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Daughter-in-law of a hundred families:

forming national professional identities in

the teaching of global English

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or any other educational institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

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The plan for this research was approved by the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (reference 2000/460).

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ABSTRACT

The worldwide debate about the role of English and English Language Teaching (ELT) has brought about different ways of looking at the images of teachers of English. Although the debate focuses on different issues, such as the ownership of English and how English and ELT are related to the discourses of colonialism, what appears to be controversial is the ethics and the politics of English and ELT. This problem includes how the images of the English teachers and students have been constructed in relation to postcolonial notions of Self (the coloniser) and Other (the colonised). The Other teachers of English are thus given certain identities, identities which have been treated as fixed in the ELT field. This relates to the question of teacher identity formation, which has affected how teachers of English see themselves as teachers and how they carry out their work practices.

With the rapid growth and expansion of English and ELT worldwide, the role of teachers of English has become more and more important. Their identities have been coupled with how English has been seen. The last fifteen years has witnessed their heyday. Being a teacher of English has become desirable and fashionable, and it is attached to opportunities, wealth and higher education. Teachers of English have also been seen as being more westernized, in that their enactment of their teacher role has been more or less influenced by English and associated values. Those teachers who are trained in English-speaking countries are seen even more critically by the society. They are given certain identities.

Over the last decades, there has also been a debate about identity related issues. Authors from different countries and various disciplines have expressed their perspectives on numerous issues, such as what identity is and means, the question of cultural identity, and identity formation. How these issues have been viewed is very much influenced by the way the authors see the world. Hence, the question of identity has been seen differently by different people, and it has been explored from multiple angles.

This study, drawing on various theories of identities and the literature on the ethics and the politics of English and ELT, takes a specific look at the processes of identity formation of a group of seven Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australian universities. A qualitative case study approach with the intensive use of in-depth interviews and reflective writing is adopted to collect data. The study contributes to the above debates by exploring how these teachers define themselves as teachers and individuals in relation to their movement in space and time between Vietnam and Australia, and in relation to postcolonial notions of Self and Other.

The findings suggest that postcolonial notions of Self and Other are not powerful enough to understand the processes of identity formation of the teachers participating in this study. They also affirm the paradoxical nature of identity. On the one hand, the participants identified their fragmented, multiple, and hybrid identities, but on the other, they perceived a sense of an enduring core. This gave them a sense of belonging. The processes by which these identities were formed emerged as being dynamic, fluid, fragmenting yet unifying. They are context-related, and responsive to internal and external conditions.

The identity formation of these Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australia was affected by multi-layer relations and different contexts, and with every relation and in each context, these teachers had to negotiate, sometimes compromise, and then assert themselves in such a way that would protect them best from social judgements, stereotypes and fixed representations in the teaching of global English. They played the role of 'the daughter-in-law of a hundred families', the daughter that had to try hard to 'please' all parties, yet relate to her sense of her own identities.

Based on the findings, a number of implications for the ELT field have been given, such as how to help TESOL teachers with their self-identification.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Foreword

Discussing identity has been my interest since I was a university student in Vietnam. Our people often talk about how Vietnam would be best protected from losing its identity in the context of globalization and regionalization. Vietnamese identity is something living, something out there that we can lose if we do not preserve and protect it. Vietnamese identity is something abstract, intangible, untouchable, yet specific so that we can name its content, such as the tradition of building the country and fighting for its independence, the tradition of respecting teachers and the teaching profession, and the role of 'village' in Vietnamese people's lives. Vietnamese identity is the only identity that is mentioned, and whatever a Vietnamese does is influenced by and for the consolidation of this identity.

This view of identity has influenced the way I see the world. When I first came to Australia, I often thought of identity in terms of cultural and national identity. For me, there was only one identity and that identity defined me as a Vietnamese. I assumed that by saying "I am Vietnamese" I would make others understand what I meant by being a Vietnamese. Likewise, as a Vietnamese teacher of English studying TESOL in Australia, I tended to believe that this sense of being Vietnamese would be the most and only important identity. This sense of a Vietnamese identity was so strong that I tended to assume that it made sense to everyone in the same way. I thus assumed that Vietnamese teachers of English studying in Western countries would always firmly adhere to this shared Vietnamese identity, and would hardly change their ways of performing the role of a Vietnamese teacher.

But then my views started to change due to my exposure to and acquaintance with a new teaching and learning environment in Australia. My contact with Western arguments of identity has challenged my views and broadened my ways of seeing the world. Identity is not just about what we think ourselves to be. It is also about representation, about how we have been constructed by others. Being a teacher of English is not simply about doing the teaching. It involves the question of identity formation, the question of Self and Other. But by the time I was aware of the changes in

my views, I also realized that it was my sense of being Vietnamese that 'unified' me. Then I asked myself, "How about other Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australia? How do they see themselves in relation to changes?" That was how the topic for this thesis blossomed.

1.2 Teacher identity in the context of English and English Language Teaching

There has been a debate in the world regarding the role of English, English Language Teaching (ELT) and the role of teachers of English. The debate is centred around issues, such as the variety of Englishes (Kachru 1982, 1986, McArthur 1998), how English and ELT are related to the discourses of colonialism (Pennycook 1994, 1998), the ownership of English (Widdowson 1997, Brutt-Griffler 1998, Deneire 1998), how to make English an international language serving all users (Brutt-Griffler 2002, McKay 2002), or simply why and how English has become a world/global language (Crystal 1997). These issues have impacted on the way we see ourselves as teachers and scholars and the way we carry out our work practices.

Although different authors present different, even conflicting, arguments about the above issues, the ethics and politics of English and ELT appear to cause controversies. These include how English and ELT have been acting as colonizing forces, how discriminatory and imperial they are, and how the images of the English teacher and student have been constructed in the ELT field. These involve the question of identity and identity formation of teachers of English, which is embedded in postcolonial notions of Self (the colonizer) and Other (the colonized). These notions have been very powerful in representing the Other teachers of English (Phillipson 1992, Pennycook 1998) as those who do not know how to teach effectively, as those who follow backward teaching methods, and as those who are by all means worse than the Self teachers. The Other teachers, accordingly, have been made to see themselves in the same way and uncritically place themselves lower than the Self. Thus, common assumptions tend to be that the Other teachers trained in English-speaking countries are likely to adopt Western teaching and learning practices for use in their local contexts, and that they are potentially harmful for their countries (Phillipson 1992).

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With the rapid growth and expansion of English and ELT worldwide, the role of teachers of English has become more and more important. Teachers of English in Vietnam have been playing the role of spreading English to every corner of the country, making English more popular and accessible to whoever wants to learn the language. They have also made English available for increasing demands nationally. Their identities have been coupled with how English has been seen. The last fifteen years has witnessed their heyday. Being a teacher of English has become desirable and fashionable, and it is attached to opportunities, wealth and higher education. Teachers of English have also been seen as being more westernized, in that their enactment of their teacher role has been more or less influenced by English and associated values. Those teachers who are trained in English-speaking countries are seen even more critically by the society. They are given certain identities.

In the context of the politics of English and ELT, and given the postcolonial notions of Self and Other and the identities of teachers of English assumed by their own society, this study aims to explore how these notions apply in the way Vietnamese teacher of English studying TESOL in Australia identify themselves, and how they see themselves as teachers and individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future.

1.3 Identity formation and the multiplicity of conceptual tools

Together with the debate about the role of English, ELT and English teachers in the world, the debate about identity has also been going on and it has produced different, even conflicting arguments of what identity is and means. For example, those who follow essentialist views tend to look at identity in terms of wholeness, stability, a core identity, belongingness and homogeneity, whereas those who pursue non-essentialist ideas explore identity with regard to dynamic change, hybridity, fragmentation and multiplicity (Hall & du Gay 1996, Hall 1997b, Woodward 1997, Dolby 2000, Farrell 2000). The latter argue that identities are multiple and they are constructed, instead of being available out there in the world. Identity involves a question of "becoming" rather than "being" and a question of us constructing our "routes" rather than going back to "roots" (Hall 1996:4). They also argue that identities are changing, formed and

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transformed and never unified and defined (Holland 1996, Hall 1997a, b, Lin 2002, Paasi 2002, Smith 2002, Willis & Yeoh 2002, Crang et al., 2003, Koczberski & Curry 2004).

Non-essentialist views have dominated the conversation about identity-related issues in the academy over the last twenty years, resulting in the tendency to neglect other ways of looking at identity, for example identity is about a coherent growth, a sense of connectedness and a sense of wholeness (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, b, c). My experiences and observations regarding identity formation have suggested that non-essentialist views alone are insufficient to understand identities. An example of a process that follows a more essentialist trend is what happened after the September 11 event. From the media shaping of the event, I have a feeling that this very event has made American people aware of the so-called 'national spirit'. Such an event as this makes people realize that they belong to one nation, and they need to unite under one identity to overcome and grow. Other individual identities suddenly become secondary, and one overall identity is needed to give people a sense of belonging. They do need it to feel secure and united. This identity is national identity, which is something imagined, something invented, something constructed as many Western authors argue. But such an event has made it something visible, tangible and real. This makes me think of Vietnam – my country. I wonder why we Vietnamese people often talk about and affirm our Vietnamese identity. Why do Vietnamese scholars ceaselessly argue for a Vietnamese identity, which has unique characteristics (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001c, Tran Quoc Vuong 2000)? Why do I, who have been influenced by Western theories of culture and identity, also feel that we have a Vietnamese national and cultural identity? Vietnam has its own identity. I myself feel this identity and it is the very thing that gives me a sense of belonging when I am here, in Australia, and far from my homeland.

However, this way of understanding identities as national identity alone also seems to silence other identities which all contribute to identity formation. When one set of ideas does not work sufficiently to understand identity formation, it is necessary to draw on multiple theories to seek a better understanding. This study hence draws on a number of Vietnamese and Western theorists' perceptions of identity, language and culture to best present the multiplicity of theories of identities and positioning. This also helps examine how the processes of identity formation take place, and explains the meanings of

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different contexts which affect the identity formation of the teachers participating in this study.

Given what has been expressed above and the nature of the study, in order to best understand the identity formation processes of these Vietnamese teachers, it is essential for me to draw on two bodies of knowledge, the Vietnamese and Western theorists' perceptions of language, culture and identity. As the study is located in the context of ELT with a specific focus on the politics of ELT, postcolonial notions of Self and Other are thus relevant elements in identity formation. Issues related to how English and ELT have contributed to shaping identities of teachers of English, such as what is going on in TESOL programmes and how CLT has been promoted with regard to teacher's and . student's roles, are also relevant to the discussion of identity formation.

1.4   Research aims and questions

1.4.1 Research aims

♦ To investigate processes of teacher identity formation in movement in space and time between contexts of teaching in Vietnam and studying teaching in Australia

♦ To explore the explanatory power of postcolonial notions of Self and Other in investigating these processes.

1.4.2 Research questions

♦ How do Vietnamese teachers of English who have studied in Australian universities see themselves as teachers and individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future?

♦ In what ways can postcolonial notions of Self and Other help us understand the processes of identity formation?

1.5   Organization of the thesis

Chapter One is the Introduction of the whole thesis, positioning the research within the personal and global motivations for a focus on personal and professional teacher identity formation.

Chapter Two looks at the Vietnamese and Western authors' arguments about the relationships between language, culture and identity to establish conceptual tools for understanding the processes of identity formation, such as identity fastening, unfastening and refastening, and appropriation and resistance.

Chapter Three investigates the politics of English and ELT with a focus on postcolonial notions of Self and Other to set the context for interpreting teacher identity formation in relation to postcolonial dichotomies, such as native and non-native teachers of English, and to the extended dichotomies of Self and Other, such as Western-trained and non-Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English.

Chapter Four presents the research methods employed to conduct this study, which is located in an interpretive epistemology and a qualitative approach. Using a case study approach, the study draws on data collected from in-depth interviews and reflective writing to elicit the experiences and perspectives of the participants, who were Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australian universities. The data are also analysed and explained based on grounded theory, drawing on different theories of identities and postcolonial notions of Self and Other.

Full transcriptions of the data (in Vietnamese) are available if requested.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven are chapters of analysis. Chapter Five examines processes of identity formation manifested in the three dichotomies, namely the teacher and/or the student, the professional and/or the personal, and the moral guide and/or the teacher of English. These apparently contradictory roles and selves have been explored to understand how these Vietnamese teachers studying TESOL in Australian universities saw themselves as teachers and as individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future.

Chapter Six investigates the relationship between teacher identity and the politics of ELT. The explanatory power of postcolonial notions of Self and Other in understanding processes of teacher identity formation is explored. Self and Other discussed here have moved very far from their original images of the coloniser and the colonised used by Pennycook (1998). In this study, apart from representing the dichotomy of native and/or non-native teachers of English, they refer to Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English, and teachers of English and/or teachers of

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Russian. Through their discussion, it was evident how the participants' teacher identity was constructed, shifted, negotiated and reshaped within these dichotomies.

Chapter Seven looks specifically at one participant's (Kien) experiences to explore how processes of identity formation take place at the individual level. It also seeks to understand how Kien negotiated his identities, and how his ways of negotiation differed from those of the other participants. With a focus on contexts, this chapter examines how identity formation is contextualised and how identities are dynamically shaped.

Chapter Eight closes the thesis with the overall discussion of the findings, implications for the ELT field and directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 - LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

2.1 Introduction

This study aims to achieve two goals, namely to investigate processes of teacher identity formation in movement in space and time between contexts of teaching in Vietnam and studying teaching in Australia, and to explore the explanatory power of postcolonial notions of Self and Other in investigating these processes. This necessarily involves the question of identity and processes of identity formation where language and culture play an essential part. Since language and culture are intimately interrelated (Hall 1997a), language acts as social practices (Fairclough 1989, Farrell 1997, Liddicoat 1997, Phan Le Ha 2001), and culture is about "shared meanings" (Hall 1997a:1), one's sense of identity is constructed within the relationship between language and culture (Hall 1997a). We construct identity through language, as language is used about us, by us and for us. Each of us has embedded within us cultural values, and through language, we communicate our culture. Language acts as a means through which identity is communicated, extended, confirmed, constructed, negotiated and reconstituted.

It has been long argued that language and culture are closely interlinked. Whether in the 'East' or 'West', the relationship between language and culture has been explored and consolidated by theories and well-argued studies. While defining this relationship, scholars of different cultures have come up with different approaches to the notions of language and culture, demonstrating the complexity and interconnectedness of such notions. Since the focus of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teacher identity of Vietnamese teachers of English, who were exposed to two different sets of cultural and pedagogical practices in Vietnam and Australia, Western and Vietnamese theoretical perspectives are discussed to assist in achieving the aims of the research.

