teaching strategies to transform the stable body of disciplinary knowledge into knowledge that is comprehensible to students. My experience of reframing my understanding and practices has prompted me to appreciate Doecke et al.'s (2004) suggestion of rethinking "'knowledge' as always involving claims and counterclaims", representing "a continuing struggle by various social groups to assert the validity of their ways of experiencing and interpreting the world" (p. 107). This reconceptualisation encourages me to engage in ongoing inquiry into these discourses in the process of teaching and to encourage my students to join me in this inquiry. This resonates with the dialogic approach to teaching in and with a different ideology that I have discussed in the previous section of this chapter and in Chapter 6.

The conception of knowledge proposed by Doecke et al. (2004) highlights the role of the practice site as a place for inquiry into teaching knowledge. In my research, the teaching and learning in my classroom provided a context for me to explore some of the complexities of my work such as the goals of English teaching, the instructional practices, the issue of L1 in an English classroom, and the ways to incorporate an EIL perspective in my context. New understandings and new knowledge have emerged from an ongoing process of interpreting and reinterpreting professional knowledge as I engaged with the literature in the field and considered the dialogues with my colleagues, the exchanges with my students, my own learning and teaching experience and the multilayered contexts in which my practice is situated. The way by which my knowledge has been built up reflects a dialogic combination of teacher knowledge and professional practice (Parr et al., 2013). New knowledge is "often generated dialogically *through* teaching and learning" which cannot be found in the academy outside of practice sites (p. 15, original emphasis). This relates to the political aspect of knowledge discussed in M. L. Hamilton (2004/2007) – that is, teachers are not just users but also *creators* of knowledge. This is a key issue in the literature on practitioner inquiry, which I have discussed at length in Chapter 4. I now look at my development as a practitioner inquirer as I reflect on the whole journey of developing my practices as an English teacher in a Vietnamese university.

8.3. The process of developing my pedagogical practices

As I have shown in the autobiographical account at the beginning of Chapter 1 and have explained throughout the first methodology chapter (i.e., Chapter 4), this PhD project is part of my ongoing endeavour to develop my practices since I started working as an English teacher in Vietnam. The question of how to improve my practices, and how to enhance my students' learning had, from the early days of my teaching, underpinned all of my collegial conversations with my colleagues to share experiences. It had driven my 'experiments' with different techniques and methods learnt from teaching materials, workshops, conferences and observations of my colleagues' classes, and my attempts to get feedback from my students at the end of the classes/courses. Indeed, this PhD project first started as a continuation of my attempt in my MA study to explore how I could negotiate with my students about what and how to study and how a negotiation-based approach could contribute to the enhancement of student autonomy and engagement in learning. However, throughout the project, the research has been shifted

from a narrow focus on 'an approach' to a wider concern about what it means to teach English in this particular context, which is subject to a range of globalising forces. Looking back, I have come to realise that paralleling this shift in focus was my ongoing development as a reflexive practitioner-researcher during the course of the PhD project.

I have noted in Chapter 4 that I started out with what I now see as a fairly objectivist view of research. How much has changed since that time! I have learnt to be open to multiple ways of interpreting the world. I have also learnt to problematise my own assumptions and challenge taken-for-granted concepts such as CLT, monolingualism, and 'standard' English. I have come to appreciate the interplay between teaching, learning and research, and my role as a practitioner-researcher who can generate knowledge-*of*-practice by working with my colleagues and students and situating my work in the national and global contexts. I have also come to fully understand the moral nature of my work as an ethical practitioner-researcher and the need to emphasise such values as respect, responsibility and social commitment in my work. Finally, I have learnt to generate knowledge through the process of writing and the dialogue with other people in my writing. And so my journey does not end here with the completion of the physical act of writing this PhD artefact. For the thesis, its life can be considered as still going on in the dialogues with the readers that it can open up. For me as a practitioner, I know I am still generating knowledge and understandings about my teaching practices throughout my teaching career, for I have adopted an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) as a way of living and being in the world.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSION

Chapter 9: Conclusion of the study

In this final chapter of the thesis, I first look again at the journey over the past five years by revisiting some of the main themes and addressing the research questions. As I have enunciated in Chapter 4, with this seemingly self-centred project, I wish to offer implications as to how other teachers can use praxis approaches to improve their understandings and practices. By adopting practitioner inquiry as my overarching methodology, I hope the knowledge generated in my project can contribute to the existing literature about teaching and learning English, particularly in the Vietnamese context. In the next section of the chapter, I acknowledge some limitations of the study. I then provide provisional recommendations for teachers/practitioners and policy makers, and for future research. At the close of the chapter, I note my last few thoughts about the road ahead for me as practitioner inquirer.

9.1. A look back at the journey…

This PhD project emerged from my concerns regarding my pedagogical practices, and with the hope to contribute to understandings about English teaching in Vietnam, particularly in the context of the Vietnamese government's endeavour to improve the quality of the English language education across the country. With these motivations, I adopted practitioner inquiry as the overarching methodology for my research, drawing on self-study action research and autoethnography traditions. With this research design, I was able to make full use of my "emic perspective" which had been developed throughout my previous teaching years at my practice site (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 101). I was also able to produce knowledge-*of*-practice relevant to my local context and at the same time connected with the larger societal and cultural settings. To enhance the rigour of the study, I have built a substantive reflexive dimension into the methodology. Reflexivity was helpful for me not only as a researcher but also as a practitioner. Adopting a reflexive stance, I appreciated the need for critically examining the kind of knowledge generated through research and how it is generated (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

The data generation was conducted at my institution in Vietnam from March to July 2014. I implemented the pedagogical framework which emerged from my reading of literature into the two classes I taught during the fieldwork and reflected on what

transpired throughout the process of teaching and learning. The data generated during the fieldwork include: documents and texts that my students and I created and gathered in the process of teaching and learning; audio-recordings of the class sessions I taught; observation notes composed by the two colleagues who observed my classes and audio-recordings of my discussions with them; my students' spoken and written feedback throughout the course; and my own research journal. Drawing on autoethnography, I weaved into the stories of what transpired in my classes during the fieldwork not only some narrative accounts of my prior experience but also my reflections on the influence of the institutional, social and historical contexts on my practices.

Since I adopted practitioner inquiry as methodology, the research questions were developed from the interplay between theory and practice. They emerged from my constantly reflecting on my earlier learning and teaching experiences and the literature that I engaged with. Similarly, the answers to the questions (as I have attempted to show throughout the thesis and I am going to recap shortly) also reflect my moving back and forth between the relevant literature and my practice (i.e., not only my previous experiences but also what transpired in the classes that I taught during the fieldwork). As I have noted in Chapters 1 and 4, from the initial questions revolving around one teaching approach, I extended the focus of my study by asking questions in relation to how I (and, by implication, other teachers of English in Vietnam) develop my (and so their) teaching practices:

> Main research question: How can I develop my practices as an English language teacher in a Vietnamese university?
>
> Sub-questions:
>
> 1. What is the knowledge base of English language teaching in Vietnam?
>
> 2. What is a potential pedagogical framework for teaching English in my own tertiary context and how has the development of this framework helped to shape my knowledge building as a practitioner?
>
> 3. How do the policy, cultural and institutional contexts and my own personal history mediate the development of my practices?

In the rest of this section, I summarise the main themes emerging from the discussions throughout the thesis in relation to the three sub-questions. I wish to reiterate that

although I present them as separate, my understanding is that these questions, and thus the answers to them, are deeply connected. Therefore, instead of presenting the answers separately, I show how my understandings have developed during the course of the project.

My review of the literature on knowledge base in the fields of general education and English language teaching and as conceptualised in the Vietnamese government's *Project 2020* reveals multifarious dimensions of knowledge for teaching, particularly for teaching English. There is a growing consensus that knowledge is mutable as it is subject to teaching contexts and that all the dimensions of knowledge are closely intertwined (see, e.g., Banks et al., 1999; Goodwin, 2010). From the review, I drew out four interrelated dimensions that are important for my research (and also for the work of teachers of English in Vietnam) – that is, understandings of (1) practitioner inquiry, (2) the contexts in which the teaching work is located, and (3 and 4) how language and the English language, and pedagogy are conceptualised in the literature. I have spoken of practitioner inquiry as the umbrella methodology in my research earlier in this section. Indeed, an increasing body of literature on teaching knowledge has highlighted the relationship between knowledge and practice and the necessity for teachers/practitioners to inquire into their practice in order to generate knowledge germane to their particular settings (see, e.g., Goodwin, 2010; M. L. Hamilton, 2004/2007; Johnson, 2006, 2009).

To develop a pedagogical framework for my study, I examined the multilayered contexts in which my practice is situated and different conceptions of language, English language and pedagogy. Two important themes emerge from my exploration of the social political context at the international level: (i) the transition of the global economy to knowledge economy, which urges higher education institutions in all countries to improve their quality in order to increase the competitiveness of the workforce in the global market; and (ii) the spread of English as an international language, resulting in the need for rethinking approaches and goals in teaching English. These two themes are reflected well in the discussion of the reforms in tertiary education and English language education at the national level, namely the Vietnamese context. There have been calls for active teaching and learning, and attention to such qualities as self-study capacity, critical thinking, responsibility and citizenship in the education of future human resources. In English teaching, concerns have been raised regarding CLT and increasing emphasis has been placed on developing Vietnamese learners' ability to communicate in a multilingual environment and at the same time enriching their

national identity. These pedagogical issues can also be seen in the educational philosophy and curriculum in the English Faculty at Ho Chi Minh University – my practice setting and also the research site of this project.