Although the arguments about language, culture and identity developed and pursued by Western and Vietnamese scholars are from two almost completely different traditions, bringing them together is helpful in understanding the identity formation of Vietnamese teachers of English who were trained in the West. On the one hand, when Western theorists fail to decode why a strong sense of belonging was shared among these teachers, Vietnamese authors are able to do the job persuasively with their theory of the

'being' and 'becoming' of identity. On the other, while Vietnamese authors seem to ignore the notion of individual identity and thus fail to acknowledge its existence, Western theorists help by introducing their constructivist approach to identity formation. According to them, identity is constructed minute by minute, and is multiple, dynamic and hybrid. They pay attention to fragmented identities rather than one overall identity, as suggested by Vietnamese authors. Moreover, the very idea expressed by Western theorists of identity presents a paradox. They argue the central formative and responsive role of culture and cultural values in identity formation, yet at the same time fail to consider and acknowledge the validity of views shaped by other cultures which may emphasise quite different aspects of identity. For example, Vietnamese thinkers emphasise the importance of a national identity based on the study of culturally shaped values, yet Hall's (1997a) views also focus on individual identity. Thus, the introduction of Vietnamese scholars' views of identity is helpful in harmonising or resolving this paradox. Thanks to both traditions, Western and Vietnamese, the multiple identities of these teachers are acknowledged, and the issue as to why they perceived a consistent sense of being Vietnamese within these multiple identities is answered with reference to the ways in which culture can shape our sense of self. Through the lenses of both traditions, the complexity and sophistication of the identity formation of these Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English are best revealed, understood, and argued. The notion of the influence of culture is the thread that brings these two very different sets of views together, despite their apparent contradictions.

It should be noted that in this study I am not trying to invent a new coherent conceptual tool based on these two seemingly contradictory traditions. It is not possible to make a hybrid model, either. Rather, I am employing both traditions to interpret and analyse the data to achieve the research aims. It seems important to use the range of ideas to better interpret and represent the diversity of experience and the tensions between apparently contradictory senses of self for professionals in local and global contexts. Creating a harmonious model would belie these tensions.

2.2 Language and Culture

As a Vietnamese and being influenced by the Vietnamese education as well as culture, I would like to first explore Vietnamese authors' voices regarding their arguments about

language and culture. Since I have been partly educated in Australia, I have also been influenced by Western sociological and cultural theories. Thus, I would like to investigate what and how Western authors view the relationship between language and culture. Then, my viewpoints regarding this relationship will be better shaped and better argued.

2.2.1 Vietnamese authors' voices

First are the voices of several Vietnamese scholars, whom I have honoured and owed for their works on culture, which have breathed life into my understanding of the world of the Vietnamese culture in particular.

2.2.1.1 The intimate relationship between language and culture

Vietnamese authors argue that language and culture are closely interlinked. Tran Ngoc Them (1993) remarks that while language and labour made human beings, they are also the sources of all cultures. Therefore, the development of both culture and language (mother tongue) is simultaneous (Do Anh 1993). According to Nguyen Lai (1993), language is not only included in the definition of culture but it also influences culture through multiple levels of complexity. He also argues that language formation is a multi-faceted premise for culture formation and development, and culture in turn enables language development. He also observes that language is considered the only means to decode all forms of arts associated with culture since language is an act of thinking. Based on this function, language has the ability to comprehensively create artistic works with words, reflecting the cultural development of a community. Therefore, in the relationship with culture, language - after 'melding' with other arts - is able to draw a lively comprehensive picture of a community's spiritual life. Because both language and culture are interrelatedly developed and act as 'tradition inheritors', they embed in themselves the most distinctive features of a nation's spirit and appearance.

Nguyen Duc Ton (1993:18) explores a national culture in parallel with language and language thought-patterns. He sees that characteristics of a national culture are reflected through human beings' activities, and language is a vital means and condition for the genesis, development and activities of other elements within culture. In his argument, language is one of the most distinctive features in any national culture since language best stores and represents a national culture. To emphasise this, he refers to

Vereshchagin's and Kostomarov's idea that "language is a real mirror of a national culture". Vu Ngoc Khanh (1993) shares this view by arguing that the development of a national culture can be seen through the development of its language. Language records different stages of development of a culture as well as providing a way to 'master' science. Language itself is created to represent new ideas and new concepts, and language itself in turn promotes intellectual breadth and cultural development. Vu Ngoc Khanh also links language with thinking and discusses that thinking reflects the level of development of a nation, and thus the degree of development of a culture can also be seen through language.

Nguyen San's (1999:2-3) discussions about language and culture seem to reflect the above authors' perspectives, presenting a comprehensive picture of this at once simple and complex relationship. He argues that despite dozens of definitions of language and hundreds of definitions of culture, they all agree on the systematic quality of both language and culture. Thanks to this quality, both language and culture have been able to maintain the stability of a particular society and community. That is to say, socially speaking, language and culture have functioned to organise a society and unite its members to gradually create a national identity generated at a certain point in history. Nguyen San emphasises that language together with other factors simultaneously fulfils the function of national culture. He suggests that the cultural distinctiveness of each people is represented through different ways of viewing and defining the world. Nguyen San proposes four theoretical points regarding the relationship between language and culture. First, language and culture are social institutions and signifying, spiritual activities. Second, language both directly and implicitly determines culture, although language is one element of culture. Third, language and culture permeate each other to develop in accordance with the principle of inheriting traditions, thus they possess the most distinctive features of a community spirit. Fourth, language carries and promotes culture, heading towards civilisation.

2.2.1.2 Language as social and cultural practices

Vietnamese authors view language as social practices. Nguyen Lai (1993) observes that both culture and language are social organisations. In principle, both culture and language activities are spiritual activities, which are based on a process of symbolisation of psycho-social values. Thus culture and language embody in themselves social norms

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of a particular society and this gives them a sense of the 'specific' and 'defined' in addition to common values shared by different communities. He refers to Saussure's remark that if one wants to discover the nature/truth of language, one should at first view language in terms of what it shares with other similar systems. Language and culture are thus viewed as 'signs' and this takes into account the psycho-social premise which is closely connected with the humanities. Nguyen Lai proposes the rather provocative argument that, as a means to progress from culture to civilisation, language is an 'open' act and despite this 'openness' it is not necessarily easily 'foreignised' or 'derooted' as many scholars fear. The concept of being 'foreignised' or 'derooted' here partly refers to the campaign 'For the purity of the Vietnamese language'. Every Vietnamese is asked to make effort to preserve the cultural richness and purity of the language. This effort helps deny and minimise foreign elements, so as to protect the language from losing its cultural traits and purity. So when many scholars are afraid of Vietnamese being 'foreignised' or 'derooted', they actually suggest that language and culture are something visible, tangible, something 'out there', and thus they can be lost. Nguyen Lai sees language and culture as interdependent and language as social practice, which means for him that language is subject to deliberate human efforts to control it.

Nguyen Duc Dan (1993) notes that language is social and a nation's cultural vision is reflected in its language. In addition to this, Nguyen Trong Bau (1993) remarks on the role of language in clearly visualising a nation's spirit, cultural values and life. Nguyen San (1999) contends that language and culture are social institutions and signifying spiritual activities.

So far it is clear that except for Nguyen Lai (1993) and Nguyen Trong Bau (1993), there is an emphasis on 'high culture', arts, spirituality and intellectual life, but not much about values and philosophies underlying practices. All the Vietnamese scholars firmly attach themselves and their arguments about language and culture to national culture and identity, in this case, Vietnamese culture and identity, which are both the means and ends in their arguments.

2.2.2 Western authors' voices

Now I would like to present voices of Western scholars who demonstrate the relationship between language and culture in their own ways, not necessarily different from the Vietnamese scholars, but with no explicit link to national culture or identity.

2.2.2.1 The intimate relationship between language and culture

Hall's (1997a) presentation of the relationship between language and culture seems to be the most comprehensive and influential. In Hall's (1997a) arguments, the relationship between language and culture can be briefly understood as follows: Culture is about "shared meanings" (p.1), meanwhile meanings are produced and circulated through language, as language "operates as a *representational system*" (p.1). Acting as the "privileged medium" (p.1), language helps humans "make sense" of the world, both the inside and outside world. Thus, culture can be seen through language and language permeates culture to reflect the human, social, and natural world. This relationship between language and culture will be illustrated by a number of points.

To begin with, culture is seen as "a process, a set of *practices*" (p.2), while language is seen as the medium through which a set of practices are visualised, conveyed, sensed, illustrated, and constantly constructed. In other words, culture is something we *do* and language is a way through which we *practise* our culture.

Secondly, Hall argues that things themselves hold no meanings. Instead, meanings are constructed through language. This reminds me of Gee's (1999:40) arguments of meaning, in which he sees meaning as socially situated, and "the meanings of words [as] ... not stable and general". Language is not 'out there', not intrinsic in words, but meaning is socially constructed. It is we, humans, who give meanings to people, objects and events; and language acts as the vehicle carrying these meanings. By doing so, we breathe life into words, constantly creating meanings and leaving words with all the senses of our culture. Language is both a product and process of culture. As a process of culture, language affects culture and the relationship between language and culture is a two-way interaction.

Thirdly, Hall (1997a:4) argues that as culture is about *shared meanings*, in order to interpret the world in roughly similar ways, people from the same culture must share "*cultural codes*". These 'cultural codes' are 'meanings'. But sharing 'cultural codes' is not enough for them to communicate if they do not have "*linguistic codes*" (p.4) to convey their "cultural codes". So, they must also have "linguistic codes" and these linguistic codes are language. This argument about 'cultural codes' and 'linguistic codes' shows that people will understand each other when they are from the same

culture and speak the same language. That means language is always coupled with culture and vice versa so as to enable people to communicate successfully.

Next, as indicated above, we construct meanings through languages. That is to say, languages are what they *do*, not what they are. So what do languages do? Hall (1997a:4) argues that "languages work *through representation*". To put it simply, languages are used by members of a culture to communicate and interpret the world in a meaningful way. In other words, languages signify by functioning as "signs" (p.5). In short, language "is a signifying practice" (p.5). While culture is a set of practices, language plays a role in signifying/symbolising this set of practices. Thus, "representation connects meaning and language to culture" (p.15), since "representation is the production of meaning through language" (p.16). However, to understand how representation works, it is necessary to mention two processes, which Hall calls two "systems of representation" (p.17). Members of a culture need to have access to these two systems to communicate meaningfully with each other. The first one is called "mental representations" (p.17) or "the conceptual map" (p.18) "which we carry around in our heads" (p.17). This shared conceptual map works together with the second system, which Hall calls "language" (p.18) or more generally "signs" (p.18), to enable people of the same culture to understand and interpret the world in roughly similar ways. At this point, it is worth stressing that the relationships between concepts and signs are governed and fixed by codes, and different languages, different cultures have different codes for these relationships.

From all the above points, it is clear that Hall (1997a) has entered the world of language and culture through the 'constructionist approach' as he calls it. The most important argument here is that through language - which works as a representational system, - and culture, - which is about shared meanings, - meanings are produced, constructed and circulated. Meanings are not 'out there' in the world, but they are constructed through humans' interactions with each other and with the natural world.

2.2.2.2 Language as social and cultural practices

Western scholars demonstrate their understanding of language as social and cultural practices. In reviewing Hall's works in the field of cultural studies, Grossberg (1996:157) demonstrates that Hall views culture as "the struggle over meaning, a struggle that takes place over and within the sign." Culture is "never merely a set of

practices, technologies or messages, objects whose meanings and identity can be guaranteed by their origin or their intrinsic essences" (p.157). Instead, "culture is 'the particular pattern of relations established through the social use of things and techniques'" (p.157-158). Grossberg (1996:158) goes on to state that Hall sees culture as "the site of the struggle to define how life is lived and experienced, a struggle carried out in the discursive forms available to us". These arguments support the view that language operates as social practices.

Liddicoat (1997:13) argues that "language use in a group is a form of cultural behaviour". This suggests that language is seen as cultural/social practices. Socially-valued text types, or genres, therefore, are determined by socio-cultural norms. Hence, "any study of a body of texts must see genre as culturally situated, culturally defined and culturally defining" and "texts like other parts of language are cultural activities and the act of writing is an act of encoding culture as much as it is a case of encoding information" (Liddicoat 1997:13). This results in the relationship between culture and writing (as a form of language) about which Soter (1988:178) concludes that "the ways in which we express thought in writing are very strongly influenced by our experiences with discourse generally and written text specifically and the related conventions that govern each of these within our own social and cultural contexts." In addition, Fairclough (1989:17) contends that "actual discourse is determined by socially constituted orders of discourse, sets of conventions associated with social institutions". This strongly supports his perception of discourse and language as social practice "determined by social structures" (p.17). Also, Farrell (1994) alludes to the fact that whether elements of a text are considered to be important in an argument is determined by culture. Recognised as a substantial element of the "cognitive apparatus" (Farrell 1994:17), culture is invoked by individuals to create coherence in discourse within each particular disciplinary framework.

Since language is seen as social and cultural practices, it always carries social and cultural messages and is contextualised. Language itself never stays alone and is never meaning-free. Thus language use is a way to communicate culture and social practices.

2.3 Language, culture and identity

However different in the way they approach the relationship between language and culture, both Vietnamese and Western scholars acknowledge the vital role of language and culture in identity formation.

Hall's (1997a) arguments about the intimate relationship between language and culture have partly asserted his approach to defining identity, which he sees as being constructed through the process of meaning production. These arguments offer grounds for the question of identity - "who I am" - to develop and be explored in great depth. Not only that, his arguments have also opened the door to understanding the inside world of human beings, since we all construct meanings as we go on, and "meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity" (p.3). With different meanings we have constructed, reconstructed and will construct as we undergo diverse experiences in life, with different contexts in which we interact with different members of different groups, different identities have also been constructed, shifted, and subjected to change. Thus, we may realise multiple identities within us. However, our identities do not exist separately or independently. Instead, they are "tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups" (p.3). Similarly, they are contextualised and situated as Gee (1999) argues. We, thus, need to understand peoples, things, and events in their cultural contexts. That is why sharing 'cultural codes' or 'conceptual maps' is very important, since this enables us to avoid stereotyping others and their practices. Even when people share 'conceptual maps', it is not guaranteed that members of the same culture would interpret the world in exactly the same ways. This leaves room for individuals' identities to get into their big cultural 'loop' and assert their positions. Thus, meanings, which individuals construct, are not only shaped by their cultural practices, but also reflect their own identities, for example, meanings constructed from gender, religion or age perspectives. These meanings embodied in different 'selves' of the same individual are, in fact, also influenced by the culture in which the individual is surrounded. But as meaning production is a process, it will always create 'new' concepts' and 'signs' as human life is always on the move. At the same time, it may polish, change, and renew words and concepts to represent new faces and practices of culture; or it may 'delete' words or concepts that are no longer needed. As a result, vocabulary is not a 'closed' system, and neither is culture. That

explains why "language-in-action is always and everywhere an active building process" (Gee 1999:11), and so is culture.

Hall (1997a:10) views identity as one site of the circuit of culture. This goes back to his discussion of the relationships between language and culture explored in the previous section. That is, identity is constructed through the production of meaning. By doing so, it gives us a sense of identity, of who we are, and with whom we belong. Therefore, we have multiple identities, not just one identity. Meanings hence do matter with identities. "They define what is 'normal', who belongs – and therefore, who is excluded" (p.10). This results in their relations with power when one thinks of how one's life is shaped because meanings of the same concept may be different or act differently in different circumstances. Although there is the presence of shared cultural codes, it cannot "guarantee that meanings will remain stable forever" (p.10), and thus as meanings matter, identities cannot be guaranteed to be 'static' or 'unchanged'. However, one's identity is tied to a specific history and culture, which creates a "positioned" context determining the 'self' of a person (Hall 1997b:51).

Woodward (1997:2) interprets 'the circuit of culture' suggested by du Gay and Hall et al., (1997) in such a way that "identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions which we might adopt".

Although Vietnamese scholars also agree upon the intimate relationship between language, culture and identity, and the argument that views language as social and cultural practices, they tend to develop their perspectives from and are influenced by the national culture and national/cultural identity as one united element and a core sense of 'wholeness', which each Vietnamese should maintain and develop. In contrast, the Western scholars focus more on the individual without referring to national culture as something 'out there', but something individuals construct as they go on and interact with members in the same community. The Vietnamese scholars persuasively draw readers' attention to their arguments by proudly focusing on the Vietnamese culture with its richness and senses that we - Vietnamese - and others can distinguish it from other non-Vietnamese cultures. These scholars strongly believe in the core values built in the Vietnamese culture, which they have been brought up with, sensed, and been surrounded by. It is this belief that leads its members to think and act under this national umbrella, and what each member does is to conform with and strengthen this core

value. Although these scholars do acknowledge that language and culture are 'open acts', they explicitly praise the Vietnamese values, although constructed and reconstructed, attaching to the very core that is always 'out there', and which, I believe and understand, is embedded in our spirit as Vietnamese. This will be explored further in the discussion of identity.

2.4   Identity

As Phan Ngoc (1998) observes, when cultural contacts take place everywhere in the world, it is crucial to understand the significance and importance of culture and identity. Moreover, "identity is such a concept – operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (Hall 1996:2). Culture and identity have thus become general matters of interest and brought numerous ways of understanding the world into the agenda. Here, scholars meet one another at some points, compromise at other points, and undeniably, fiercely criticise each other at many remaining points.

For the West, identity seems to have much to do with the question 'who I am', which has long haunted humans, since it is so subtle and complicated. There are times when one thinks one clearly understands and knows who one is, but there are times one gets totally lost and panics because one feels that one has lost one's self. So, does identity merely mean 'self'? No, it is more than that, it is embedded in every aspects of our lives, ranging from the individual level to the community level, from the community level to the national level, and from the national level to the international level. The 'Self' as an individual has become the 'Self' of 'Representation', symbolising a specific community or a group of people, meanwhile the 'bigger Self' represents multiple 'Selves' within it. However, this proportion between the 'bigger Self' and the individual 'Self' has been calculated differently by authors whose arguments have added values to the knowledge of identity, which I myself still struggle to define. At this point, I want to seek support from Vietnamese authors, who have their own ways of interpreting this proportion. In other words, they approach the notion of identity from different viewpoints, which on the surface may be conflicting to those expressed by many Western authors.

Thus, I now want to explore what the West says about identity, and then compare it with what Vietnamese scholars think, to found a meeting ground for seemingly uncompaniable theories.

2.4.1 The West, mobility, transnationality and hybridity

Western scholars' views on identity vary hugely, among which postcolonial writings on identity greatly contribute to the debates. This is not to say that postcolonial theory is a uniform, uncontested or homogeneous scholarship. Rather, it is presented and developed based on the debates among its theorists, such as literary authors like Edward Said, psychoanalytical authors like Homi Bhabha, sociological authors like Stuart Hall, neo-Marxist authors like Dirlik, and historical authors like Dipesh Chakrabarty. These authors are not necessarily Westerners but their theories are developed in the West and to a certain extent represent a powerful Western strand of scholarship known as postcolonial theory. Discussions of recent postcolonial theories on identity and knowledge, especially with respect to the notions of the West, mobility, transnationality and hybridity, are particularly relevant and essential to the aims of this research.

2.4.1.1 The West and Western knowledge in postcolonial theories

"Postcolonial theory seeks to explain issues of opposition, privilege, domination, struggle, resistance and subversion as well as contradiction and ambiguity" and contests colonialism's aftermath (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004:2). The West and/or Western knowledge have been questioned, criticised and challenged from multiple angles by postcolonial theorists, among whose ideas the hegemonic and imperialist nature of Western knowledge is most often contested. Postcolonial theorists contest the assumption that Western thought is superior and the only truth worldwide. Its assumed superiority has been constructed, sustained and presented to the world in every way.

In his famous classic "Orientalism", Edward Said (1978, 1995) claims that Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1995, p.3). It is "not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice ... a system of knowledge about the Orient" (p.6), in which voices of the Orient are given no space to speak for themselves. "[If] Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it" (p.21-22). Orientalism, the West's invention, "looks as if it were

developed scientifically, systematically and reliably as truths although "there is very little consent to be found" " (p.6).

Said's Orientalism was revolutionary because it argues convincingly and systematically how Orientalism as Western discourse is developed and promoted as truths. It explains why Oriental people construct themselves the way the West assumes them to. The West gives itself the right to impose its ideas, beliefs and imagination on the "man·made" discourse of the Orient (p.5). Said's arguments imply that the Orient is seen through the Western vision with certain fixed characteristics and this vision is so powerful that the Orient has come to believe that they are born with these built-in characteristics. This implication has been proved to be true in many contexts, such as in a series of West/non-West dichotomies (developed vs underdeveloped or developing, progressive vs traditional, and so on).

Nevertheless, Orientalism has also received criticisms, among which its failure to acknowledge non-Western peoples' agency and active resistance to the theories and practices of Orientalism appears to be the most significant (Gandhi 1998, Graversen 2001). Ahmad (1994), Bhabha (1994), and Spivak (1993) criticise Said for his oversimplification of "the division between a dominant West and a subordinate East as a relationship of active and passive, of imperial villain and unresisting victim" (cited in Graversen 2001:8). Other critics also point out Orientalism's contradictory nature. Said on the one hand argues that the West needs an 'Other' to define its own identity, and Orientalism is invented as a result. This to a large extent suggests essentialism, the West vs the Orient. However, the methodological message Said wants to send through Orientalism is his rejection of essentialism. In trying to reject the West's essentialization of the Orient, Said sometimes seems to essentialize the West by suggesting that the West is ethnocentric and racist and enjoys a coherent self-identity which is defined in relation to the Other Orient (Windschuttle 1999). Although Orientalism has flaws as indicated by critics, its greatest success is that it nurtured and set a foundation for. critical debates in the West which is later known as postcolonial theory. Said's Orientalism encourages other theorists to question and revisit Western knowledge, and asks for the voices of the Orient to be heard. "The person who has until now been known as 'the Oriental' must be given a voice. Scholarship from afar and second-hand representation must take a back seat to narrative and self-representation on the part of the 'Oriental.'"(Sered 1996, Internet). In light of this discussion, I see the need to present

the voices of Vietnamese theorists who construct and represent themselves – the so-called Orient – in their own eyes.

Both the Orient and the Occident are not "merely there", instead, they are invented by the West (Said 1995:3). The notion of the West is what Vinay Lal (2002) and Chakrabarty (2000) question in their works, "Empire of knowledge" and "Provincializing Europe" respectively. Vinay Lal (2002) investigates Western thought – the 'Empire of knowledge' – as he calls it. Notions such as development, modernity, nation-state and Western civilisation all have to do with the politics of knowledge, which have been developed and utilised to serve the West's interest and maintain the assumed Western superiority over other non-Western peoples. Western civilisation and superiority are thus used as legitimate reasons for the West' 'good-willed' interference into other countries' affairs. The West's 'civilising mission' in the past has been transformed into the mission of democracy, freedom and human rights to bring to light the 'outlaw' peoples who go against these Western notions. Still, the West gives itself the right to enlighten, 'teach' and punish others, no matter in what forms. Colonial thinking is still active but operates in different ways, the ways that make many of the others follow the West and look up to the West as the only example of development and civilisation. Western thought – the 'Empire of knowledge' – has been examined by Lal and his work suggests that this knowledge Empire and its accompanying politics are for Western domination and supremacy, and other non-Western(s) are constructed and understood in ways that maintain this arguably assumed superior West.

Chakrabarty (2000) criticises the European ideology of the "first in Europe, then elsewhere" structure of global historical time" (p.7), which, for instance, implies that modernity or capitalism originated in Europe first then spread outside it. Thus, Chakrabarty urges the need to see in what way "historicism ... posited historical time as a measure of the cultural distance ... assumed to exist between the West and the non-West" (p.7). He also insists that postcolonial scholarship should commit itself to engaging the universals and theory, and by the same token pay attention to cultural and historical difference at every possible moment (Chen 2003).

Chakrabarty argues for three propositions, which are the provincialization of Europe, the provincialization of history and the provincialization of time. Chakrabarty has demonstrated how the notion of the West and Western thought has always been highly contested. He problematizes the assumptions that European thought can be employed to

interpret and make sense of the practice of history in a non-European place. His work indicates that "the mythical figure of Europe that is often taken to be the original site of the modern in many histories of capitalist transition in non-Western countries [and] this imaginary Europe ... is built right into the social sciences" (back cover page). However, taking India as an example, Charkrabarty shows that European thought can neither understand adequately nor explain meaningfully the political and the historical in a country like India. Provincializing Europe also teases out how powerful and taken-for-granted European thought is in social sciences. Its power and the way it is presented in scholarly works have treated other non-European thoughts as "truly dead" (p.6) and at the same time made non-Western scholars accept the European way as the only "alive" tradition (p.5) based on which they can develop their knowledge. That is why "South Asian(ist) social scientists would argue passionately with a Marx or a Weber without feeling any need to historicize them or to place them in their European intellectual contexts" (p.6), whereas few of them if any would argue seriously with their own philosophers and theorists. His argument points out that the idea of the non-West has been interpreted in binary terms in ways that have masked its colonial constructions and continuing hegemonic role. I acknowledge the likelihood of the hegemonic role of the West in the complex development of Vietnamese scholars' views on identity and knowledge formation. Nevertheless, I am relying on the argument that many other social and historical layers of meaning inhabit these Vietnamese scholars' views in addition to Western ideas. Because of this complexity of layeredness of the Vietnamese scholars' views, I feel necessary to represent them alongside current Western thought on identity and knowledge.

Although Chakrabarty self-positions as a postcolonial scholar and attempts to resist to a large extent the universality of European thought, the way he resists it presents a paradox. Chen (2003:4) makes clear this paradox by showing that "despite [Chakrabarty's] "loving grasp of detail" when it comes to Indian life-worlds, [he] relies heavily on the "philosophical" – or what he also calls "structural" – side of history writing; and for him, the inspiration for this kind of philosophical work is Western, naturally." It is clear from Duong Thieu Tong (2002) and Phan Ngoc (1998), well-known scholars in Vietnam, that Vietnamese scholars also face this paradox. However, as Phan Ngoc indicates, many Vietnamese scholars actively Vietnamise foreign philosophies (for example, the Chinese Confucianism, the French nationalism, and the

Marxist and the Leninist communism), and develop their own bodies of knowledge which are also grounded in their rich sources of cultural and historical heritage. These scholars not only negotiate confidently with powerful and hegemonic foreign philosophies but also hold on to the Vietnamese sense of nationalness to construct Vietnamese voices. More discussions of this are presented in the part on Vietnamese authors' views on language, culture and identity.

Although postcolonial theories have helped us to question and challenge many of the universalising claims of European philosophies, to disrupt stereotypes in many fields of knowledge, and to invite the voices of the non-Western others to be heard, postcolonial theories also receive criticisms.

Ingham and Warren (2003) state that postcolonial theories have been criticised for their focus on modernity, which results in their limit of scope of studies as well as scope of time. Additionally, their focus on modernity treats "colonial "modernity" as a fact of history rather than an ideology of colonialism" (p.2). This also "blocks certain routes to the past, and thus maintains certain nationalist and historicist exclusions" (p.2). Ingham and Warren refer to leading classic postcolonial writers, such as Bhabha and Dirlik, to argue that these authors, despite their influential works and theories of modernity, "do not set out to move the postcolonial beyond modernity, and might deny the validity of this interpretation of their work" (p.4). Critics also point out that postcolonial writings just focus on consequences of Western colonialism and imperialism without considering "the specificity of particular historical processes of colonialism" (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004:3). By the same token, postcolonial theories pay remarkable attention to Anglocentric concerns rather than trying to cover other places (Ingham & Warren 2003). Another critique of postcolonialism is that "it diverts attention from the material basis of cultural difference towards generalisations and theoretical abstractions" (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004:3). Above all, postcolonial theories, for many years, have put tremendous emphasis on the politics of power, the one-way impact of colonisers on the colonised, and the hegemonic and imperialist imposition of the West, without taking into account sufficiently the degrees of appropriation, resistance and active reconstitution from the non-West sides, particularly the colonised. This approach seems to disregard local cultural, social and historical realities and movements of colonised countries. To make known these missing parts of postcolonial theories, the second section of this Chapter presents Vietnamese scholars' perspectives of language, culture

and identity. In addition, Chapter Three draws on and engages with a number of scholars who acknowledge and develop the notions of resistance, appropriation and reconstitution. Postcolonial theories, as a field of inquiries, need to encourage more writings regarding these concepts to bring in multiple voices and to reflect and represent multiplicity in this globalising world.

Thus far it is clear that postcolonial theory is not a unitary experience. I wish to look at it from different angles and identify what theories are most relevant to and useful for my understanding of the processes of identity formation of the Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australian universities, who afterward would return to Vietnam to teach again. I acknowledge that by distinguishing the West and Vietnamese, I am running the risk of essentialising both, as Edward Said has been criticised with his 'Orientalism'. However, I also acknowledge that I try to avoid it whenever I can, and it is difficult to have a discussion without using this differentiation for the aims set out in the thesis. While I am distinguishing Western and Vietnamese views on identity and knowledge, I am also acknowledging their complex interrelations and will take them into account in my effort to investigate the research questions.

2.4.1.2 Mobility, Transnationality, Hybridity and Identity Formation

Mobility, transnationality and hybridity are essential concepts in postcolonial writings of identity, and they have become particularly significant conceptual tools in the understanding of identity formation in this ever globalising world. They largely contribute to the exploration of different processes of identity formation, including fragmentations, fluidity, negotiations, accommodations, mediations, contradictions, appropriation and resistance. The discussion of mobility, transnationality and hybridity below is located in the context of identity formation. Thus, I will only focus on arguments and points which serve this purpose. Although I present the concepts separately, I acknowledge that I am well aware of the fluid and dynamic interrelationship and interdependence of these concepts.