My review of the literature on the concept of language shows different perspectives, including language as system, language as discourse and language as ideology. Rather than viewing these conceptions as mutually exclusive, I found them all useful for developing a pedagogical framework for teaching English in my context, which I will present shortly. Similarly, the diverse sociolinguistic landscape of English as a result of its global expansion has led to different conceptions of the English language, including World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca and English as an International Language. These perspectives do not exclude but contribute to each other and to understandings of the complexities of English in a globalising world. For my study, I chose to draw on the conception of EIL as it is more comprehensive than the other two.

In terms of the concept of pedagogy, I adopted Gore's (1993) conceptualisation of pedagogy as consisting of a social vision and the particular types of instruction that help realise the social vision. With this conception, I found Cummins's (2001, 2009b) categorisation of pedagogies useful in providing flexibility for me to frame my teaching practices in light of the aforementioned social, cultural and institutional contexts. Cummins views the three pedagogical orientations (i.e., transmission, social constructivist, and transformative) as nested within, rather than opposing to, each other. In this continuum, transformative pedagogy builds on the other two pedagogical orientations in order to expand the instruction for broader educational visions including social justice and equity concerns.

With these understandings of the contexts and the concepts of language, English and pedagogy, I developed an initial pedagogical framework for my project, drawing on Cummins's (2001) framework for developing academic expertise and the EIL pedagogy as discussed in Marlina (2014). Contending that the micro-interactions between teacher and students in the classroom are not only reflective but also constitutive of the macro-interactions between dominant and subordinated groups in the society, Cummins proposes a useful instructional framework which is situated in transformative pedagogy and aims to build up collaborative relations of power between teacher and students. The framework consists of three focus areas of instruction, namely focus on language, focus on meaning and focus on use. What is significant in the instruction is Cummins's

emphasis on the development of critical awareness of how language works as a system and in society, the attention to deep levels of cognitive and linguistic processing in the learning, and the creation of ample opportunities for students to use language to express their identities and knowledge. The keystone in Cummins's instruction is the encouragement of students' first language(s) as a way to affirm their cultural, linguistic and personal identities and facilitate their cognitive engagement and identity investment. As such, the instructional framework as constructed by Cummins encompasses the three conceptions of language that I explored in the literature review. It also offers the potential for addressing some educational concerns in Vietnam including the emphasis on deep thinking and the enhancement of the national identity.

To contribute to the development of collaborative relations of power, I included in the three focus areas in Cummins's framework the instruction based on the EIL paradigm to raise the students' awareness of the heterogeneous forms, uses and users of the English language, and to promote legitimate recognition of all varieties of English, particularly their own varieties which reflect their identities (see Marlina, 2014). I drew on two approaches listed in Hino (2010) to develop my instruction – that is, teaching 'about' EIL and exposing my students to varieties of English. With this inclusion, the pedagogical framework aimed to address the concern about native-speakerism, which is often associated with CLT, and help my students learn to live in this multilingual world.

My presentation and discussion of the data (including those generated during the fieldwork and some narrative fragments from my personal history) suggests the potential of this pedagogical framework in my teaching context for simultaneously developing in students languaging practices essential for a globalising world and also promoting active learning, cognitive development and identity enhancement. More importantly, through my constant reflection on what transpired in my classes and the literature, I have been able to reconceptualise my pedagogical framework by incorporating translanguaging as a pedagogical lens (see García & Wei, 2014) and a dialogic approach for teaching and learning (see Bakhtin, 1981; Doecke & Kostogriz, 2008).

These two important findings have broadened my understandings of the concepts of language (and thus pedagogy), and accordingly, built up my knowledge for teaching. I have noted in Section 3.2.4 of Chapter 3 that my immersion in the data has led me to engage with an increasing body of literature on languaging and translanguaging, which

challenges the limited and limiting concept of language. Translanguaging as practice and pedagogy offers a lens for me to explore discursive practices in this increasingly multilingual world and to conceptualise my teaching accordingly to help prepare my students for participation in this world. With regard to the findings related to EIL, through the process of reflecting on the relevant data, I have come to fully appreciate Bakhtin's (1981) concept of *heteroglossia* (referred to in Section 3.2.2) and the "heteroglot world of competing discourses" (Doecke & Kostorgriz, 2008, p. 77) in which my teaching work is situated. This fuller understanding, together with the entire process of constructing and reconstructing the pedagogical framework in this PhD project, has developed my understanding of the notion of knowledge itself. To borrow Doecke et al.'s (2004) words again, knowledge consists of "claims and counterclaims" (p. 107); it is never finalised. This points to the need for teachers to critically inquire into their own teaching and the different knowledges that mediate their practices, and to generate knowledge germane to their particular contexts. Indeed, the process of reconceptualising my pedagogical framework in this study has demonstrated how new knowledge can be "generated dialogically *through* teaching and learning" (Parr et al., 2013, p. 15, original emphasis).

Up until this point of the thesis and specifically with the above summary, I have shown how I have developed my practices as an English teacher. In adopting practitioner inquiry as the methodology, I have engaged in ongoing dialogues (in Bakhtinian sense) with my colleagues, my students, myself and texts of varied types in different ways, thereby framing and reframing my understandings and practices. And as I have emphasised elsewhere (see Section 8.3), my journey does not end here. I will revisit this point at the end of the chapter. Now I present the limitations of my research before offering some tentative recommendations.

9.2. Limitations of the research

One limitation of the study was my failure to conduct focus group interviews in Class 2B-T owing to my own and my students' busy schedules towards the end of the semester (and also the end of my fieldwork). Although I had obtained their written feedback and the interviews had originally been planned as follow-up research, had I been able to carry them out in Class 2W-T, I could have gained further insights into my students' learning experiences and their opinions about my pedagogical practices.

Another limitation was the lack of diversity in collegiate input with respect to gender and professional seniority. Since the timetables of all the teachers were arranged by the academic affairs staff in my faculty and all the classes took place on the second campus, which was far away from the main campus, it was not easy to find colleagues who were available and willing to come and observe my classes. The two colleagues participating in my study were both female and had been teaching for nearly the same years as me. A wide range of perspectives on teaching and learning English may have been generated had there also been colleagues with different gender or teaching experience.

The study was conducted at the English Faculty of a well-established public university in Ho Chi Minh City in the south of Vietnam. It has its own characteristics, including its educational philosophy, vision and missions, which differ from private universities and even other public universities. Although the faculty draws on the generic guidelines mandated by the Vietnamese government, it has a fairly high degree of autonomy to develop the curriculum in accordance with its characteristics. The teachers in the faculty are also given some degree of flexibility to adjust the faculty-designed teaching syllabi (including part of the assessment) to the particular groups of students that they work with. In addition, the students in my faculty major in English. Therefore, although there were mixed levels among my student participants owing to their prior learning experiences, in general they had acquired some fundamental knowledge and skills. These features were an advantage for my research but may perhaps be regarded as a limitation by those who wish to see some generalisations from the study. However, I do not aim to draw generalisations for other contexts. Indeed, this is at odds with the tradition of practitioner inquiry that I drew on for my methodology, which emphasises knowledge as grounded in the local practice settings. In my view, it is this characteristic of practitioner inquiry that empowers teachers to generate the knowledge germane to their contexts rather than depending on knowledge generalised by an outsider researcher which may not work for them. From my experience, I believe teachers in all settings have, to a greater or lesser degree, autonomy over the teaching and learning process in their own classroom. Moreover, as I have noted in Chapter 2, most Vietnamese students of English are fairly open owing to their contact with another language/culture. They are also generally dynamic because of the interactive nature of many activities/tasks designed for English learning. Therefore, they often welcome new ways of teaching and learning as introduced by teachers. It is my hope that my story of developing my practices in my particular context could open up dialogues with other teachers, speaking

to them about their experience, be it similar to mine or not, and encouraging them to imagine their own paths for inquiry into their practices. With this hope, I now offer some tentative recommendations for future research, particularly addressing them to teachers/practitioners and policy makers in Vietnam.

9.3. Provisional recommendations

My story of framing and reframing my understanding and practices throughout the thesis has shown the value of practitioner inquiry as a framework for transforming teaching and learning, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) advocate. By adopting an inquiry stance, teachers/practitioners (and in most cases their students as well) can become, to borrow Goodwin's (2010) words again, "actors in the process" rather than being "simply acted upon" (p. 25). They are not merely users of knowledge created by researchers who are often situated outside of their contexts of practice, but can develop knowledge relevant to their localities and at the same time connect their work with national and global demands. Accordingly, they can actively contribute to any educational reforms instead of passively implementing the directives and curricula mandated by their institutions and the policy makers at higher levels. Therefore, I would particularly recommend practitioner inquiry to teachers of English in Vietnam, where the government has been carrying out a number of reforms including the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* and the *Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006-2020* (see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 in Chapter 2). I am certain that as more and more teachers engage in practitioner inquiry and share their stories, there will be ongoing dialogues in the profession, generating multiple perspectives on English language pedagogy in various contexts in Vietnam and helping to enrich the literature of ELT in the country.