Mobility

Mobility often refers to human/population movements/flows at different levels worldwide. Movements can be at local, regional, national, transnational or global levels (Lin 2002, Paasi 2002, Smith 2002, Willis & Yeoh 2002, Crang et al., 2003, Koczberski & Curry 2004). These movements necessitate identity formation to take place in

multidimensional directions, resulting in different kinds of negotiations of identities. In the same vein, these also offer "a new terrain for the articulation and interaction of identities" (Smith 2002:117).

Lin (2002) examines thoroughly the relationship between identity and mobility. He points out that the shift from modernity to postmodernism has supported a new way of looking at this relationship, in which migrants [I added, as well as any others who travel] "actively constituted, negotiated, and transformed their multiple identities in their narration of development and the centrality of such identities in shaping various mobility patterns and experiences" (p.65). Although the relationship between identity and mobility is encouraged in the literature, Lin argues that its nature remains "highly controversial and vague" (p.65). For example, he shows, on the one hand, how notions such as place-based identity have been proved significant in transnational identity formation of the Chinese diaspora in the context of globalisation. In reviewing other studies related to the Chinese diaspora, he remarks that "globalisation has not in any way downplayed the role of place-based identity in the transnational movement of people and capital." Instead, "globalisation has propelled a return to the local and reinforced 'primordial attachments' which are instrumental to the global mobility of the Chinese diaspora" (p.66). He also indicates, on the other hand, the increasing popularity of other contrasting notions, such as "deterritorisation, dislocation, and displacement" (p.66), in identity formation of Chinese transnationalism. He refers to a number of researchers who argue that "as a result of deterritorisation and spatial displacement, identities are no longer tied to cultural (national) space and mobility is not simply shaped by place-based identity but it is the other way around" (p.66). These researchers also indicate that increased mobility has in fact enabled cultural knowledge gain, offered opportunities for the generation of new spatial images and meanings and for the formation of new cultural or national identities. By the same token, increased mobility opens spaces for the social reproduction of cultural and national identities. So, instead of viewing identity as place-based or land-based, these researchers see it as "diaspora based" (p.66). As a result, "identity is reinterpreted 'as a politics rather than as an inheritance, as fluidity rather than fixity, as based on mobility rather than locality, and as the playing out of these oppositions across the world (Ong & Nonini, 1997:327, cited in Lin 2002:66). In this view, identity formation is interpreted as "ongoing processes of construction, negotiation, and transformation" (p.67). Identity thus, as

these authors suggest, no longer operates independently from mobility. Instead, identity is "embedded by and constantly reworked through mobility" (p.67).

Faced by these two contradictory arguments discussed above of the relationship between identity and mobility, Lin (2002) attempts to find his own answers by conducting his research into how great spatial mobility of Hong Kong sojourners affects their identity formation. His study shows that identity and mobility are mutually interrelated and that the interrelationship between spatial mobility and place-based identity is complex and multi-faceted. His study also demonstrates that despite increased global mobility of diaspora and the ongoing processes of deterritorisation and displacement, locality or place of origin plays a significant role in transnational identity formation of Hongkongers. "The great mobility of the Chinese diaspora from Hong Kong, and the diasporic landscape they have created, have been effectively shaped by their place-based ethno-linguistic identity" (p.87). This suggests that place-based identity is "one of the many fundamental forces operating behind the scene of the great spatial mobility demonstrated by the Hong Kong sojourners" (p.87).

In the context of the increasing movement of people, capital and information across spatial boundaries, Paasi (2002) explores the meanings of 'region' and 'identity' and their relationships, with a specific focus on Finnish regions and the mobility of the Finns between these regions. Paasi's study contributes to questioning "the supposition of closed local/national cultures" (p.144), and simultaneously challenges "the fixed links between a territory and a group of people" (p.144). Paasi suggests viewing "spatial identities in more dynamic ways", paying attention to "the dynamic links between spatial contexts and cultural flows" (p.144). Paasi also indicates that personal mobility problematises the existing narratives of fixed regional identities and suggests that the links between space, boundaries and identity have new meanings in this mobile world. She argues that Finnish people, together with having a sense of 'roots', which are typically connected to their place of birth or their areas of origins, also "identify themselves with new home regions" (p.144). Her study suggests that "we have to analyse critically any discourse of 'regional identity' or 'our identity' that is based on roots or common heritage, since these often hide the influence of mobility" (p.146).

Koczberski and Curry (2004) look at the mobility of people in Papua New Guinea (PNG) from areas of disadvantage to regions of better services and employment opportunities to examine how the mobility affects identity shifting in migrant

destination sites. The authors locate their study in two of the major palm oil producing areas of PNG, namely West New Britain Province (WNBP) and Popondetta, Oro Province, where there are land disputes and conflicts between landowners and migrants/settlers. Due to the mobility, new group identities (collective identities) emerge, particularly those of settlers and landowners. While ethno-regional identities emerge among local landowners, settlers construct their vaira/weira identities. Vaira, coming from the local language of WNBP, "refers to strangers/outsiders that do not belong to the same land, language or descent group" (p.366), and it is used by customary landowners to label settlers and other migrants in WNBP and Popondetta. The authors find out that "while the literal meaning [of vaira] implies exclusion and difference, it is increasingly being adopted as an umbrella label by the multi-ethnic settler population to forge among themselves a shared identity and collective consciousness" (p.366). This vaira identity is subject to construction and reconstruction, based on the notion of nation building – "a narrative that places the 'hard-working' settler at the centre of national development and advancement" (p.367). This narrative implies by settlers that they are superior over landowners because they are "modern, educated and engaging in the market economy" (p.368) and because it is them (not landowners) who bring about prosperity and development for the land/the areas. Their mobility makes the difference and their vaira identity is accordingly constructed. On the one hand, their vaira identity supports the argument of "a unified common identity" (p.368) which is 'out there' 'available' although constructed, but on the other hand it signifies the importance of mobility which makes this identity construction fluid and subject to being unstable and reshaped.

Transnationality

Transnationalism/transnationality originated in work on transnational corporations, and then it is extended to migration and various forms of movement studies, such as the work of Davis and Moore 1997, O'Donnell 2001, Beaverstock 2002, Willis and Yeoh 2002, Crang et al., 2003. Regarding the later, over the past decade, there have been numerous perspectives of transnationalism, ranging from work on diasporic social formations and senses of identities, cultural globalisation, hybridization, experiences and political economies of migration to work on forms of political engagement that operate transnationally (Crang et al., 2003:439). Transnationalism/transnationality has become "a ubiquitous term of reference for the 'multiple ties and interactions linking

people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec 1999:447, cited in Crang et al., 2003:439).

Yeoh et al., (2003) point out how useful and potential the notion of transnationalism/transnationality is to the way we understand many key concepts, such as 'identity', 'place', 'nation', 'transgress' and 'mobility'. These authors recognise the role of transnationality in strengthening the significance of the 'national'. Transnationality, instead of treating the world in the dichotomy of the global and the local, acts as "a bifocal one which views the nation-state and transnational practices as 'mutually constitutive' (p.208). In this view, "transnationalism studies open up the possibilities and politics of simultaneity where transnational subjects, from a range of social groups, can now 'think and act simultaneously at multiple scales' and fashion transnational social practices by being both 'here' and 'there'" (Smith 2001:164, cited in Yeoh et al., 2003:208). This argument is closely associated with the question of identity formation and identity politics in transnational social spaces.

Transnational identities are not only fluid, flexible, dynamic, but also attach to specificity and particularity of places and times. While transnational identities go against essentialist and fixed notions of identity, they put emphasis on "interconnectedness across borders" (Yeoh et al., 2003:213). This way of understanding transnational identities suggests that identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed along the lines of "simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (p.213). This nature of being 'here' and 'there' and simultaneity enable the understanding of transnational identities in ways in which "the 'individual', 'group', 'national' and 'transnational' relate to one another – whether in collusion or collision, or both – in shaping a world with increasingly, but also complexly, fluid borders" (p.215).

Although transnationalism has been largely used as a more popular conceptual tool in scholarly work, it receives criticisms in relation to its scope, specificity and politics. Crang et al., argue that despite its popularity, transnationalism stays problematic since the implication and application of the term remain

> (a) paradoxically, locked within a national geographical imaginary of culture and identity; (b) [to be] an overdrawn distinction between nationals and transnationals; and (c) [to be] an unhelpful preoccupation with 'disciplining' transitional studies and concepts (p.441).

In terms of the scope of transnationalism, Crang et al., review a variety of work on transnationalism and comment that several authors criticise the term for being used "too sweepingly, with too little attention to place-specific variations in the form of cross-border activities and sensibilities" (p.441). The deployment of transnationalisim needs to acknowledge different experiences of displacement and should not treat these experiences in the same way, otherwise transnationalism is no more than "a uniform fashion" (Lavie & Swedenburg 1996:4, cited in Crang et al., 2003:441) which views hugely diverse experiences of mobility as one single act of movement. Transnationalism and the notion of "a world without boundaries" are so powerful and romanticising that various discourses have enthusiastically adopted them, and this adoption seems to neglect that 'a world without boundaries' is not for everyone yet (Kaplan 1995:45, cited in Crang et al., 2003:442).

In relation to the question of historical specificity of transnationalism, Crang et al., claim that the use of transnationalism implies that the nation state no longer plays a significant role in social analysis. These authors argue, reversely, that in spite of preferences of transnationalism, "the nation state continues to play a key role in defining the terms in which transnational processes are played out" (p.442). Transnationalism should not neglect this role and instead it needs to take into account the specificity and particularity of histories, times and places, since every identity formation process in the mobile world makes little meaning if it is separated from its origins of locality.

Regarding the politics of transnationalism, Crang et al., raise the concern that the term has been applauded for its progressive and resistant nature. It is believed that transnationalisim is able to destabilise fixed constructs of people and place, and reflect the dynamics and increased mobility of the globalised world. This belief supports a particular way of seeing the world in which movement, flow and boundary crossing are emphasised and make sense. This way suggests that transnationalism is "seen as politically transgressive and resistant" (p.442), which often denies seeing the world as "politically constraining, conservative and hegemonic" (p.442). Thanks to the resistant nature of transnationalism, the term has been used to explore how people worldwide resist certain forms of global cultural flows. However, drawing on Mitchell (1997b, 1997c), Crang et al., argue that

> there is nothing intrinsically 'given' about the politics of transnationality, and those who make appeals to concepts of non-fixity, in-betweenness and third

spaces as inherently progressive construct transnationality in equally one-dimensional terms as those who equate transnationaliy with the operations of monolithic, American-centred transnational corporations" (p.443).

In order to find ways to compensate for the three criticisms made against transnationality, Mitchell (1997, cited in Crang et al., 2003) addresses the need to employ transnationality in relation to actual movements of things and people across space. She argues:

> without 'literal' empirical data related to the actual movements of things and people across space, theories of anti-essentialism, mobility, plurality and hybridity can quickly devolve into terms emptied of any potential political efficacy ... It is through the contextualisation of concepts such as hybridity and margins ... that theories of transnationalism can best serve a progressive politics of the future (Mitchell 1997:110-112, cited in Crang et al., 2003:443).

While many transnational studies remap the spaces of cultural identity and belonging in ways that "problematise and complicate the assumption of national territories" (Crang et al., 2003:445), this approach again falls into focusing on "bounded communities even as it redraws their location in space" as Crang et al., (2003:445) observe. These authors suggest seeing transnationalism/transnationality empirically "without fixing the transnational on identifiable transnational communities, while being open to other more fluid and multidimensional cultural geographies" (p.446). Their work on studying commodity culture associated with British-South Asian transnationality, as they claim, enables them to utilise all the strengths of recent accounts of transnationality and at the same time avoid all the problems they have identified so far. On the one hand, their work recognises and reflects diverse connections British-South Asian communities have with their different 'homes', which are their places of residence in the UK and their real and imagined homelands in South Asia, and with other South Asian transnationals in their diaspora. On the other hand, their work also extends "the boundaries of transnationality to include differently located groups and individuals who may or may not be members of these specific 'ethnic' communities" (p.451). Additionally, Crang et al., argue that their work shapes their views on transnationality, which is "not only multiply inhabited but also multidimentional" (italics in the original) (p.451). Furthermore, they suggest that transnationality needs to be looked at as both "an abstract cultural discourse" and "as a lived social field" (italics in the original) (p.451). Importantly, these views of transnationality do not, in any ways, deny "the continued salience of the national in a globalising world" (p.452). Rather, as these authors

contend, these views put emphasis on "the active constitution of identities through the process of commodification across specific national spaces" (p.452).

Hybridity

In the context of mobility and transnationality, hybridity has become one of the most important notions relating to identity formation of different groups of people, communities, places and nations. This notion, however, does not enjoy a unitary definition.

Homi Bhabha is perhaps one of the first scholars who develops and theorises the concept of hybridity. Hybridity, one of Bhabha's major concepts, as Hallward (2001:24) puts it, "is 'a difference "within"', a difference without binary terms".

From a psychoanalytical point of view, Bhabha (1990, 1994) questions existing knowledge of nationalism, culture, representation and resistance, and encourages a rigorous rethinking of these notions. Nations, in his view, "are "narrative" constructions that arise from the "hybrid" interaction of contending cultural constituencies" (Graves 1998a, Internet). Bhabha's argument for the rethinking of the above notions "stresses the "ambivalence" or "hybridity" that characterises the site of colonial contestation, a "liminal" space in which cultural differences articulate and ... actually produce imagined "constructions" of cultural and national identity" (Graves 1998a, Internet). Bhabha claims that colonial culture is not a simple combination of the colonizing and the colonised. Rather, its hybridity, its in-betweenness is the very salient characteristic of colonial culture. Bhabha's (1994:36) coins the term "Third Space" when he argues that "the pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement". Instead, "the production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space", which suggests and implies "_ibivalence in the act of interpretation" (p.36). The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, as Bhabha argues, "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People" (p.37). He states the significance of the productive capacities of the Third Space which embodies a colonial or postcolonial provenance. Importantly, as Bhabha claims,

> For a willingness to descend into that alien territory .... may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of

multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves (p.38-39).

Bhabha's interpretation of hybridity, ambivalence and Third Space leads to the understanding of culture as "complex Intersections of multiple places, historical temporalities, and subject positions" (Mitchell 1995, Internet). His ideas question the tendency to essentialise colonised countries as a homogenous identity. He argues, instead, ambivalence is always there at the site of colonial dominance. Ambivalence and hybridity, in his arguments, embrace the sense of agency and negotiation. In the interview with Mitchell (1995, Internet), Bhabha's explanation of 'the split' supports this point:

> The split doesn't fall at the same point in colonised and colonizer, it doesn't bear the same political weight or constitute the same effect, but both are dealing with that process. Actually, this allows the native or the subaltern or the colonised the strategy of attempting to disarticulate the voice of authority at that point of splitting .... For me, [the split is] much more the idea of survival/surviving in a strong sense – dealing with or living with and through contradiction and then using that process for social agency.

In light of his arguments, neither 'coloniser' nor 'colonised' can be seen as separate entities which are constructed independently from one another. In reading Bhabha (1994), Graves (1998b, Internet) remarks that the negotiation of cultural identity that Bhabha suggests "involves the continual interface and exchange of cultural performances that in turn produce a mutual and mutable recognition (or representation) of cultural difference." This "liminal" space is a "hybrid" site where the production of cultural meanings takes place.

Although Bhabha is considered one of the most influential scholars of postcolonial theories, his work has also been criticised. According to Hallward (2001:35), Bhabha's work is challenged for "totalis[ing] a hegemonic global ideology, neither much tainted by its conditions of production nor transformed by the pragmatics of colonial encounters and struggles." His theories do not pay attention to specificity and particularity of the location and the moment.

Marxist or neo-Marxism critics also participate in debates regarding identity formation. They attack the central postcolonial concepts of hybridity, flexibility and mobility.

Citing Lazarus, Hallward (2001:41) remarks that for many of these critics, these central concepts "are of practical significance only to foreign elite and indigenous comprador classes: to the overwhelming masses of local people, they merely spell out exploitation in new letters." Postoclonialsm, as Ahmad, Dirlik, Parry and San Juan point out, is another form of capitalism but at a global level. "Postcolonialism coincides with the ideology of Global Capitalism", as Dirlik (1997:viii) puts it (cited in Hallward 2001:41). So, in this view, the concepts of hybridity, flexibility and mobility help mask the ideology of capitalism while discouraging attachment to local identity formation and local particularity.

According to Hiddleston (2004:371-372), "Aijaz Ahmad and Benita Parry, largely influenced by Marxism, pour scorn on the poststructuralist emphasis on the play of identity effects, suggesting that the fetishization of endlessly shifting modes of identification renders positive political contestation defunct." In the contrary, literary and psychoanalytical authors such as Homi Bhabha argue that "traditional power structures rely on a form of determinism that glosses over and tyrannises the true ambivalence of both coloniser and colonised" (p.372). Hiddleston notes that neither of these two opposite ways of looking at identity are sufficiently useful conceptual tools. She suggests, instead, the work of the Algerian novelist Assia Djebar, which, she claims, "offers a particularly innovative approach, in that it replaces the binary opposition described above with a mode of thinking that operates on several levels simultaneously" (p.372). Djebar's work embodies conflicting aims, and these aims "reconfigure the opposition between identity and hybridity into a tension between the specific, the singular and the plural" (p.372). Also, Djebar's writing "privileges unconditionally neither the concrete agency of Ahmad's thinking nor the hybridity proposed by Bhabha" (p.384). The search for identity in Djebar's work "is coupled with reflections both on contingent singularity and on a form of plurality that resists totalization" (p.384).

Werbner (2001) examines the limits of cultural hybridity and contested postcolonial purifications. Werbner's overall argument is that while concepts such as hybridity and transgression have been proved to be very useful tools of resistance, they can also become a source of offence due to the fact that they "play dangerously on the boundary" (p.138). Postcolonial theorists, such as Bhabha (1994), indicate that hybridity signifies not only the colonised's active resistance to discrimination and oppression in

postcolonial times but also their agency to affirm themselves to be recognised. The colonised often draw on their cultures strategically to achieve these aims. However, hybridity is two-edge knife here. In reading Werbner, I understand that hybridity can lead to either effective resistance, recognition and appreciation or offence. The essential question thus to be raised here is "what are the creative limits of cultural hybridity" (p.138).

Werbner helps answer this question step by step. She first argues that "the stress on hybridity theory on the colonial encounter as the source of reflexivity and double consciousness does not engage ... with the fact that cultures produce their own indigenous forms of transgression and hence also of critical reflexivity and satire" (p.133). Werbner states that one key criticism against the notion of cultural hybridity is that "it assumes the prior existence of whole cultures" (p.134). Cultures, according to the author, "may be grasped as porous, constantly changing and borrowing, while nevertheless being able to retain at any particular historical moment the capacity to shock through deliberate conflations and subversions of sanctified orderings" (p.134). This argument, as the author then claims, is based on "a key distinction made by Bakhtin between 'organic' and 'intentional' hybridity" (p.134).

'Organic' hybridity, according to Bakhtin (1981:358), means "unintentional" and "unconscious" hybridity (cited in Werbner 2001:135). Bakhtin (1981:358) argues that "unintentional, unconscious hybridization is one of the most important modes in the historical life and evolution of languages ... [and] language and languages change historically primarily by means of hybridization, by means of mixing of various "languages" ' (cited in Werbner 2001:135). Although "the mixture remains mute and opaque, never making use of conscious contrasts and oppositions ... such unconscious hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new "internal forms" for perceiving the world" (Bakhtin 1981:360, cited in Werbner 2001:135). According to Bakhtin (1981:358-359), "an intentional hybrid is first of all a conscious hybrid" which is "an encounter, within the area of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (cited in Werbner 2001:136). In this view, intentional hybrids are "inevitably dialogical" and "double voiced" embedded in a single utterance (Bakhtin 1981:360-361, cited in Werbner 2001:136). Bakhtin's notions of 'organic' and

'intentional' hybridity have similarities with Bhabha's (1994) concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, liminality and Third Space, as Werbner argues and as I have discussed earlier.

Werbner contends that Bakhtin's discussion of hybridity enables the theorisation of "the simultaneous coexistence of both cultural change and resistance to change in religious, ethnic, or migrant groups and in postcolonial nation-states" (p.143). But what are the limits of cultural hybridity? "When and why do hybrid postcolonial novels cease to be funny and entertaining and become deeply offensive?" (p.143). In this global context, "when does transgressive hybridity facilitate, and when does it destroy, communication across cultures for the sake of social renewal?" (p.149). Given that identities are subject to dynamic change, construction, reconstruction, negotiation, hybridization, reproduction but hold on to continuity as well as connectedness, as my overall Chapter on language, culture and identity suggests, these questions raised by Werbner regarding the limits of cultural hybridity and even hybridity in general are of essential significance. They remind researchers that together with celebrating hybridity, we need to work on a notion of hybridity that is critical and useful for recognition and appreciation of difference, and cultural creativity, not a notion that denies the right to be different. Hybridity and/or hybrid transgressions must respect and retain "a local sensibility in a globalising world" (p.149), so as to lead to "a double consciousness, a global cultural ecumene" not to "a polarization of discourses" (p.149). As Werbner (2001:150) observes, "the line between respect and transgression" is very easy to cross, particularly "in postcolonial nations and the ambivalent encounters they generate."

Nederveen Pieterse (2001), in many points, shares her concerns regarding hybridity, identity politics and politics of difference and recognition with Werbner (2001). Nederveen Pieterse questions the relationship between difference and recognition and how hybridity plays within this relationship. After all, the politics of hybridity makes sense in the context of boundaries, because hybridity "problematizes boundaries" (p.220). Nederveen Pieterse goes through a number of criticisms against hybridity, arguing that the most common criticisms are that hybridity does not take questions of power and inequality in consideration. She particularly reviews the anti-hybridity backlash and refers to the arguments which support hybridity.

Arguments for and against hybridity

Contra hybridity	Pro hybridity
Hybridity is meaningful only as a critique of essentialism.	There is plenty of essentialism around.
Were colonial times really so essentialist?	Enough for hybrids to be despised.
Hybridity is a dependent notion.	So are boundaries.
Asserting that all cultures and languages are mixed is trivial.	Claims of purity have long been dominant.
Hybridity matters to the extend that it is a self-identification.	Hybrid self-identification is hindered by classification boundaries.
Hybridity talk is a function of the decline of Western hegemony.	It also destabilizes other hegemonies.
'Hybridity talk is carried by a new cultural class of cosmopolitans.	Would this qualify an old cultural class of boundary police?
The lumpenproletariat real border-crossers live in constant fear of the border.'	Crossborder knowledge is survival knowledge.
Hybridity is not parity.	Boundaries don't usually help either.

(cited in Nederveen Pieterse 2001:225).

Although hybridity has a number of flaws as Nederveen Pieterse has pointed out, she states that she does not mean to reject hybridity. Instead, what she attempts to do is "acknowledging the contingency of boundaries and the significance and limitations of hybridity as a theme and approach" (p.239) so as to engage with hybridity politics. She goes on to argue that "this is where critical hybridity comes in, which involves a new awareness of and new take on the dynamics of group formation and social inequality," and "this critical awareness is furthered by acknowledging rather than by suppressing hybridity" (p.239).

So far I have discussed various critical notions of postcolonial writing regarding identity formation, namely the West/Western, mobility, transnationality and hybridity. Drawing on the discussion of these notions, the following sections look particularly at notions of

identity discussed by a number of Western theorists (such as Dolby 2000, Hall 1997, Holland 1996, Reed 2001, Woodward 1997, and Wodak 1999) and Vietnamese scholars (such as Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001, and Tran Quoc Vuong 2000). Acknowledging both the usefulness and flaws of these notions of the West, mobility, transnationality and hybridity in postcolonial writing and in relation to the theories of identity enables me to critically interpret the data to understand the processes of identity formation of a group of Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australian universities. The fact that these postcolonial notions together with the notions of identity and related notions discussed by both Western and Vietnamese authors are employed as conceptual tools, I believe, best helps the exploration of complex and diverse identity formation processes, taking into account the dynamic fluid transnational mobility between space and time, the Vietnamese, the Australian, the global, the here, the there, the past, present and future.

2.4.2 Western-oriented perceptions of identity

In this section, I will focus on non-essentialist Western perceptions of identity to build a framework for my discussion. The following themes, which are generated from the debate, will be explored: identity as constructed, multiple, hybrid and dynamic; identity formation and difference; identity formation as relational; and construction of national identity.

2.4.2.1 Identity as constructed, multiple, hybrid and dynamic

In this section, I would like to highlight the debate between essentialist and non-essentialist points of view about the notion of identity. Non-essentialists view identity as constructed, multiple and dynamic as opposite to the "notion of an integral, originary and unified identity" suggested by essentialists (Hall 1996:1).

Hall (1996:3) contests the notion of the "stable core of the self", remaining unchanged throughout history and across time. Similarly, he expands his contestation to the notion of the stable core of cultural identity, which remains fixed, identical and static over time, as essentialists argue. He goes on to suggest that there is no "unchanging 'oneness' or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences" (p.4). Instead, cultural identity, as well as other identities, is always changing, and transformed. Identity has and makes its own history.

The question of identity, as Hall (1996:4) argues, is thus not the question of "being", but the question of "becoming". In other words, identity has to do with representation, using "the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming" (p.4). This notion of identity is contrasted to the traditional notion, in which identity is "an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation" (p.4).

The debate between essentialist and non-essentialist views of identity has also taken place in Woodward (1997). While the proponents of the former view claim that "identity can be seen as rooted in kinship and the truth of a shared history" (p.3) and identity is "formed in particular historical circumstances" (p.3), the latter actually challenge this view by expressing their discussion about identity, employing different notions, among which "fluidity and contingency" (p.3) have been largely used.

Regarding culture and identity, Hall (1997b) contends that there are at least two different ways of presenting cultural identity. He sees identity "not as transparent or unproblematic as we think" (p.51). Instead, it is viewed as "a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (p.51). He is actually against the position of viewing cultural identity "in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (p.51). Cultural identities in this sense "reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history" (Hall 1997b:51). The second position supported by Hall (1997b:52) is that in addition to many points of similarities, there is other deep and significant "difference" which presents "what we really are, or rather, since history has intervened, what we have become." Cultural identity, in this case, "is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'." It has both 'past' and 'future' in it. It has histories and constantly transforms. After all, "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (p.52). In Hall's (1997b) perceptions, identity concerns both 'positioned context' and 'fragmental' values. Hall's view also suggests that identity formation has much to do with history which experiences different times. This causes contradictory identities within us to pull in different directions.

Holland (1996) criticizes essentialist perspectives of identities for their power in constructing and maintaining fixed and well-claimed 'authentic' images of Aboriginals in Australia. These perspectives, as she emphasises, deny differences existing within Aboriginal communities. She supports Hall's (1992:277) argument of identity, that "identity becomes a 'moveable feast': formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (p.109). Hall's understanding of identity, as she acknowledges, allows her to speak of herself as "having multiple identities" and "to recognize that in different contexts and at different times [she assumes] different identities" (p. 109). Holland's interpretation of identity demonstrates that identity is multiple, constructed and dynamic.

Dolby (2000:900) perceives identity "as a phenomenon that is actively produced and reproduced, instead of as a stable entity that exists before the social world," and "as a site that is in constant flux, responding to and recreating itself in the new contexts in which it is located" (p.905). This view suggests that identity has no quality of stability and immutability. Rather, it is constructed, hybrid and dynamic. Also, in this argument, identity formation seems to be an active process.

Farrell (2000:21) employs Ivanic' (1997) descriptions of identities, which are characterised by "plurality, fluidity and complexity" to express her perception of identities. This nature of identities results in identities being always contested and changed.

Thus far it is clear that non-essentialists' arguments against essentialists' points of view about identity are centred around the notion of identity as constructed, hybrid, multiple and dynamic, instead of as a stable, unchanging, homogeneous core.

2.4.2.2   Identity formation and difference

Many non-essentialist Western theorists explore the question of identity in relation to difference. "Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live" as Woodward (1997:1) observes. She goes on to argue that "identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not" (p.1-2). She suggests that identity can be marked by "polarisation", "inclusion or exclusion" and "oppositions", whether we are 'insiders/outsiders', 'us/them', or 'man/woman' (p.2).

No matter how identity is understood, it "gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live" (p.1).

Woodward (1997) argues that identity is often defined at the expense of difference also because by asserting 'who I am', we simultaneously produce the image of 'who I am not'. By doing so, we have created the 'us' and 'them'. The marking of sameness and difference is done both "symbolically through representational systems and socially through the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups of people" (p.4), as she observes.

Self is constructed through other; or identity is constituted "through the eye of the needle of the other", as Hall (1991:21) argues (cited in Dolby 2000: 901). In other words, when we define others, we indirectly define ourselves. We make selves as well as others.

Playing an important role in identity formation, and like identity, "difference is not a static, immobile reality" either, as Dolby (2000:902) remarks. Difference is also constructed, produced, and reproduced. Thus, identity formation becomes even more complex.

2.4.2.3   Identity formation as relational

Since identity is constructed through difference, identity and identity formation are thus perceived as relational. That is to say one identity needs another identity to rely on and to provide the conditions for its existence (Woodward 1997).

As individuals are positioned in multiple relationships, exposed to numerous social situations, and experience changes in life, their identities are subject to be constructed within relations. Dolby and Cornbleth (2001) conceptualise this phenomenon of identity as relational. They argue that "identity itself is a relation - or set of relations and interrelations" (p.293). Thus, "we see or define ourselves in relation to various individuals and groups, specific life situations and particular contexts" (p.293). Because these situations and relations change over time, identity is also subject to change.

Identity and identity formation are relational in a sense of geographic space as well (Reed 2001). Movements in space and exposure to a new place influence identity formation.