In their cogent discussion of practitioner inquiry, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) point out an ironic situation in many reforms – that is, the increasing recognition of the crucial role of teachers in educational success unfortunately has led to the development of "a system of close monitoring and tight public accountability" in order to improve the quality of the teaching force (p. 124). In this kind of mechanism, teachers are, as these scholars eloquently argue, "positioned as important in educational reform, to be sure, but they are important by virtue of their faithful implementation and application of outside expertise, skills, and techniques" (p. 124). This stands in sharp contrast to the key assumption underpinning practitioner inquiry that I have argued for throughout this

thesis. My experience in the research has prompted me to believe that it is important that the leadership within institutions as well as policy makers at the national level acknowledge the value of practitioner inquiry and offer support for this kind of work to be undertaken. This could include setting aside time and spaces, creating opportunities, providing resources (especially financial, where it is possible), and granting more autonomy over the curricula so that teachers can undertake sustained and in-depth inquiry into their practices and share their experiences and knowledge with others within as well as outside of their institutions. In Vietnam, the good sign is the Vietnamese government has shown its appreciation of the importance of professional development and lifelong learning in the newly-designed *English Teacher Competency Framework* in *Project 2020* (for in-service as well as pre-service teachers) (see Appendix 3). I would like to suggest that the government provide support for teachers to engage in practitioner inquiry and share their understandings and practices rather than always seeking to prescribe and standardise.

Although my PhD study was undertaken singly by me, I have shown throughout the thesis that it is in many ways a collaborative endeavour, not individualistic. Many new understandings in the research emerged from the dialogues (in the broadest sense of the word) between me and my participants, particularly my two colleagues Tiên and Khuê. Indeed, one of the emphases in Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) discussion of practitioner inquiry is the potential of "collective intellectual capacity of practitioners" for educational transformation (p. 124). It is, therefore, recommended that the leadership at various levels create opportunities to encourage collaboration among teachers within and across institutions. I would also recommend that the leadership join this collective interrogation of knowledge and practices in their own contexts as well as in other settings, generating new understandings for transforming practices and enhancing students' learning. In fact, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) use the term 'practitioner' in an expansive manner to include teachers, student teachers, teacher educators, school administrators and other leaders, parents and others involved in the practice sites. This reflects one important dimension in practitioner inquiry – that is, "an expanded view of practice as the interplay of teaching, learning, and leading" which challenges the traditional views of the roles of researchers, policy makers and practitioners as distinct and separate (p. 126). This points to the need for promoting collaboration among all educational stakeholders including students, teachers, and

leaders at different levels in the process of transforming learning, teaching and schooling.

The remaining recommendations that I would like to offer concern different dimensions of the pedagogical framework that has emerged from this project. Firstly, I would recommend further research into Cummins's framework for academic language learning. The presentation and discussion of the data in my research has shown the potential of this framework for linguistic growth, cognitive engagement and identity investment. Particularly, the encouragement of learners' first languages in the process of teaching and learning makes it worth considering given the discourse of preserving the national language/identity in light of the global spread of English. With regard to the issue of L1, it is also recommended that there is further research into translanguaging as a pedagogical lens. While it has been increasingly discussed and investigated in multilingual contexts, little attention has been given to translanguaging in the so-called traditional foreign language classrooms in 'homogeneous' linguistic contexts such as Vietnam. Although some studies have been done into the value of the Vietnamese language in an English classroom in Vietnam, especially through the narrower concept of code-switching (see, e.g., T. G. L. Hoang & Filipi, 2016; Kieu, 2010; V. C. Le, 2014; Q. T. Nguyen, 2012; T. H. Nguyen, 2013), there has been, to my knowledge, little discussion on translanguaging as pedagogy. Despite the prevalence of the English-only environment assumption in English language teaching classes in Vietnam, the Vietnamese government's acknowledgement of the role of L1 in the newly-designed *English Teacher Competency Framework* version for pre-service teacher education programmes points to the need for research into translanguaging as discursive practices and a pedagogical approach in the classroom.

Although my research focused on the teaching and learning of general English, part of the data points to the need to consider the role of the Vietnamese language in the teaching and learning of discipline knowledge through English, or, in other words, EMI programmes (see Section 6.3). In light of this emerging trend and the challenges facing these EMI programmes, particularly with respect to students' English language proficiency and pedagogical practices (see H. T. Nguyen, Walkinshaw, & Pham, 2017), it would be worth exploring how translanguaging as pedagogy works in this context, as also recommended by Heugh, Li, and Song (2017).

Finally, further studies could focus on how to incorporate an EIL paradigm into the teaching and learning of English. In spite of considerable discussion in the literature regarding the need to teach EIL, there have not been many attempts to look into what would transpire when an EIL curriculum and pedagogy is introduced into a classroom (Marlina, 2013). In Vietnam, a few scholars have mentioned some pedagogical issues related to the EIL context (e.g., Doan, 2014; D. C. Nguyen, 2013; Truong, 2004) but mainly from the perceptions of the participants rather than investigating classes where an EIL paradigm is introduced. The addition of the need to raise awareness of issues related to the global status of English in the *English Teacher Competency Framework* version for pre-service teacher education by the Vietnamese government indicates the necessity to develop and research programmes that incorporate an EIL paradigm to prepare Vietnamese learners of English for today's globalising world.

With respect to suggestions for pedagogical practices for teaching EIL, besides the two approaches that I adopted in my project (i.e., teaching 'about' EIL and exposing students to a variety of Englishes), I would recommend teachers to consider adopting a dialogic approach to teaching and learning. My experiences in this project as analysed in Chapter 7 show that teaching with and in an EIL paradigm (or, to put it generally, an ideology different from the 'traditional' one) is inherently full of tensions and struggles. However, I have argued that these challenges and conflicts are crucial to the process of teaching and learning. It is, therefore, suggested that teachers approach them in a dialogic manner by reflecting on and discussing openly with their students the different discourses underpinning their perspectives.

9.4. … And the road ahead…

In closing the Conclusion Chapter as well as the whole thesis, I want to quote an interesting extract from the final discussion with my two colleagues at the end of my fieldwork. I am aware that in conventional theses researchers tend not to provide new data in the conclusion. However, narrative writing creates space for me to disturb traditional ways, and present the data on my own and my participants' experiences and understandings in a powerful way. The excerpt below is taken from a long conversation in which while commenting on my teaching during the course, Tiên and Khuê at several points reflected on and then reframed their own way of teaching English:

Tiên: Previously, I just understood from my own experience. After observing your classes, my understanding of EIL has been deepened. It's like… my experience has been supported by some theories as well as the experience in your class. Next semester when we [i.e., Tiên and Khuê] teach, we will accept all the accents. We will have the students listen to not only RP and GA but also other Englishes.

[…]

Khuê: Tiên, I think in our class next semester, we shouldn't start the course by saying, for example, what language skills they will be learning. We can say to the student, "During the course, together we will explore ten topics. The first topic is, for example, human cloning…

Tiên: "What is cloning?" OK, I got it.

Khuê: "The second is outer space. What is the Vietnamese government's space programme?" By saying so, in a way we switch to the view of language as a *tool* for exploring knowledge.

[…]

Khuê: Tiên, I think that in each lesson, we will spend some time discussing what to do in the next lesson. For example, for the topic of cloning, we will give two or three questions. I think after one semester teaching together we will improve a lot. We have had ideas but they're sparse and scattered. If we implement them in one semester, we can *shape* them.

[…]

Trân: I envisage making my future language skills classes more *research*-oriented. Languages are *tools* for the students to do *research*. Just as you are going to use *topic* as the focus of the course, I am going to place more emphasis on searching, sharing…. They can use both English and Vietnamese…. I don't know. I'm still thinking…. [*laughs softly*].

(Collegial discussion, Tiên and Khuê, 4 July, 2014, my translation)

As can be seen from the excerpt and in the other pieces of data that I present in the discussion chapters, Tiên and Khuê had already had some conceptual understandings and ideas of teaching English from their own experiences. By observing and commenting on my classes, they could, in turn, critically reflect on and reconceptualise their understandings and practices. The experience in my classes prompted them to try out some of the ideas that they had been thinking of in their future classes. Indeed, they started to co-teach in the following semesters and help develop each other's practices. In a sense, the ending of my fieldwork seemed to herald a new beginning in their teaching journey.

For me, while reflecting on my teaching during the fieldwork with Tiên and Khuê, I was also envisioning how my classes would look in the future. Although my future plan was still vague then as I was struggling to make sense of various issues arising during the course, particularly the place of L1 in an L2 classroom, it demonstrates the unfinalised process of pedagogical framing and reframing. For those who engage in practitioner research (in this case, me as well as my colleagues, who collaborated with me during the fieldwork), the inquiry never draws to a close. It is a dynamic and ongoing process.

I have noted elsewhere that my journey does not end with the completion of this thesis artefact (see Section 8.3). As I am writing this final chapter, I can see my new understandings regarding translanguaging and the dialogic approach to teaching and learning have opened up a new road ahead in my journey – that is, I am wondering what will transpire when I incorporate translanguaging and dialogic approaches in my future classes. More importantly, as I have indicated in the last discussion chapter, my reframed pedagogical framework is emergent and not finalised. There will continue to be agreement, disagreement, reconsiderations and perhaps reconceptualisations according to changes in the courses that I am going to teach, the colleagues and student cohorts that I am going to work with and the policy, cultural and institutional contexts that I am going to be situated in. Adopting an inquiry stance is a lifelong journey. And I am still on the road…

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics documents

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number:	CF13/3665 - 2013001888
Project Title:	Innovative Language Teaching in Vietnam: Reflection on Practice
Chief Investigator:	Dr Jill Brown
Approved:	From: 16 December 2013 To: 16 December 2018

Terms of approval - *Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.*

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel): Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.
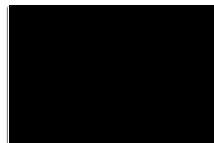
Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Ms Nha Tran Nguyen

MONASH University

CONSENT FORM
(Main research)
Student participants

Project: Innovative Language Teaching in Vietnam: Reflection on Practice

Chief Investigator: Dr Jill Brown

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project fully explained to my satisfaction, and I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the research and to demand that no data arising from my participation be used in the research provided that this right is exercised within four weeks of the completion of the data collection period and prior to any publications from the research if there is any within four weeks of the completion of the data collection period.

I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
• the use of my data in the audio-taped recordings of classroom activities	☐	☐
• the use of documents generated by me during the course	☐	☐
• the use of the above data that I provide during this research for Ms Nguyen's PhD thesis, conference presentations and publications in books or journal articles	☐	☐

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

MONASH University

CONSENT FORM
(Follow-up research)
Student participants

Project: Innovative Language Teaching in Vietnam: Reflection on Practice

Chief Investigator: Dr Jill Brown

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project fully explained to my satisfaction, and I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the research and to demand that no data arising from my participation be used in the research provided that this right is exercised within four weeks of the completion of the data collection period and prior to any publications from the research if there is any within four weeks of the completion of the data collection period.

I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
• my data in the audio-recorded focus group interview	☐	☐
• the use of the data that I provide in this research for Ms Nguyen's PhD thesis, conference presentations and publications in books or journal articles	☐	☐

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 2: BA programme in English Linguistics and Literature at EF

BA program in ENGLISH LINGUISTICS & LITERATURE (143 Credits)

→ **PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE (97C – In English)**

GENERAL KNOWKEDGE (46Credits – In Vietnamese)

1. **Basic Courses: 24C**
2. **Intermediate Courses: 42C**
3. **Specialized Courses: 31-32C** *(Student chooses one of three)*

Language Skills	Credits
Language Skills 1A (Reading+ Writing +Grammar)	04
Language Skills 1B (Listening + Speaking)	02
Language Skills 2A (Reading + Writing + Grammar)	04
Language Skills 2B (Listening + Speaking)	02
Language Skills 3A (Reading+ Writing +Grammar)	04
Language Skills 3B (Listening + Speaking)	02
Language Skills 4A (Reading+ Writing +Grammar)	04
Language Skills 4B (Listening + Speaking)	02

Core courses (27C)
Pronunciation	03
Academic Writing	03
Basic Translation	03
Introduction to Literature	03
Intro to English Linguistics	03
Intro to British-American Culture & Society	04
Teaching Methodology	03
Presentation Skills	03
Language Proficiency	02

Elective courses (15C)
Advanced Reading	03	*English for Business Correspondence*	03
Advanced Grammar	03	*English for Banking & Finance*	03
Business English	03	*Basics of Economic Studies*	02
Research Methodology	03	*Vietnamese Traditions & Customs*	02
English for Tourism	03	*Vietnamese Folk Culture*	02
English for the Office	03	*Introduction to Public Relations*	02
Advanced Listening	03	*Event Organization*	02
Trans. Practice 1(E-V)	03	*Foreign Relations Skills*	02
Writing about Literature	03	*Secretarial Skills*	02
Public Speaking	03		

Political Courses (10C)
Basics of Marxism and Leninism 1	02
Basics of Marxism and Leninism 2	03
Processes of Vietnamese Revolution	03
Ideologies of Ho Chi Minh	02

Social Sciences Courses (14C)
Core Courses (10C)
Research Methodology	02
Introduction to Linguistics	02
Comparative Linguistics	02
Vietnamese Writing Practice	02
Basics of Vietnamese Culture	02

Elective Courses (4-5C)
Basics of Anthropology	02
Basics of Law	02
Basics of Logics Studies	02
Basics of Sociology	02
Basics of Psychology	02
Basics of Religious Studies	02
Basics of Politics	02
Processes of Vietnamese history	02
History of World Civilization	03

Second Foreign Language (Level B)
Natural Sciences Courses (07C)
Statistics for Social Sciences	02
Enviroment and Development	02
Computing (Level A)	03
Physical Education	04
National Defense Education	07

American-British Culture and Literature
Core Courses (13C)
British & American History	03
British Identity & Lifestyle	02
American Identity & Lifestyle	02
British Literary Works 1	03
American Literary Works 1	03

Elective Courses (6C)
Social Issues in the UK	02
Social Issues in the USA	02
British Politics	02
American Politics	02
British Education	02
American Education	02
Business Culture	02
Select American. Literary Works	03
Select British Literary Works	03
Survey of British Literature	03
Survey of American Literature	03
English Semanticcs	03

Graduation Courses (10C)
Popular Culture in the UK&USA	04
British Literary Works 2	03
American Literary Works 2	03

Internship (3C)

English Linguistics-Language Teaching
Core Courses (12C)
English Morpho – Syntax	03
English Semantics	03
Materials for Lang. Teaching	03
Teaching Practice	03

Elective Courses (6C)
Approaches to Lang.Teaching	03
Teaching English to Young Learners	03
Using IT in Language Teaching	03
Stylistics	03
English Phonetics& Phonology	03
Sociolinguistics	03

Graduation Courses (10C)
Cross-Cultural Communication in Language Teaching	04
Language Assessment	03
Discourse Analysis / Systemic Functional Grammar	03

Internship (3C)

Translation-Interpretating
Core Courses (12C)
Trans. Practice 2 (V-E)	03
Theory of Translation	03
English Semantics	03
Interpreting 1	03

Elective Courses (6C)
Literary Translation in Practice	03
Eng. Phonetics& Phonology	03
English Morpho-Syntax	03
Select American and British Short Stories	03
Stylistics	03
Sociolinguistics	03
Non-Lit. Translation in Practice	03
Business Translation	03

Graduation Courses (10C)
Interpreting 2	03
Advanced Trans. (E-V)	02
Advanced Trans. (V-E)	02
Discourse Analysis	03
Systemic Functional Grammar (HP)	03

Internship (3C)

Appendix 3: Excerpts from the English Teacher Competency Framework for pre-service teacher education programmes in *Project 2020*

Overview of Pre-Service ETCF

DOMAIN 1	KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, CONTENT & CURRICULUM
Competency 1.1a	Language Proficiency
Competency 1.1b	Knowledge of CEFR
Competency 1.2	Language as a System
Competency 1.3	Second Language Acquisition Theories
Competency 1.4	Target Language Cultures
Competency 1.5a	Literary Content in the Target Language
Competency 1.5b	Academic Content in the Target Language
Competency 1.6	Language Curriculum and Syllabus Design
DOMAIN 2	**KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING**
Competency 2.1	Language Teaching Methodology
Competency 2.2	Language Teaching Lesson Planning, Activities, and Assignments
Competency 2.3a	Building Supportive, Meaningful Learning Environment
Competency 2.3b	Implementing & Managing Language Classroom Activities
Competency 2.4	Assessing Language Learning
Competency 2.5	Using & Adapting Textbooks, Authentic Materials, & Other Resources
Competency 2.6	Using Technology Effectively to Enhance Language Teaching & Learning
DOMAIN 3	**KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS**
Competency 3.1	Understanding Learners' Development to Motivate & Engage Students
Competency 3.2	Understanding Learner Language & Using it to Inform Instruction
Competency 3.3	Reflecting on Cultural Values & Prior Language Learning
Competency 3.4	Creativity, Critical Thinking & Innovation in Language Learning
DOMAIN 4	**PROFESSIONAL VALUES & PROCESSES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**
Competency 4.1	Demonstrating Professionalism in Language Teaching
Competency 4.2	Practicing & Applying Cooperation, Collaboration & Teamwork
Competency 4.3	Engaging in Professional Development and Pursuing Life-long Learning
Competency 4.4	Contributing to the Language Teaching Profession
Competency 4.5	Modeling Ethical Language Teaching & Testing Behavior
DOMAIN 5	**CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE & CONTEXT of LANGUAGE TEACHING**
Competency 5.1	Connecting Learning Beyond the Language Classroom
Competency 5.2	Reflecting on & Researching Language Learning & Teaching
Competency 5.3	Understanding Roles, Uses & Issues of English in Southeast Asia
Competency 5.4	Incorporating Awareness of Global Role of English

Example of performance indicators accompanying a competency

Competency 1.3   Second language acquisition theories
Teacher-candidates know and are able to apply SLA theories and research to enhance their own language learning and to inform their teaching.

Knowledge of SLA	Performance Indicators
How instruction affects language acquisition	Teacher-candidates have basic understanding of theories of SLA that show how instruction affects acquisition (such as target language input, negotiation of meaning, interaction, and supportive learning environment); reflect on what theories were employed by their teachers; and apply their understandings to their teaching.
How individual learner variables affect language acquisition	Teacher-candidates recognize the role of individual learner variables (such as age, L1 literacy, personality, motivation, socioeconomic status) in language acquisition; reflect on those variables in their own language learning; and apply a variety of instructional techniques to address student differences.

Competency 1.4   Target Language Cultures
Teacher-candidates know and embed knowledge of target-language cultures into their teaching and examine them in light of Vietnamese culture for understanding and empathy.

Knowledge of Target Cultures	Performance Indicators
Cultural knowledge	Teacher-candidates understand both surface-level cultural practices and deeper level target-culture perspectives, question stereotypes, develop empathy, and reflect on how to incorporate cultural knowledge to their teaching.
Cultural experience	Teacher-candidates experience target culture(s) through instruction, others who have traveled to or lived in target cultures, native speakers, TV and films; observe, interview, and reflect on their experiences and observations ,and reflect on how to provide target culture experiences for students.
Integrating culture into instruction	Teacher-candidates experience cultural knowledge systematically integrated into teacher education courses, reflect on that knowledge, and observe and reflect on how to integrate this knowledge in their own teaching.
Analyzing & comparing cultures	Teacher-candidates use cultural analyses from instructional materials and also demonstrate ability to analyze unfamiliar cultural issues, make cultural comparisons, and reflect on how they can connect his to their teaching.