2.4.2.4 Construction of national identity

While essentialists view national identity as "integral, originary and unified" (Hall 1996:1), as "unchanging 'oneness' or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences" (p.4), and as being "rooted in kinship and the truth of a shared history… [and being] formed in particular historical circumstances" (Woodward 1997:3), non-essentialists see national identity from different perspectives. Drawing on De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999), I will expand Western authors' discussion about notions of national identity.

De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999:153-154) present five basic assumptions about nations and national identities. First, they refer to Anderson's (1988:15) definition of nations, in which nations are understood as being *"imagined political communities"*. Second, they argue that national identities are *"discursively… produced, reproduced, transformed* and *destructed."* Third, national identity can be seen as *"a sort of habitus"*, *"a complex of common ideas,* [and] *concepts or perception schemes."* Fourth, "the discursive construction of nations and national identities always runs hand in hand with the *construction of difference/distinctiveness and uniqueness."* The fifth assumption is that "there is *no such thing as the one and only national identity* in an essentialising sense, but rather that different identities are discursively constructed according to context" (p.154).

White (1997) also views national identity as imagined, since each individual can be seen through other multiple identities. Therefore, he states that to focus on national identity is not simply to send an underlying message that that is the only significant identity, or that the many other individual identities constructed by people for themselves are irrelevant.

Turner (1986:110) argues that "definitions of national identity are sites of struggle", and "the definitions are never static or fixed" (cited in Stratton 1998:107). Hence, as Hall (1997b:53) argues, "there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'." Hall also suggests that identity (including national identity) is a matter of "being" as well as of "becoming" (p.52).

Although Western theorists come to terms with different expressions of national identity, they offer ways which individuals employ to construct national identities. De

Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999) give a detailed list of these ways. To begin with, national identities are constructed on the basis of "a common history, and history has always to do with remembrance and memory" (p.154). Secondly, the construction of national identities is closely related to the role of culture. Thirdly, national identities have much to do with "internalised structuring impetus which more or less strongly influences social practices" (p.156).

De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999:160) also identify four strategies used by individuals in Austria to construct their national identities, namely constructive strategies, perpetuation and justification strategies, transformation strategies, and dismantling or destructive strategies. Constructive strategies aim at building and establishing a particular national identity, using linguistic acts such as "we-group" (p.160) in statements like " 'we Austrians'" or " 'Austrians'" (p.160). Perpetuation and justification strategies "attempt to maintain, support and reproduce national identity" (p.160-161). These strategies can be seen in discussions where individuals "construct immigrants as a threat to national identity (p.161). Transformation strategies involve transforming "the meaning of a relatively well-established aspect of national identity into another" (p.161). For example, "some Austrian politicians have been pretending that it would be possible to re-define the Austrian neutrality in a way which would integrate modified geo-political conditions, without abandoning neutrality altogether" (p.161). Dismantling or destructive strategies are used to "de-mythologise or demolish existing national identities or elements of them" (p.161). For example, some Austrians observe that it is not worth arguing for Austria's neutrality because it is "not traceable to an autonomous 'national' decision" (p.161).

I have so far talked about Western-oriented perceptions of identity. The subsequent sections explore those of Vietnamese authors.

2.4.3 Vietnamese authors' perceptions of identity

Identity, perceived by many Vietnamese authors, is often related to national and/or cultural identity. Thus, since I was first introduced to the notion 'identity', I have always referred to it in terms of the Vietnamese cultural/national identity.

When looking at Vietnamese authors' discussion of identity, it is often tempting to judge that their views reflect and are very much the same as essentialists' perceptions of identity. However, their viewpoints are positioned within their personal and national

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discourses, which signals differences, similarities as well as uniqueness as compared with those belonging to other discourses. But this is not to say that their Vietnamese and personal discourses are static. Rather, these are changing over time but hold on together to maintain the sense of connectedness and continuity.

2.4.3.1   Identity as both 'being' and 'becoming'

Vietnamese authors argue that identity is about both 'being' and 'becoming'. This suggests stability within changes or changes that take place along the lines of continuity.

The '*being*' of identity is understood as the constituents of Vietnamese national and cultural identity. National identity, as Tran Ngoc Them (1999:2-3) observes, is distinctive values transferred and sustained in history and their sustainable best. He acknowledges the commonly universal truth that every people in the world loves their nations, loves their families, and works hard, etc. However, this does not mean that they are all the same. Neither do his arguments about Vietnamese distinctive values suggest that Vietnamese people are better than others, or they have values that others do not have. What he tries to suggest is that Vietnamese cultural identity is affected by its structure and by the environment where its people have been living. He offers a number of Vietnamese cultural constants, which determine the feature and development of the culture. For example, in terms of natural condition: *high level of rain and humidity*; in terms of geographical location: *Vietnam being at the crossroad of civilisations*; in terms of traditional economy: *water-based rice crops*. Let me look at Tran Ngoc Them's (1999:3-5, 2001a, 2001c:39-46) analysis of how the cultural constants affect the formation and becomingness of Vietnamese cultural identity.

Thanks to the high level of rain and humidity, Vietnam has *a wide range of flora*, and *complicated and uneven geology*. This results in the development of planting, and because planting depends heavily on nature, Vietnamese people have to work hard, develop the '*sense of induction*' and *flexibility*. Flexibility enables them to easily adjust with new circumstances and learn from others. Also, planting is seasonal, so Vietnamese people have to closely unite with each other, which results in the *respect for social relations*, and the *sense of community* and *solidarity*. This sense of community is emotion-oriented, which is different from that of China and Japan, often known as being more social-oriented. Because of the vitality of living within a community, Vietnamese

people highly appreciate *dignity* and *personality*. The nature of planting requires people to live permanently at one place, but the complicated and uneven geology makes Vietnamese people divide into many smaller communities, resulting in the diversification of ethnic groups and languages. Therefore, in parallel with the sense of community, the *sense of self-rule* also develops. The sense of self-rule within individual communities creates the *love for home-villages*. The sense of self-rule within a broader scope creates the *love for the country* as a whole and strong *sense of national independence*. That is why the love for home-villages and the love for the Vietnamese country are interrelated and permeate each other. Interdependence in planting also leads to *emotion-biassed lifestyle*, and thus *tactfulness* and *sophistication* are valued in the society. Planting requires stability as well, so Vietnamese people tend to be *tolerant, forgiving* and *peace-loving nation*. Thus, whenever its peace is threatened, *patriotism* and the sense of national independence are enhanced, and its people are willing to die to defend the country. Bravery hence emerges. All of these above features add the sense of harmony to the way Vietnamese people behave. That is why they often think twice before taking actions, and are optimistic in difficulty.

Tran Ngoc Them (1999, 2001a) goes on to suggest that these values had been formed before cultural contacts with China occurred, and they are still present in the modern times. Nevertheless, he states that these values are not absolutely everlasting and unchanged. They do change in the appearance and content, but at the same time, remain relatively stable in the content, developing alongside and sticking to a common thread, which is composed of these above distinctive appearances.

Tran Ngoc Them (2001a) locates his argument within the following philosophy: in the universe, nothing is absolutely immutable and nothing is absolutely moving, either. Everything is both stable and moving, and the difference rests in the degree of stability and movement. Therefore, different concepts and notions have different degrees of movement and changes. He then defines 'cultural identity' as the everlasting existing permanence of culture. Material culture is always changing, meanwhile spiritual culture is more stable, so cultural identity is always and only be spiritual values formed in history. Thus, this is the '*becoming*' of Vietnamese national and cultural identity. '*Being*' and '*becoming*' are interwoven.

In relation to cultural identity, Phan Ngoc (1998) looks at culture in terms of a series of human relations to explore his own inner life and what remains of its unchanged needs

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(p.5). He argues that the way a culture chooses to represent itself is unchanged, and thus this makes different cultures (p.15). In light of this argument, Vietnam has its own 'way' of representation, meeting its people's spiritual desire (p.5). Yes, all human beings need to eat, shelter/dwell, and possess some properties, but different groups of people have different 'ways' of signifying such needs. Moreover, he argues that although man's forms of desires change over times and are very diverse, man's spiritual/mental life remains more or less unchanged, for example, the image of a village in the mind of most Vietnamese people has always been attached to the love for the homeland. This results in the unchanged way of representation to the greatest extent.

Identity, as he argues, is the stable part within culture. However, this stable part is not a thing. It is rather a relation. It thus cannot be seen with our eyes. To exemplify Vietnamese identity in cultural contact with the world, he refers to the image of a circuit actor who performs on a thin rope (line) and needs to maintain balance, so that he/she will not fall. Vietnamese identity, in this view, may change unpredictably, but needs to sustain a relation similar to the importance of the balance maintained by the circuit actor (p.140). Cultural identity, similarly, refers to the unchanged part of culture in history. Culture is a system of relations, and these relations may be portrayed in different forms depending on explanations given by different times (p.32). He argues that even the most distinctive features of Vietnamese identity are subject to change due to historical situations, living environment, and cultural contacts. Nevertheless, cultural identity remains more or less stable, reflecting the unchangeability of Vietnamese people's mental/spiritual desire.

Phan Ngoc (1998) views culture as a science, which has its own objects, methods and terminologies. Importantly, he makes a valuable remark that people should respect difference and live in harmony. Difference does not mean deficit. Research into the relationship between what framework man has in minds and what framework man has created is the job of culturology. On the basis of this approach and his argument that the way Vietnam chooses to represent itself is unchanged, Phan Ngoc (1998:32-106) identifies four dominant elements portraying Vietnamese identity: *Fatherland*, *Family*, *Fate* and *Face* (Four F), which I interpret as *the Vietnamese homeland, the Vietnamese family, the issue of status (than phan)*, and *the issue of identity (dien mao)*. All of these elements are interrelated and intertwined.

The Fatherland (Vietnamese homeland): Phan Ngoc observes that Vietnamese people understand deeply and proudly that Vietnamese homeland is their land, the land they have had to exchange their lives for, the land they have had to create out of nothing due to the injustice of nature (the plains in Northern Vietnam are man-made and Vietnamese people have been fighting against both natural and human enemies to sustain them). Thus, there is nothing more important to them than their land, the land that did not come to them from nature, but was a product of their labour and struggle. This results in Vietnamese people being homeland-oriented, which means their homeland is the most significant and important. They thus are loyal to and willing to die for their land, which belongs to all people, not to any particular families, any kings or any groups of people. This is unchanged. Different peoples have different ways of understanding and loving their countries, and this is the way Vietnamese people understand and feel about their land (p.34). Their love for the homeland permeates and penetrates into all activities and relations as much as the other way. As a result, in contact with other cultures, Vietnamese people Vietnamise every foreign value through their vision of homeland, which means they make foreign values serve the interest of their people with deep attachment to their land. For example, according to Phan Ngoc (1998), Buddhism in Vietnam is the Buddhism of patriotism, Sino-Vietnamese literature is the agenda for writers and composers to express their love for the Vietnamese country and people, and even the French-influenced Vietnamese poetry in the early 20th century expressed patriotism and the passion for peace in a combination of both a sophisticated and heroic voice. The notion of Vietnamese homeland has nurtured the sense of nationalism and collectivism, in which the latter is also a product of living in villages - the core image of Vietnamese culture.

Phan Ngoc lists a number of factors which are interwoven in order to form Vietnamese nationalism. For instance, firstly, it is the integrity and uniform of ideology, and in Vietnam, it is Buddhism. Then, a myth (legend) of the Viet race was woven, telling that all Vietnamese people regardless of their living environments all over Vietnam have the same father and mother: father Dragon and mother Fairy. Nonetheless, the most important quality of Vietnamese people is their built-in love for the homeland, the love that comes from the reality of life: solidarity is needed to fight against and live in peace with natural disasters for the sake of the water-rice agriculture, and to defend the

country from human enemies. It is the very quality that holds people together and makes a core Vietnamese identity, around which other identities of Vietnam are centred.

The Vietnamese family: Phan views *the Vietnamese family* in relation to Vietnamese villages, relatives, ancestor worshiping practice, and above all - *the Vietnamese homeland*. The interest of the family is harmonious with and accompanied by that of the homeland. Vietnamese family is the very base for nurturing and maintaining the love for the homeland and the sense of nationalism (p.56-57). In particular, Phan Ngoc discusses generational conflicts in his own extended family as well as family conflicts in general when Vietnam experiences cultural contacts with others, whether forcedly or willingly, to prove this unchanged characteristic. Although different times may place different responsibilities on families, the core responsibility remains quite stable.

The issue of status (than phan) and *the issue of identity (dien mao)*: Phan indicates that before the French colonisation, a single Vietnamese person had his/her status and self-identity in the society. He/she was not economically and politically dependent on any powerful force. Rather, he/she enjoyed social protection, which ensured him/her a safe life if he/she lived with kindness and moral as socially expected. Because Vietnam had a tradition of having a united political mechanism built on the basis of self-rule villages rather than a powerful bureaucratic regimes, its people had to harmoniously follow two sets of relations. In either relation, Phan proves that every single Vietnamese person had a status and identity provided and protected by this dual relation.

Phan Ngoc explains why Communism had victory in Vietnam when it was first brought in. It won people's heart because it did care about the nation, the land, the independence and their social status and identity. He believes that if the Party can maintain and promote these values, it will have the support of the people.

It is clear that Phan Ngoc (1998) shares a number of views about culture and identity with both essentialist and non-essentialist Western authors. But instead of demonstrating identity as absolutely static and unchanging, he argues that identity (specifically Vietnamese national/cultural identity) has been changing but within a degree of stability and continuity, which are supported by the way Vietnamese people choose to represent themselves. He has pointed out that this way of representation appears more or less stable over times. Thus, in his arguments, identity contains both the '*being*' and the '*becoming*', in which the '*being*' seems to dominate.

Tran Quoc Vuong is also an influential scholar of culture in Vietnam, who has devoted his scholarly work to the exploration of Vietnamese culture. Tran Quoc Vuong (2000), apart from sharing his perspectives with Tran Ngoc Them (1999, 2001a, b, c) and Phan Ngoc (1998), looks at Vietnamese culture from the angle of life experiences, values and traditions. He remarks that the distinctiveness of Vietnamese culture is its non-refusing characteristic (p.44). It only refuses forced assimilation; otherwise it is able to harmonise and integrate every cultural aspect. Moreover, he observes that Vietnamese people pay most attention to their manner of behaviour. These contribute to the formation of Vietnamese cultural identity. In his opinion, the most important factor in sustaining the on-going development of a nation is to maintain its nationalness of its cultural identity (p.108). However, he also argues that traditions and values do change. Whether a behaviour or a cultural tradition is considered good or bad depends on historical circumstances. Tradition embodies both stability and changeability (p.28).

Like many Western theorists, Tran Quoc Vuong (2000) emphasises the importance of exploring identity in relation to difference. Specifically, he sees the significance of juxtaposing Vietnamese culture to Chinese culture to define Vietnamese national/cultural identity. Together with other Vietnamese authors, he has indicated vital differences between the two to oppose the assumption that Vietnam is a Chinese-like culture located in South East Asia. At this very point, a strong sense of a Vietnamese cultural/national identity is significant to every Vietnamese to feel Vietnamese.