Appendix 4: Course syllabus

Vietnam Metropolitan University – HCMC
Ho Chi Minh University
English Faculty

COURSE SYLLABUS
(Draft)

I. Course title: LANGUAGE SKILLS 2B (LISTENING-SPEAKING)
II. Course code: NVA085
III. Course credits: 2 credits (Theory: 1 credit, Practice: 1 credit)
IV. Course prerequisites: Student must have completed Language Skills 1B.

V. Instructor: Nguyễn Nhã Trân
Email: xxx
Mobile phone: xxx

Assumptions that guide this course[51]:

- Learning is improved when the teacher and students collaborate with one another in the inquiry of knowledge, and the diversity in the classroom can be made full use of.

- As English has become the most frequently used international language, many varieties have emerged. The goals of English language teaching should be ensuring intelligibility and developing strategies to achieve friendly relations among the speakers of English.

- The role of the teacher is to give initial guidelines. The course syllabus will change depending on what happens along the way, and through the process of reflection and negotiation between the teacher and students.

VI. Course overview:
The course is one of the disciplinary general courses for first-year students, which focuses on developing skills of listening and speaking with the ultimate goal of providing students with good communication skills in English. The course also pays special attention to the development of sub-skills with the aim to equip students with the skills necessary to be applied in practical situations.

- Listening skills: The course helps students practise listening comprehension skills through long conversations and lectures. It also exposes students to different varieties of English.

- Speaking skills: The course helps students develop speech on a variety of rather complex subjects.

VII. Course learning outcomes:
On completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Have knowledge of the current status of English in the world today;
- Use language (2 skills) flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes, benchmarked against CEFR B1 level or equivalents;
- Be dynamic, reflective and patient in learning, doing research and working;

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[51] The blue parts were my modifications or additions to the faculty-designed syllabus for the teaching purposes in my classes in this PhD research.

- Effectively work individually and in groups;
- Master problem solving skills and critical thinking skills.

VIII. Texts and materials
Required texts and materials:
- Tanka, J. & Baker, L. R. (2007). *Interactions 2 – Listening/Speaking* (Silver ed.). Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
- Hanreddy, J. & Whalley, E. (2007). *Mosaic 1 – Listening/Speaking* (Silver ed.). Singapore McGraw-Hill.

Supplementary materials:
- http://www.dialectsarchive.com/dialects-accents (International Dialects of English Archive)
- http://ice-corpora.net/ice/ (the International Corpus of English – ICE)
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/recordings/ (The Voices Recordings)
- http://www.world-english.org/listening.htm (free online radio)
- http://www.newsonair.com/ (India's public service broadcaster)
- http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos (The Times of India)
- YouTube
- Films
- http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
- http://www.englishclub.com/
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
- http://www.writeexpress.com/sample-business-letters.html
- http://dictionary.reference.com/
- http://www.ipl.org/
- http://vdict.com/
- https://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/

IX. Course policies (to be discussed)
Regarding late work, group work, attendance.

X. Tentative schedule

Week	Topic/Content
1	*Introduction*
2	*Unit 1 in Mosaic 1:* "New challenges"
3	"English as an international language"
4	*Unit 2 in Mosaic 1:* "Cooperation and competition"
5	*Unit 3 in Mosaic 1:* "Relationship"
6	*Unit 9 in Interactions 2:* "New frontiers"
7	*Unit 10 in Interactions 2:* "Ceremonies"
8	*Mid-term test* (To be discussed)
9	*Unit 4 in Mosaic 1:* "Health and leisure"
10	*Unit 5 in Mosaic 1:* "High tech, low tech"
11	*Unit 6 in Mosaic 1:* "Money matters"
12	*Review*

Note: The schedule is subject to revision.

XI. Basis for Final grade

Assessment criteria	Note 1	Per cent	Score	Per cent of final grade	Note 2
Midterm test	To be discussed (TBD)	100% **100%**	Midterm score	30%	To be computed by the University Admission Office
Group mini-project	TBD	10%	Final score	70%	To be computed by the University Admission Office
Quizzes	TBD	10%			
Participation in class	TBD	10%			
Final exam	See below	70% **100%**			
				100%	

Passing grade: **5/10**

Exam information:
- The Final Listening and Speaking exams are conducted by the faculty by the end of the course
- Exam level: CEFR B1 level or equivalent
- Themes for the exams:

    Midterm test: Units 9 & 10 Interactions 2 and Units 1 & 2 Mosaic 1
    Final exam: Units 3, 4, 5 & 6 Mosaic 1

  - Listening (Final exam)
    a. Time allowed: 30-45 minutes
    b. Format:
        Fill in the blanks
        Multiple choice
        True-False
        Short answers

  - Speaking (Final exam)
    a. Time allowed: approximately 10 minutes per group of 3-4 students
    b. Format: Student-led discussion of a theme-based topic

XII. Some issues for discussion

Mid-term test, group work, quizzes, participation

  Some suggested options (at least: one task done individually and one task done in groups)
  - Listening learning log
  - Research on one variety of English
  - Interview
  - Learning portfolio
  - Group-organised discussion
  - Others?

Appendix 5: List of main tasks for assessment
as negotiated with the students

Class 2B-T:

1. Learning portfolio (10% of final grade)

2. Group work 1 (10% of final grade): Tour guide activity

3. Group work 2 (10% of final grade): Group-organised game

4. Tasks done in place of mid-term test:

    4.1. Speaking:

        - Group work 3 (maximum: 8 points): group-organised discussion

        - In-class participation (maximum: 2 points)

    4.2. Listening:

        - Listening learning log (maximum: 5 points)

        - Two listening mini-tests in class (maximum: 5 points)

Class 2B-W:

1. Learning portfolio (15% of final grade)

2. Group work 1 (15% of final grade): group-organised game, role-play/drama, research on a variety of English [52]

3. Tasks done in place of mid-term test:

    3.1. Speaking:

        - Group work 2 (maximum: 8 points): group-organised discussion, interview

        - In-class participation (maximum: 2 points)

    3.2. Listening:

        - Listening learning log (maximum: 8 points)

        - Two listening mini-tests in class (maximum: 2 points)

Brief explanation of the tasks:

- Learning portfolio: (i) preparation of each lesson based on the tasks in the textbooks and my guidance; and (ii) home assignments where applicable.

- Tour guide activity: The activity was suggested by one student in Class 2B-T. After discussion, the class and I decided to have an outing in which we went to three tourist attractions in the centre of the city. At each place two groups would play the role of tourist guides and introduce the place to the rest of the class.

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[52] Class 2B-W preferred letting each group choose the task they liked for group work rather than agreeing on one type of task for all the groups as in Class 2B-T.

- Group-organised game: The group choosing this option would organise a game for the class to have fun and use English at the same time.

- Group-organised discussion: The group would organise a discussion on a topic (related to the themes studied in the course) for the whole class.

- Role-play/drama: The group would prepare a play and perform in front of the class. They could write their own play or draw on any available stories/plays.

- Research on one variety of English: The group would choose one variety of English different from the so-called standard Englishes, research into its particularities and give a presentation in class.

- Interview: The group would interview international students/tourists outside the classroom about a topic and report the findings in class.

- Listening learning log: Each student would do some intensive and/or extensive listening at home each week. Below is part of the guidelines I gave the students in Class 2B-W.

LISTENING LEARNING LOG (plan - action - reflection - replan - action ...)

There must be a combination of intensive (at least 30%) and extensive listening (at least 40%) in the whole log. In each week you can choose either intensive or extensive (or a combination of both).

(1) INTENSIVE LISTENING: aiming at improving specific skills or answering pre-determined questions.

- listening for specific information
- listening for the exact words of a phrase or expression

* 1 week: at least 2 parts in PET/IELTS/TOEFL, etc. or 2 clips.

* Suggested materials (roughly in order of difficulty level) (NB: (1) you can use your own materials; (2) use at least 2 different types of materials):

- http://www.abc.net.au/btn/stories.htm (NB: follow the questions and activities on the website)
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/index.shtml (NB: same as above)
- PET
- How to master skills for the TOEFL iBT (intermediate)
- IELTS foundation (Rachael Roberts, Joanne Gakonga, & Andrew Preshous)
- Focus on skills for IELTS foundation (Margaret Matthews & Kate Salisbury)
- Focus on IELTS foundation (Sue O'Connell)
- Step up to IELTS (Vanessa Jakeman & Clare McDowell)
- Improve your IELTS: Listening and speaking skills (Barry Cusack & Sam McCarter)
- Prepare for IELTS: Skills and strategies (Book 1: Listening and speaking)
- New insight into IELTS (Vanessa Jakeman & Claire McDowell)
- Focus on IELTS (Sue O'Connell)
- How to master skills for the TOEFL iBT (Advanced)

- Mastering skills for the TOEFL iBT (Advanced)
- Cambridge IELTS 5, 6, 7, 8

(2) EXTENSIVE LISTENING: an effective way to help develop fast automatic processing of oral language (listening fluency)

- Listen to a lot of COMPREHENSIBLE and ENJOYABLE listening materials
- Primarily concentrate on MEANING (rather than grammar/ vocabulary/ pronunciation). You don't have to understand 100%.
- Listen to MANY DIFFERENT voices, styles and topics

* 1 week: at least 1 film, or several video clips/ pieces of online news as long as they are at least 60 minutes long in total. Listen/watch and then briefly summarise what you understand and/or free-write your feelings and opinions about it, plus plan for the next action.

* Suggested materials: (NB: (1) you can use your own materials (movies, TV shows, news, audio books, radio programmes, songs, etc.); (2) use at least 3 different sources of materials):

- http://www.storylineonline.net/
- http://www.elllo.org/english/
- http://www.abc.net.au/btn/stories.htm
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/index.shtml
- http://www.buildingpeace.org/teach-visit-us-and-learn/exhibits
- https://www.ted.com/talks/browse (TED talks)
- http://www.dialectsarchive.com/dialects-accents (International Dialects of English Archive)
- http://www.world-english.org/listening.htm (free online radio)
- YouTube
- Films (you can borrow some from me if you like)

Appendix 6: Profile

Please spend five to ten minutes filling in this short questionnaire to help me understand your prior learning experience, and learning preferences and expectations. (Feel free to use either Vietnamese or English as long as you can fully express your ideas.)

1. Your full name:

2. Your student code:

3. Your city/town/province:

4. Please describe briefly where and how long you have learnt English? (e.g., started at lower secondary school? used to study at foreign language centres? etc.)

5. Why do you want to study English?

6. What are your goals of studying listening-speaking skills?

7. What do you think are the strengths of your listening and speaking skills?

8. What aspects of listening/speaking skills do you most need to improve?

9. What are your expectations/suggestions for this class? (e.g. objectives? activities? skills? materials? etc.)/ What questions do you have about this class?

10. Other things you want to share:

Thank you for sharing ☺

Appendix 7: Some prompts to get students' feedback
at the end of the lesson

Please take five to ten minutes to write about your experience in this lesson. (Feel free to use either Vietnamese or English as long as you can fully express your ideas.):

1. How was the session going? What worked? What didn't work?

2. What do you think about what we discussed in the session?

3. What suggestions would you like to offer to make the class better?

4. Other comments:

Appendix 8: Questions in the course evaluation form

Please take ten to fifteen minutes to write about your experience in this course. (Feel free to use either Vietnamese or English as long as you can fully express your ideas.):

1. What did you gain from this course? (e.g., knowledge, skills, any changes, etc.)

2. In what ways was this course not useful to you?

3. What do you think about the content we studied and the materials we used in this course?

4. What do you think about the way of working in this course? (e.g., method of teaching and learning, tasks and activities, assessment, etc.)

5. What do you think about the teacher's approach to teaching? (good points and weak points)

6. Did you participate in this class more, equally, or less compared with the other language skills classes that you have attended so far? What influenced your level of participation in this class?

7. In general how did you feel after participating in the course?

8. What suggestions would you give the teacher to improve this course in the future? (e.g., what she could maintain, what she needs to change, what she could add, what she should leave out, etc.)

9. Other comments:

Thank you very much ☺

Appendix 9: Questions for focus group interviews in Class 2B-W

1. Free speaking: if you are to say a few things about our class (i.e., 2B), what would you say?

2. In our class, what worked?

3. What didn't work?

4. What was the best thing you liked about this class? Why?

5. What was the thing you disliked most about this class? Why?

6. Is there difference between the way we worked in this class and the way you have studied in other classes? What do you think about this difference?

8. What do you think about your interaction with your classmates and teacher in this class?

9. Has your view about the teaching and learning of a language (especially listening and speaking skills) changed after this class?

10. Do you have any suggestions or other comments?

Appendix 10: Activities and materials
for incorporating the EIL paradigm

As explained in the Conceptual Framework Chapter (i.e., Chapter 3), I drew on two approaches, namely teaching 'about' EIL and exposing students to a variety of Englishes. For the first approach, I planned an EIL lesson in Week 3. The session could be regarded as a follow-up to the lesson in Week 2, in which the students listened to a lecture about "Learning to speak someone else's language" (see the tentative schedule in Appendix 4). The core activity in the EIL lesson was the discussion with the class about five questions regarding key issues related to the status of English as an international language (see section 2.2 below). There were other small activities designed to facilitate the discussion in the core activity (see sections 1, 2.1, and 2.3-2.6). When I conducted the lesson in class, the discussion (with aiding activities) took longer than I had planned. Therefore, we could not finish discussing questions 4 and 5 and had to continue in the first half of the lesson in Week 4.

As can be seen in some aiding activities of the core discussion, the students had a chance to listen to different varieties of English other than the so-called standard British and American Englishes (i.e., RP and GA). In addition, there were other tasks/activities throughout the course in which they were exposed to various Englishes (see sections 3 and 4).

1. Listening task: Ban Ki-moon video clip

This activity was designed as a lead-in to the core activity for teaching 'about' EIL. The students watched a video clip in which Ban Ki-moon talked about global warming and the Copenhagen deal. The students then shared what they could hear and I also asked some questions to check their comprehension or to help them understand the parts they could not hear. This activity was adapted from the activity "Global issues on YouTube" in Matsuda and Duran (2012)[53]. There were several versions of the speech; I chose a video clip with more images and key words to scaffold the students' understanding (see below), as this might be the first time that some students had ever listened to a Korean speak English. Besides exposing the students to a Korean accent, the activity was to

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[53] Matsuda, A., & Duran, C. S. (2012). EIL activities and tasks for traditional English classrooms. In A. Matsuda (Ed.), *Principles and practices of teaching English as an international language* (pp. 201-237). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

demonstrate the purpose of learning English is to help solve global issues rather than imitating American or British accents. The content of the video was, therefore, relevant to the topics covered in Unit 2 in the textbook *Mosaic 1*, which include global issues such as Greenpeace, whale hunting, and endangered species.

2. Discussion

As noted above, the whole class discussion (section 2.2 below) was the core activity for teaching 'about' EIL. The other activities aimed to facilitate the discussion.

2.1. Group discussion: Talking points activity

The activity was a way for the students to activate and share with one another their prior knowledge and experience. The students formed groups of five or six. Each group stood in front of one question that I had glued on the wall (i.e., one talking point). They had approximately five minutes to discuss the question. After five minutes, I clapped my hands and the groups changed the questions or their talking points. When each group had had the chance to discuss all the five questions, I had the students return to their seats so that the whole class and I could discuss altogether.

1. "English has become an international language". What comes to your mind when you read this statement?

2. What images come to your mind when you hear the word "native speaker"?

3. What is 'standard' English to you? Who speaks 'standard' English?

4. As English learners, what should you learn to be able to communicate across cultures?

5. What is the role of the Vietnamese language and culture in English learning?

2.2. Whole class discussion

Below are the sub-questions, activities and materials I used to monitor the whole class discussion of each question.

1. "English has become an international language". What comes to your mind when you read this statement?

   Where is English spoken? Who speaks English?

   What does it mean for you as English learners?

   Visual aid: map of World Englishes in PowerPoint slide 1 in section 2.5 below.

   Give students some varieties of English for them to categorise (see PowerPoint slide 2)

   Discuss Kachru's circles (see PowerPoint slides 3-5).

2. What images come to your mind when you hear the word "native speaker"?

   Activity "Finding the 'native' speakers" (see section 2.3 below).

3. What is 'standard' English to you? Who speaks 'standard' English?

   Activity "Scots in the lift – Watch and think" (see section 2.4 below, see also PowerPoint slides 7-9 in section 2.5).

4. As English learners, what should you learn to be able to communicate across cultures?

   What elements are necessary to help the communication flow?

   Use the activities in section 2.6 below (see also PowerPoint slides 10-12 in section 2.5).

> 5. What is the role of the Vietnamese language and culture in English learning?

2.3. Finding the 'native' speakers

The aim of this activity was to problematise the notions of 'native' versus 'non-native' speakers. It points to the permeability of the border between 'native' speakers and 'non-native' speakers in this context of globalisation.

Show students the photos and have them guess some details about these people:
- Country/Nationality
- Language(s) spoken

Answers:

Waleed Aly

Born: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Education: University of Melbourne, Monash University

Occupations: radio and television presenter, lawyer, rock musician

Show part of the video clip: Interview with Waleed Aly:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUdu0niRlVA

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Lee Lin Chin Born: Jakarta, Indonesia (grew up in Singapore) Education: Singapore – grad/professional school Occupation: News presenter (SBS World News on the Australia SBS TV) *Video clip:* Lee Lin Chin does the 2014 Oscars in Celebrity Chin-Wag: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbhQHX2QX1w	
Nelson Mandela Born: Mvezo, Cape Province, Union of South Africa The first President of South Africa *Video clip:* Nelson Mandela interviewed by Neil Mitchell – 2000: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2v3ckPI4Ws	
Anh Do Born: 1977 in Vietnam Went to Australia in 1980 Occupations: actor, stand-up comedian *Video clip:* Anh Does Vietnam 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPTLXa8pBHg	
Nicolas Sarkozy Born: Paris, France The 23rd President of France (used to fail to graduate due to an insufficient command of the English language)	

Randy Born: Vietnam (Mom: Vietnamese; Father: an African-American soldier during Vietnam war; grew up in an orphanage and then brought to the USA in 1983) Occupation: singer *Video clip:* Randy presenting the song "*Mẹ*" [Mom] in Vietnamese: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjwY5HdtJx4	

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org and YouTube.com)

It should be noted that the last case (i.e., Randy) was added according to my colleagues' suggestion when I was discussing this activity with them in Week 2.