It is clear that Tran Quoc Vuong's (2000) viewpoints of culture and cultural identity also suggest that Vietnamese culture enjoys both the '*being*' and the '*becoming*'. He implies a sense of Vietnamese cultural identity, which Vietnamese people need to maintain. He also suggests that that sense of identity is continuous in the context of historical changes.

2.4.3.2 Identity as national/cultural identity

It can be understood from the previous section that Vietnamese scholars tend to address identity in light of the notions of 'nation' and 'homeland', which have been seen in close relation to culture. They thus have created a comprehensive picture of 'identity', often understood as 'Vietnamese cultural identity', something very basic, fundamental, and immortal regardless of time. So identity here is often referred to as 'cultural identity' or

'national identity'. This very notion of cultural identity has, as a result, established a strong tie between each individual under this identity 'loop' and the loop itself. It has also affected their behaviours and ways of doing things. In other words, it has created its own Discourse (Gee 1999), its own 'Vietnamese' uniqueness (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c). Vietnamese scholars have provided us a portrayal of Vietnamese identity with highly agreed-upon distinctive qualities of Vietnamese people within its Discourse.

Because Vietnamese scholars strongly believe that there is a shared Vietnamese identity, they tend to believe that every Vietnamese acts, behaves and thinks with reference to this core identity. Due to this assumption, individual identities are often either neglected or underestimated. But this fact is normally compensated for by the general belief that Vietnam has a distinctive identity and each individual has the right, pride and responsibility to maintain and develop it. Let me imagine Vietnamese identity as a big umbrella, under which every individual allegedly thinks and acts in connection with it. This is to say that individuals are strongly and closely influenced by 'the shared' identity, while individual selves fade away or are put behind the scenes. Nevertheless, individuals make sacrifices for this shared identity and accept the reasons for their sacrifice. They are defined by the national identity which takes precedence over other aspects of identity.

2.4.3.3   Identity as the sense of belonging

Phan Ngoc (1998), Tran Quoc Vuong (2000) and Tran Ngoc Them (1999, 2001a, c) present identity as the sense of belonging. Although they have indicated that identity is about both 'being' and 'becoming', and place emphasis on Vietnamese national/cultural identity as the most important identity, what appears important in their discussion is a strong sense of continuity and connectedness, which gives one a sense of belonging.

Tran Ngoc Them (email exchange and phone conversation 2001) admits that despite his exposure to different parts of the world and Western theories of identity and culture, he strongly feels a Vietnamese national/cultural identity. His feelings support the argument that one defines oneself in relation to other (Woodward 1997). He thus feels a stronger sense of being a Vietnamese when he is outside Vietnam. However, because he is a scholar of culture who constantly argues for the existence of a shared Vietnamese identity, his feelings may present resistance to what is argued in the Western theories of

identity and culture. I understand his feeling as both physical and mental. Thus, the 'being' of identity and the sense of it complement each other, and suggest a sense of belonging.

Phan Ngoc (1998) sees himself as a person experiencing major historical changes in Vietnam over the past century, and has been influenced by the education in both Chinese and French in the first half of 20th century. He thus has developed his concern about the identity of his country. Different chapters in this book, at first, aimed to answer the writer's own questions. Later, he realised that his questions are also common among his generation, those in their 70s who have eye-witnessed changes in Vietnam with its open-door policy, Phan Ngoc (1998) then decided to publish his book. He emphasises that his book mainly reflects his own viewpoints. Phan strongly emphasises that although people like himself who have had close contacts with both Chinese (a powerful Asian culture) and French (a powerful Western culture), may have some Chinese flavour in their literary works, and adopt some Western styles at work, they, most importantly, remain a Vietnamese and are able to Vietnamise a bit of Chinese and a bit of French to reflect the Vietnamese spiritual and mental life. To understand profoundly why Phan Ngoc, a highly recognised international scholar, has strongly believed in the very 'core' cultural identity of his country despite his enriched education and his mastery of various languages, it is important to note that he has a strong sense of belonging. He feels that he belongs to Vietnam.

The theory of language and culture advocated by Hall (1997a) obviously suggests that the language one speaks or uses to communicate with the world gives one a sense of identity. I thus interpret it technically as follows: the more languages you speak, the more identities you have; or the more 'independent', the more liberated your identity becomes. But this seems insufficient to explain how Phan Ngoc's (1998) identity or his view of it is presented. On the one hand, he does have a multiple and international identity, but at the same time, the more his identity is liberated, the stronger it attaches to the core Vietnamese values. Put differently, the more he contacts with the world, the more he believes in the 'out-there' cultural identity of Vietnam. He feels he has a strong sense of belonging, which many Western authors disagree with and try to argue against.

2.4.4 Conclusion and main principles

So far I have discussed both Western-oriented and Vietnamese perceptions of identity.

It is clear that contemporary Western scholars have shared a common view about identity. That is, identity is constructed, changing, hybrid and multiple. They do not agree on a 'core' and 'fixed' identity. Identity is rather transformed than unchanged. Likewise, there is no particular 'overall' identity that may always intervene in a person's behaviour or activities. Instead, a person's multiple identities will determine these acts. At one stage, one identity will come to the ground, but at another time other identities will be foregrounded while the previous one stays back. Through this process, identity will be transformed, retransformed, negotiated and renegotiated to create new aspects of identity. That is why identity, according to most of these authors, keeps moving and moving, undergoing sites of struggle. Identity is always more than just one thing.

When discussing identity-related issues, Western writers are inclined to focus on individuals as the most important criteria to build 'identity'. They pay most attention to fragmented aspects of identity as well. Put differently, they analyse the issue with a thorough look at every single component. In this case, they study identities of individuals, who have multiple ever-moving and changing identities. Individual 'self' has more space and encouragement to develop. Moreover, as there is nothing called 'core identity', individuals' behaviours are not determined from and towards a non-existent 'core identity'.

While many Western theorists put an emphasis on the '*becoming*' of identity, Vietnamese authors suggest both the '*being*' and the '*becoming*', in which the '*being*' plays an important role in maintaining a sense of belonging. Vietnamese authors argue that even though identity contains both stability and changeability, the latter occurs in such a way that brings change together under a shared sense of Vietnameseness. Instead of viewing change in terms of fragmentation as some of the above Western authors argue, Vietnamese authors see it more as a fluid process of identity formation to ensure continuity and connectedness, and thus a sense of belonging. I see this view as useful, but this does not mean that Western authors' views are not useful. Identity is constructed, multiple, hybrid and dynamic, but it gives one a sense of belonging.

What Vietnamese authors suggest about the 'being' of identity and identity formation embodies a notion of 'existing' and 'persisting' values. I understand this notion as a sense of connectedness in the fluid negotiation of values, rather than entire stability as the notion may suggest. Put differently, stability is obtained through fluid movement and movement is operated through a certain degree of stability.

Both Western and Vietnamese authors view identity in relation to difference and as relational. The former express their points more explicitly, while the latter implicitly interweave this view in their discussion. Both talk about the construction of national identity and the means used for this purpose. Although Western authors argue that national identity is constructed and it is changing over times, they seem to acknowledge that people do feel it when they identify themselves in terms of nationality, for example, as Austrian (Wodak et al., 1999). Thus, I argue that there must be a sense of belonging, a sense of national/cultural identity that differentiates one people from others. Let me look at Vietnamese students studying in Australia as an example. Being positioned in an environment where their classmates come from different cultural backgrounds, they are often asked 'where are you from?'. These students have to make sense of their Vietnameseness when answering 'I am from Vietnam'. Although it does not guarantee that all of them have the same perception of what it means to be Vietnamese, they at least have in mind some things to tell about it. All of these create a sense of Vietnamese cultural/national identity, which holds them together and makes them different from Chinese or Japanese, for instance.

The discussion of this thesis will employ these abovementioned principles to interpret the data and theorise the analysis.

2.5 Other conceptual tools

Together with the main principles discussed above, in this section, I will look at a number of notions related to the question of identity, which I will employ as conceptual tools to interpret the data. They are identity fastening, unfastening and refastening; appropriation – resistance - negotiation; and identity and discourse.

2.5.1 Identity fastening, unfastening and refastening

I would like to employ Reed's (2001) metaphor of identity fastening and unfastening to set the context of the participants in this study. Identity fastening, in Reed's definition, is referred to as "the work that individuals do to claim insider status for themselves and for others" (p.329). Meanwhile, "identity unfastening often happens when individuals move from one cultural context into another where the norms and rules for membership are different" (p.329). The latter applies to the participants' movement from Vietnam to

Australia, where their insider status was challenged. The former applies to them as they experienced different sets of pedagogic performance, which governs their acts to claim insider status for themselves and others. As Reed argues, "identities are fastened by the categories that we have available and by the ways that we submit to those categories and subject others to them" (p.329). Reed also argues that individuals sometimes fasten identity so as to build a way to belong. This suggests that an act of identity fastening somehow secures a sense of belonging for individuals. But identities are always subject to be unfastened as individuals are in constant contacts with new cultural values and norms as they move from one place to another. Thus, identity fastening and unfastening take place side-by-side. In other words, they walk hand-in-hand and corelate. But one is also obtained at the cost of the other. As Reed asserts, they "usually occur simultaneously and in multidimensional ways" (p.329). Identity fastening and unfastening are part of the ongoing process of identity formation and identity negotiation. However, all of the above arguments do not suggest that identity fastening and unfastening are fixed. Rather, they are progressive processes.

Reed argues that "identity fastening, unfastening and refastening are continuously done to us and by us" (p.337). He gives an example that immigrants adopting a new identity often unfasten and refasten their identities. I understand his perception of refastening as reconstitution, in which refas_ning is not simply remaking a new identity after unfastening and fastening identities. Instead, it should be seen as part of "the ongoing identity formation process" (p.337), which takes into account a sense of belonging and a sense of continuity, maintained by a fluid process, despite fragmentation and/or contradiction in the course of identity formation. Fastening, unfastening and refastening are thus better understood as processes than conditions or stages.

2.5.2 Appropriation – resistance - negotiation

I will focus on three aspects that I believe contribute most to the identity formation. They are the notions of '*appropriation*' and '*resistance*' (Pennycook 2001), and the process of '*negotiation*'.

Appropriation does not only refer to the process of 'making suitable' or 'taking possession of or making use of exclusively for oneself, often without permission' (online dictionary) or 'taking for one's own use without permission' (Collins compact Australian dictionary), but it also carries sites of resistance and reconstitution. Put

differently, appropriation walks side by side with resistance and this creates 'reconstitution'. Appropriation may also include both resistance and reconstitution. Thus, appropriation does not take place as one-way process, rather it operates in a more complicated way, embracing the other two processes.

To explore the identity formation of these Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English in the context of postcolonial ELT, I would like to refer to Canagarajah's (1999b:2) discussion of *resistance perspective*, which

> provide[s] for the possibility that, in everyday life, the powerless in postcolonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage. The intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical and democratic terms (cited in Pennycook 2001:65).

In my understanding, this discussion actually explains the author's perception of appropriation. To simplify it, if viewing appropriation as a ruler, then negotiation will take place at every point of the ruler. Thus, although with this understanding, appropriation becomes extremely complicated, it will enable the 'Other' to use the Self's language and norms (in this case, English and ELT) to turn against itself. Appropriation contains the possibility of change and opens up spaces for the Other to develop positively and equally compared to the Self. In the context of English and ELT as global characteristics, appropriation is specifically related to how the Other actively uses English and ELT in their tongues and for their comfort. But appropriation does not stop at an "apolitical relativism" status (Pennycook 2001:71). Instead, it will assert itself by constantly creating "*third cultures* or *third spaces*" as suggested by Kramsch (1993) (cited in Pennycook 2001:71). Canagarajah's (1999b:76) example of how Sri Lankans appropriate English acts as a model sample for me to interpret the identity formation process:

> [they] appropriates English to dynamically negotiate meaning, identity and status in contextually suitable and socially strategic ways, and in the process modifies the communicative and linguistic rules of English according to local cultural and ideological imperatives (cited in Pennycook 2001:71).

2.5.3 Identity and discourse

First of all, I must acknowledge that I am going to discuss the relationship between identity and discourse as a conceptual tool rather than as a body of knowledge. Thus, I

will focus on how this relationship as a conceptual tool helps interpret the data of this thesis.

I would like to employ Gee's (1999) definitions of 'Discourses' to begin the discussion of how identity is constructed within Discourse:

> "*Discourses*" with a capital "D", that is, different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language "stuff," such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and objects in the right places and at the right times so as to enact and recognize different identities and activities, give the material world certain meanings, distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain sorts of meaningful connections in our experience, and privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others (Gee 1999:13).

This definition suggests that "Discourses are ways of being 'people like us'" (Gee 1996:viii). Gee (1996:ix) also argues that "each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each Discourse represents one of our ever-multiple identities." Importantly, "these Discourses need not, and often do not, represent consistent and compatible values. There are conflicts among them, and each of us lives and breathes these conflicts as we act out our various Discourses" (p.ix). Gee observes that "for some, these conflicts are more dramatic than for others" (p.ix).

Gee (1999:38) treats Discourses as tools of inquiry. For him, in addition to other characteristics, Discourses involve "situated identities" and "ways of performing and recognizing characteristic identities and activities."

Since we define ourselves when we speak or write (Farrell 1994, Gee 1999, Phan Le Ha 1999), language acts as a medium in and through which our identities are enacted and constructed. But as "language makes no sense outside of Discourses" (Gee 1996:viii), our identities are accordingly shaped in and through multiple Discourses to which we belong.

In understanding the relationship between identity and Discourses, it is important to understand cultural models and situated meanings as tools of inquiry, since "both of these involve ways of looking at how speakers and writers give language specific meanings within specific situations" (Gee 1999:40). This discussion links to what Hall (1997a) means by 'meaning', in which meanings are socially constructed, multiple, and subject to change. Each word is associated with both situated meanings and a cultural model.

Gee (1999:80) defines a 'situated meaning' as "an image or pattern that we assemble "on the spot" as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and our past experiences." Situated meanings "don't simply reside in individual minds; very often they are *negotiated* between people in and through communicative social interaction" (p.80).

Gee defines 'cultural models' as "storylines," families of connected images ... or "theories" shared by people belonging to specific social or cultural groups" (p.81).

> Cultural models "explain," relative to the standards of the group, why words have the various situated meanings they do and fuel their ability to grow more. Cultural models are usually not completely stored in any one person's head. Rather, they are distributed across the different sorts of "expertise" and viewpoints found in the group, ... much like a plot to a story or pieces of a puzzle that different people have different bits of and which they can potentially share in order to mutually develop the "big picture" (p.81).

Also, "cultural models link to each other in complex ways to create bigger and bigger storylines" (p.81).