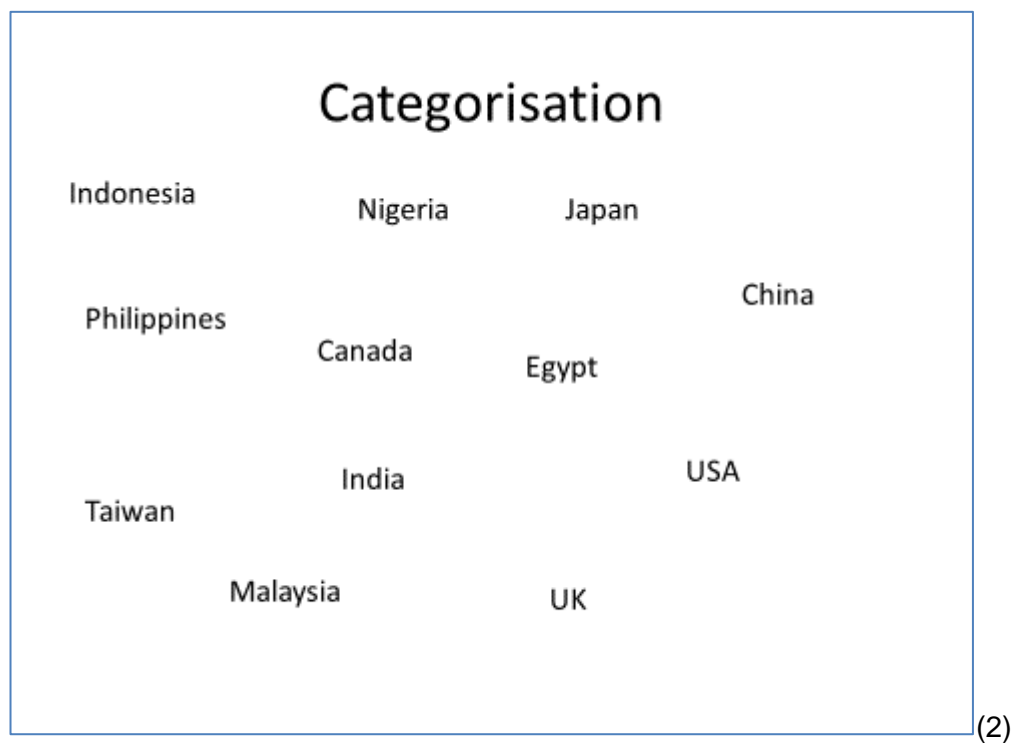### 2.4. "Scots in the lift" – Watch and think

This activity aimed to challenge the practice of selecting one or two varieties of English as the 'standard' for communication and for teaching and learning. The use of the humorous video clip was to attract the students' attention as well as assist with their thinking and discussing based on this situation (though invented). It would also give them a taste of Scottish accent and draw their attention to the fact that not all people in the United Kingdom speak the British pronunciation that they were taught at school and university (i.e., RP).

> Students watch the following clip from YouTube and discuss the following questions:
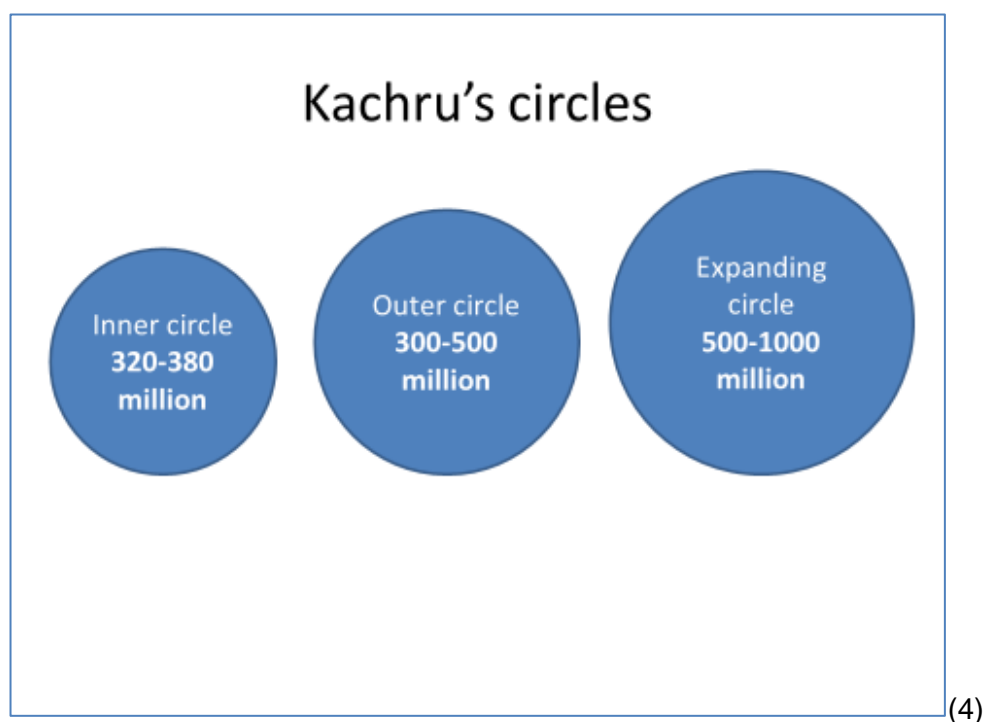>
> Voice activated Elevator They Don't Do Scottish Accents
> EnglishCentralcom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r48KA2X2Rb4
>
>   1. Where are the speakers?
>   2. What happens in the clip?
>   3. What are the problems in communication here?
>   4. Do the Scots speak English?
>   5. Should the accent spoken by the voice recognition machine be the 'standard'/'norm'?
>   6. What would happen if there were a lift operator there instead of the voice recognition machine?
>   7. Imagine this scenario happens in Vietnam: for example, a voice recognition machine using a northern Vietnamese accent is installed in the lift in a building in the south of Vietnam.

2.5. Powerpoint slides used in the EIL sessions

(1)[54]

(2)

Kachru's circles

Inner circle   Outer circle   Expanding circle

(3)[55]

Kachru's circles

Inner circle 320-380 million   Outer circle 300-500 million   Expanding circle 500-1000 million

(4)

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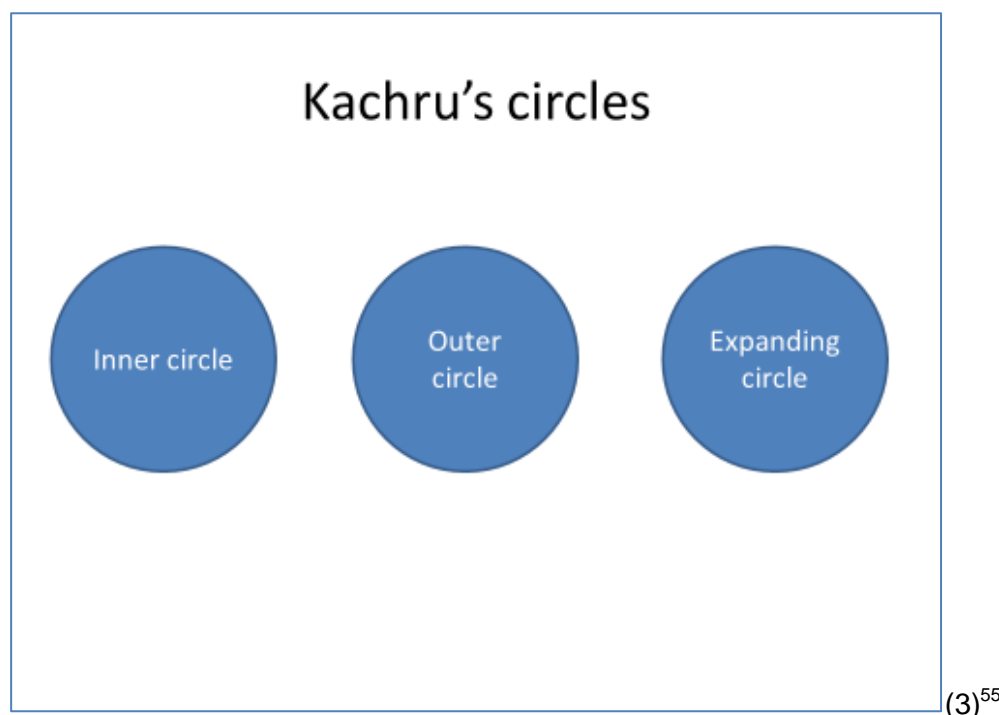
[55] Drawing on my colleagues' comments on my planned lesson for EIL, I did not present Kachru's circles the way he did, for his categorisation has been debated in the literature. My intention was to borrow his idea of the three circles, which most people tend to think of when talking about the status of English in different countries, but present them horizontally and use the visual effect to emphasise the bigger population in the outer circle and particularly in the expanding circle compared with the inner circle. I acknowledge that the use of the terms "inner circle", "outer circle" and "expanding circle" may not be appropriate any more given the complex sociolinguistic landscape of the English language in today's globalising world (see the discussion in Chapter 2). However, I focused more on the populations and the implication in terms of international communication rather than the issue of terminology, which I considered was beyond the scope of my teaching in this course.

Fact

- More than 80% of communication in English today is among the so-called non-native speakers of English.

(5)

(6)

What is 'standard' English?
Who speaks 'standard' English?

- "Scots in the lift" – Watch and think:

- What happens in the clip?

- What are the problems of communication here?

- Do the Scots speak English?

- Should the accent spoken by the voice recognition machine be the 'standard'/the 'norm'?

-What would happen if there were a lift operator instead of the voice recognition equipment?

-This scenario in Vietnam?

(7)

Fact

- Only 5% of British people speak RP.
- A similar case can be found for GA.

(8)

Tongue surgery

http://www.heymister.net/blog/2009/9/11/the-world-needs-more-american-flag-tongues.html

http://jeffbezemer.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/img_0919.jpg

(9)

Accommodation/negotiation skills

- SPEAKING AND LISTENING ACTIVELY
- Asking for clarification

    What do you mean?

    I'm not sure what you mean.

    Sorry, but I don't understand what you mean.

    Could you explain what you mean by...?

    Are you saying that ...?

    I'm not sure I follow you. Did you say that...?

- Clarifying or restating, repairing

    I mean...

    In other words, ...

    The point I'm trying to make is...

- Paraphrasing

    John said that...

    What Mary means is....

    I believe Dan's point is...

    I think Anne feels ... Isn't that right?

    Let me see if I understood. You said...

Checking for understanding

    Do you see what I mean?

    Is that clear?

    Does it make sense?

Elaboration

    In my culture, we consider...

(10)

Accommodation/negotiation skills

- Gestures
- Tones
- Attitudinal resources

(11)

A good English communicator

- Very good vocabulary?
- Very good grammar?
- Having British/American accent?
- Building up relationship?
- Sensitive to differences in cultures and experiences?
- Body language?
- Ideas?
- what else?

(12)

2.6. Matching activity and sample conversations for discussion

These activities were designed (based on my colleagues' comments and suggestions) as lead-ins to the discussion of question 4 in the core activity.

a. Matching the phrases with the categories:

Each group of students was given an envelope which contained small pieces of paper. On each piece of paper there was either a category or a set of phrases. The group had to match the phrases with the categories. After that, I had the students free-talk in pairs in five minutes and encouraged them to use these phrases when necessary in their conversations.

Clarifying or restating, repairing	Paraphrasing
Asking for clarification	Encouraging
Eliciting	Empathising

I see…. That's interesting. Uh-huh. Mmm…	Why is that an important issue for you? What concerns does that situation cause for you?
What do you mean? I'm not sure what you mean. Sorry, but I don't understand what you mean. Could you explain what you mean by…? Are you saying that …? I'm not sure I follow you. Did you say that…?	I can see why you feel that… That must have been very disturbing for you…
I mean… In other words, … The point I'm trying to make is…	John said that… What Mary means is…. I believe Dan's point is… I think Anne feels … Isn't that right? Let me see if I understood. You said…

b. Sample conversations:

The students read these conversations and discussed the way the speakers interacted in these samples.

---

1. Conversation between a Cambodian, an Indonesian and a Singaporean

C: in the future I hope that er (..) er more and more (..) Cambodians will speak English because erm we we understand about the advantages of English. We cannot erm live erm without English because {S: ok} we have to contact the world {S: eh hm} we have erm to do business with the world we have to {I: ehm} yeah we have to develop our country with the world. {S: ehm} So nearly all nearly all nearly all factors of development we have to (..) erm interdependent {S: eh hm} yeah we have to interdependent between one {S: eh hm} country and another country. So we have to use English in communi[cation

I: ah yes of] course yes

C: So Cambodian people rely and I will I will tell Cambodians I will tell them about the advantage advantages of English and ehm er (..) motivate them to learn English because I know the the the **good things** of English

S: the **benefits**

C: yeah the benefit **you want to travel the world?**

I: well you [can you

C: you you] have to speak English

I: you [can

C: you] want to do business with er {I: ehm ehm} other country you have [to

S: you have] to use English

I: yeah

C: use] English

I: yeah yeah ok

C: you want to do research? (I: laugh)

S: you have to do it in English

C: you have to (S+I: laugh) to do in English (general laughter)

(Kirkpatrick, A. (2007). *World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching* (pp. 228-229). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press).

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2. A conversation between a Singaporean, a Burmese and a Laotian

S: do they] do they write essays do they write essays do the pupils write compositions?

M: can your students write an essay or paragraph {S: eh hm} a composition?

L: yes I think they can write because er as I /a// them to /rai/ er the story they can write and some mistakes I think that's ok for them because they have never learned English before.

(McKay, S. (2005). Teaching the pragmatics of English as an international language. *Guidelines*, *27*(1), 3-9.)

3. British English versus American English

A husband sitting in his living room is addressing his wife. The husband is of middle class American background; the wife is British. They have been married and living in the United States for a number of years:

Husband: Do you know where today's paper is?

Wife: *I'll* get it for you.

Husband: That's O.K. Just tell me where it is. *I'll* get it.

Wife: No, I'LL get it.

(Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies* (pp.134-135). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press)

3. "Ceremonies" poster presentations

Unit 10 in the textbook *Interactions 2* is about ceremonies in different countries. In the textbook there is an activity in which the students interview a classmate or a friend from a different culture, community, or religion about his or her way of celebrating a ceremony, and then share the information with the class in a short presentation. Generally, all of the students enrolling in my faculty were Vietnamese. They might talk about the ceremonies in their regions but in that case, there would be no opportunities for them to listen to someone from a different country using English with their own accent to speak about a ceremony there. The unit also contains two listening exercises about two ceremonies in the United States and in Thailand but the speakers in the accompanying compact disc spoke with American accents. I had planned an interview activity (see section xii in the course syllabus in Appendix 4 above) but the topic for the activity was open to the negotiation with my students when the course started. In case

my students chose the interview activity with a different topic and they could not do another interview activity for this unit (because they had to go to the main campus in the centre of the city to look for foreign students/tourists), I planned another replacement activity in advance. Before returning to Vietnam for the fieldwork, I asked some friends I knew during the time I had been in Australia to talk in a few minutes about a ceremony in their country for me to audio-record. I contacted some via Facebook, for they were not in Melbourne at that time; and they recorded by themselves and sent the recording to me via Facebook. I made it clear to my friends that these audio-recordings were to be given to my students so that they had an opportunity to listen to varieties other than RP and GA and I would not reveal my friends' names. My friends were free to choose any ceremony that they liked to talk about (see the list of the ceremonies in the recordings below).

During the first few weeks of the teaching course, I noticed some students had been exposed to some varieties of English elsewhere such as through watching video clips on YouTube or cable TV at home. Therefore, I designed a small activity in which I let the students listen to the recordings of the ceremonies and asked them to match each speaker with particular varieties of English that I had listed. After that, I assigned each group of students a recording for them to listen more closely at home and prepare a poster to present the ceremony described in the recording to the whole class in the following week. The students were encouraged to search for more information about the ceremonies when designing the posters.

In the poster presentation session, two members of each group were in charge of presenting the ceremony in their poster. The other members freely walked around the classroom to listen to any presentations they liked and talked with the presenters about the ceremonies.

Ceremonies:
    Wedding ceremony in a region in Indonesia
    Kite flying in India
    Christmas in the Philippines
    New Year tradition in Bangladesh
    New Year tradition in China
    New Year tradition in Sri Lanka
    The Ramadan Feast in Nigeria
    The Ramadan Feast in Malaysia

4. Additional listening tasks/materials:

4.1. Posts on Facebook

Considering the time limitation and the requirements of the course, I was afraid that if I had my students listen too much to other varieties of English in class, I would put them at a 'disadvantage' compared to their peers in the other classes in the final listening tests in this course as well as in their future courses, which were based on RP and GA. Moreover, anyone who has studied a new language knows that it will take long before we become familiar with one variety. Furthermore, it is a difficult question as to what varieties of English would be useful to each of my students in the future. Therefore, in class I only let my students have a taste of some varieties of English other than RP and GA via some activities as presented above. I then encouraged them to listen to different varieties at home, choosing the ones that they liked or found useful. I sometimes shared some video clips on Facebook, in some of which the speakers used accents different from RP or GA. These were for the students to watch at home if they liked and they could use them for the extensive listening section in their listening learning log (see Appendix 5).

When sharing video clips, I particularly chose (if there were any) the ones which were related to the topics taught in the textbooks or in which the speakers were Vietnamese. For instance, in the first example below (i.e., the video clip "Building peace at summer camp"), two teenagers (an Israeli and a Palestinian) talked about the activities that they engaged in at the Seeds of Peace camp and how they built peace when they returned home. The content of the video was relevant to the topic "Cooperation and competition" in Unit 2 of the textbook *Mosaic 1*. Therefore, I posted the video on Facebook for the students to listen by themselves at home. This aimed to help them explore thoroughly the topic while being exposed to different accents. [I also meant to recommend www.buildingpeace.org to the students since there are other video clips about global issues and with different varieties of English on the website (see the point regarding global issues in English teaching and learning in the activity with the Ban Ki-moon video clip in section 1 above).]

In the second example, the speaker is a well-known Vietnamese. This was to help the students see how a Vietnamese person used her own variety of English to communicate with the world.

Tran
April 12, 2014

Wednesday 16th April: Mosaic 1 Unit 2: Cooperation and competition

Additional listening task:

This clip may be a bit difficult for some of you but don't worry. It's not
necessary to hear every word they said. If you can understand the main
ideas, that's great.... See More

Seeds of Peace: Building Peace at
Summer Camp | Global
Peacebuilding Center | United
States...

They came together at a summer camp in Maine...

BUILDINGPEACE.ORG

Like · Comment · Share

Tran shared a link.
March 31, 2014

www.ted.com is a website where you can find many inspiring speeches by
motivational speakers. Here's an interesting one by Madam Ninh, a famous
Vietnamese.

http://tedxtalks.ted.com/.../Change-Identity-vs-Humanity-Mad;...

Watch "Change: Identity vs.
Humanity: Madam (TON NU THI)
Ninh at TEDxSanJoaquin" Video at
TEDxTalks

In the horrors of war the Vietnamese retained their...

TEDXTALKS.TED.COM

Like   Comment   Share

4.2. Extensive listening in the listening learning log

As explained in Appendix 5, in the extensive listening part of the listening learning log,
I encouraged my students to listen to a wide range of Englishes. They were allowed to
use the materials which were suitable for their levels and interests.

4.3. Films

Some films for the students to borrow and watch at home if they needed: My fair lady;
Life of Pi; The kite runner; Slumpdog millionaire; Outsourced.