Farrell (2000:21) discusses identity in connection with discourse, in which she remarks that identities "imply sets of beliefs, values and orientation, the knowledges and the capabilities, that are available to a person in their social setting, moment by moment." She understands 'discourse' as "a socially recognised way of representing experience from a particular ideological point of view, ... which implies certain values, beliefs and orientations, certain identities" (p.21). Thus, identity and discourse are interrelated and one contains the other and vice versa.

As a conceptual tool, the relationship between identity and discourses discussed above, will be used to interpret the processes of identity formation experienced by the participants in this study.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have so far explored the relationship between language, culture and identity, and related conceptual tools in order to understand different processes of identity formation. Also, by looking at these theories and tools, I have been able to define my position in the complicated discussion among scholars and theorists from the West and Vietnam.

Although some Western theorists' arguments about the relationship between language, culture and identity are both illuminating and useful, the ideas of the Vietnamese authors are equally so, as they partly spell out the sense of Vietnameseness that both I and others in my community seem to feel. Identity is multiple, dynamic and hybrid. Yet, it is also something like a 'core', a 'root' based on which new values are constructed. It is the very 'core' that unites members of a society under one identity called national identity. I argue that identity needs to be understood and studied in a specific context which has its own culture. In other words, identity needs to be contextualized. Both Western and Vietnamese scholars would support this need, despite the fact that it leads to different, sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary points of focus. Thus, in order to understand the processes of identity formation of Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English, the combination of these two different traditions in my analytical framework is a must.

CHAPTER 3 - SELF, OTHER AND THE POLITICS OF ENGLISH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.1 Introduction

One of the aims of the research is to explore the explanatory power of postcolonial notions of Self and Other in investigating processes of teacher identity formation in movement in space and time between contexts of teaching in Vietnam and studying teaching in Australia. To achieve this aim, this chapter looks at the concepts of Self, Other and the politics of English and English Language Teaching (ELT).

Postcolonial notions of Self and Other as explored by Pennycook (1998) are embedded in the debate regarding the use of English and ELT as political and power-related practices. Although many authors have argued for the neutrality of English as an international and/or a global language, and of a family of Englishes, and of Standard English, the growth and expansion of English and ELT are demonstrated by many others as being associated with issues of ethics. Still, the representation of Other (the colonised) which is constructed and maintained by Self (the coloniser) is problematic. Moreover, as many authors point out, the Other has been made to believe in their images created by the Self, and together with the Self, they strengthen these images. However, this aspect of the debate needs to be further investigated, a task this study will undertake in discussing the data.

This chapter first looks at the politics of English and ELT, where a number of issues are investigated, such as how English and ELT are connected with colonialism, whether English is neutral and belongs to all users, whether TESOL programmes are for the benefit of the Other, and what has made Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) so vulnerable to criticism. Next, the chapter examines postcolonial notions of Self and Other in particular to set up conceptual tools for understanding whether these notions are powerful enough to understand processes of identity formation. Finally, the conclusion to this chapter discusses conceptual tools to establish a foundation for data interpretation in subsequent chapters.

Before exploring the focuses of this chapter, it is important for me to acknowledge that I use the terms Self, Other, Centre/centre and Periphery/periphery suggested by

postcolonial theorists mainly as conceptual tools. In other cases, these terms are employed because they are known and recognised in the literature.

3.2 The politics of English and English Language Teaching (ELT)

This section first looks at the politics of English and ELT with a focus on the connection between English, ELT and the constructs of colonialism, and the ownership of English. It then looks at TESOL programmes conducted in English-speaking countries and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as lacking in critical perspectives on how English is taught in different parts of the world, and on how the role of teacher should be respected.

3.2.1 English, ELT and the constructs of colonialism

> English: "a language - the language - on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep"
>
> (Randolph Quirk 1985:1)

"The sun never sets upon the British Empire"

Let me start the discussion with the powerful statements that have been made about the status of English and its Mother Empire that have resulted in the tendency to assume the spread of English is inevitable and natural.

The spread of English as a world, international and global language, and the expansion of ELT to the rest of the world have been enthusiastically discussed by many authors, such as Kachru (1986), Smith (1987), Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994, 1998), Crystal (1997), McArthur (1998, 2003), Ronowicz and Yallop (1999), Brutt-Griffler (2002), and Melchers and Shaw (2003). Different perspectives have been expressed by authors from English-speaking countries, from countries where English is a second language or an official language, from countries where English is a foreign language of the first priority and from countries where English is one among many foreign languages to be taught. English as a global language, as these authors observe, has both positive and negative sides. On the one hand, as a lingua franca and today a global language, English has efficiently served as a bridge to connect all parts of the world together, and thus made the world a village (Crystal 1997). Through English, the world can not only hear voices of the powerless, appreciate values owned by different peoples

regardless of what language they speak, what race they belong to, but also see and protest against global exploitation and inequality. Garcia and Otheguy (1989:3) reinforce this contribution of English by indicating that English "has facilitated political and cultural understanding across societies, as well as served as a medium to expose injustices perpetrated on powerless ethnolinguistic groups (not frequently, by the English speaking powerful)". Also, according to these authors, English has played the key role in understanding "different realities of our international world" (1989:3). On the other hand, English has been used as "a tool for the licentious exercise of imperialist inclinations" (Verschueren 1989:33). Moreover, the use of English as the language of powerful nations has contributed to the superior – inferior relationships between the powerful and the powerless. The powerful play their game while the powerless are often pawns on a chessboard. As part of this dichotomy of power, Garcia and Otheguy (1989:8) contend that "the powerful impose communication norms and the powerless are asked to follow them".

The explosive growth of the use of English has been accompanied by the similarly rapid expansion of ELT. The dominant status of English and ELT in almost all parts of the world is the product of colonialism, as Pennycook (1998) discussed. Phillipson (1992) sees the dominance of English and ELT as 'linguistic imperialism' when he draws readers' attention to the claim that the 'Centre' (English-speaking countries) imposes its own cultural values, military and economic power, wants and needs upon the 'Periphery' through ELT and so-called 'aid'.

To reveal how cultural constructs of colonialism adhere to English and ELT, Pennycook (1998) argues that many current ELT theories and practices embody in themselves the colonial thinking and views, which strongly disadvantage the learners of English as a second or foreign language. Due to the fact that ELT had a long history of direct connections with colonialism, and that ELT was both the product and 'weapon' of colonialism, it carries in itself many of the ways of thinking and behaving that are still part of Western cultures. If in the colonial times ELT was used to spread the empire's power and support the colonial governance, then ELT today is used to back up and strengthen the current global expansion of English and its underlying cultural values. These missions of ELT are in fact not much different since its duty is always to serve the benefit of colonialism and "linguistic imperialism" as the title of Phillipson's book, *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), has suggested.

English – a superior language – and ELT – a superior teaching practice – are promoted according to these three views, known as "capacities: English-intrinsic arguments, what English is; resources: English-extrinsic arguments, what English has; uses: English-functional arguments, what English does" (Phillipson 1992:271). The means used to exert linguistic power is through sticks (force), carrots (bargaining), or ideas (persuasion) (Galtung's classification, quoted in Phillipson 1992:283). In these days, the means of ideas (persuasion) is most appropriate and relevant to the world order and situations. Instead of using force or bargaining, the Centre has succeeded in making the Periphery peoples believe that what the Centre is doing for the Periphery is good and this is what they – Periphery- want. This refers to Fairclough's (1989:33) views on language and power, in which he argues that power can be maintained and exercised through "*coercion* or *consent*". He also observes that *consent* proves to be more effective, "less costly and less risky to rule" (p.34). If we apply this theory to English and power, we can see clearly that the Centre has intentionally shifted the role of English and ELT from *coercion* in the old days to *consent* in recent times. In other words, if peripheral countries used to think of English and ELT as a means of actual colonisation, they have now come to believe that English and ELT have been doing more good to them.

Phillipson (1992) argues that English and ELT have helped most in gaining the success of the Centre by acting as 'a tool', 'an instrument', a 'neutral' means as the Centre calls them (English and ELT), to build a bridge between Centre and Periphery. To further his discussion, Phillipson (1992) refers to Galtung's ideas that "the 'educated' in the Periphery are internalising Centre values and ways of thought to the point where the physical presence of Centre inter-state actors is no longer necessary and computers will ensure the Centre's control over the Periphery" (p.242). This point links to the point made by Phillipson earlier in his book, that "research by fledgling Periphery scholars could best be influenced when it was conducted and 'supervised' as graduate study in Centre countries" (p.234). In accordance with this argument, when scholars from Periphery countries are offered scholarships to do their research in the Centre, they are guided and influenced by the Centre and what their research aims at is to benefit the Centre. Also, these scholars are the ones who will bring Western values, ways of thought, and the results of their research back to their countries. By doing so, these scholars contribute to the spread of English linguistic imperialism. They, whether

unconsciously or not, are those who share common interests with the Centre's representatives. And if they are not aware of what they are doing, they then become 'harmful' forces who transmit Western values and English linguistic imperialism to their home countries. As Pattanayak (1986d:vi) comments, "the advocacy of the norms of the Centre by 'educated' persons tutored in the modes of western thinking" in language policy has had harmful effects on dominated languages and societies (quoted in Phillipson 1992:286).

> These societies are then made permanent parasites on the developed countries for knowledge and information. By destroying interdependent self-directed societies, the elites in these countries achieve what colonialism failed to achieve through coercive occupation" (Pattanayak 1986d:vi, quoted in Phillipson 1992:286).

While the people of the Periphery realise the dominance of English and ELT, they are also aware of the importance and necessity of these 'effective weapons'. This has resulted in an explosive growth of English and ELT. However, Crystal (1997) and Phillipson (1992) make oversimplified arguments, which suggest that as the 'weapons' of the Centre, English and ELT have been carrying their missions of spreading and consolidating the Centre's values and power in the Periphery and other places, and these weapons are so powerful that both the Centre and the Periphery have been made to believe in the advancedness, appropriateness and efficiency of ELT pedagogy set by the Centre. Moreover, the belief that 'the West is better' often held by both Westerners and non-Western people has also facilitated the spread of English and ELT. Non-native English teachers thus often assume that what the West provides is more advanced, and as a result, they come back and question their own ways of teaching English to their local students. These teachers, particularly those who are trained in English-speaking countries, are the ones who exert an influence on language teaching policies in their countries and have at the same time been most influenced by Western pedagogical values and practices. Nevertheless, concerns about the problems of ethics and inappropriateness of ELT pedagogy have been raised by authors from both the Centre and Periphery, such as Tollefson (1991), Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994), Ellis (1996), Li (1998), Liu (1998), and Le Van Canh (2001). These concerns will be presented in the section on Communicative Language Teaching.

These abovementioned arguments are much related to what I argue, that the role of those who are educated abroad or educated in the modes of western thinking is very important to the future of their countries because these people are selected from among

the most elite in their countries, and they are the ones who will play the key role in future development and future education locally. Among these elites/scholars, those who are trained in ESL, EFL, or TESOL in English-speaking countries, are most closely associated with the double-sided arguments of English and ELT. Thus, they need to be fully aware of their responsibilities for the education of younger generations in their home countries when they go back and apply to their local contexts what they have obtained through western education. Their positioning regarding English and ELT plays an essential role in shaping their students' identity, and how the relationship between language and culture operates in the construction of identity. Hence, whether or not or to what degree they see themselves, their positions and their images as being created by Western visions is explored. Also, how they construct their identities as teachers of English and individuals is examined.

3.2.2 The ownership of English

This section investigates the question 'who owns English', since it is embedded in how English and ELT are perceived, practised and promoted globally.

Since English is often referred to today as a world language, the issue of the ownership of English has attracted great attention from scholars worldwide. Clearly, English first belongs to those who speak it as their mother tongue, and this truth does not generate as much significant debate among scholars as the belief that English is now a global property owned by international citizens. The statement that English as an international language is "natural, neutral and beneficial" to the world (Pennycook 1994:7) is centred on the controversy of who owns English. As Pennycook (1994) observes, the arguments that English is natural, neutral and beneficial has overshadowed other sides of it, resulting in the one-sided attitudes towards English from its users. Thus, he calls for an examination and reassessment of "the social, cultural and political contexts of English" (p.11). Phillipson (1992) also criticises this statement, persuading readers to realise the 'unethical' side of the spread of English and ELT - its side-by-side companion.

Thus, I will now look at the literature closely to try to reason whether English is truly an international and a world language, and whether it is the language for all, politics-and-ideology-free and for the benefit of its users. Then, my arguments will be presented.

3.2.2.1   Is English an international and a world language?

Regarding the discussion of English as an international and a world language, many authors have raised their voices. Kachru (1982, 1986), "one of the most effective campaigners for the recognition and study of local variety of English" as Pennycook (1994:9) remarks, has continuously argued for the neutrality of English, suggesting a friendly attitude towards this widespread language. He argues for a family of 'Englishes' or the existence of a variety of local Englishes.

Approaching the matter of the variety of Englishes, in the introduction for the book "The English Languages" written by McArthur (1998), the publisher clearly states that

> *The English Languages* looks at the 'pluralism' of English, especially the 'Englishes' that have been discussed in the last twenty years or so, and addresses the question of whether or not English can be considered a family of languages in its own right, like the Romance languages (p. iii).

But is this statement true? It may sound reasonable and Kachru (1986) or even Phillipson (1992) may agree, but what I am concerned with here is what lies behind this well-observed statement. Yes, these Englishes may belong to a family but this family enjoys a fiercely hierarchical relation among its members, in which some members play the dominant role trying to 'support' and at the same time 'bullying' their weaker yet vulnerable 'sisters' and 'brothers'. Yes, although there are varieties of English, such as Singlish, Indian English, African English, Australian-English, American-English, and British-English, international norms and rules of the language are not set by all these Englishes, nor even negotiated among them. Only the so-called 'native' speakers of English have a voice in the matter (Pham Hoa Hiep 2001). We can see examples of this in the norms of English academic writing (Farrell 1997a, b, Phan Le Ha 1999), or in the debate of cross-cultural issues (Kaplan 1966, Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997, San Miguel 1996, Liddicoat 1997, Phan Le Ha 1999, Phan Le Ha & Viete 2002), or in the case of many students who have been using English since they started schooling in their countries (some African and Asian ones) but still have to take TOEFL or IELTS tests for their entrance into universities in the US and UK.

It is apparent that who is counted as 'native' speakers of English has caused controversy, but let me not talk about it and return to McArthur's work for the sake of the purposes clearly expressed in this discussion. After a long and detailed presentation on the English languages, McArthur (1998) has to come back to reality by looking at the shapes of English, linguistic insecurities and other related issues. In the end, Standard

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English has its own triumphant and decisive status, no matter how many Englishes have come into being. As one example, Black English, also known as Afro-American English, is considered inferior with low quality, and thus those who speak it are labelled "low level of achievement" forces (p.197).

Although Phillipson (1992) strongly and provocatively argues against the so-called 'neutrality' and the natural spread of English and ELT, he seems much less adamant in an article co-authored with Skutnabb-Kangas (1996:429) when they research into the two language policy options, namely "a *diffusion-of-English paradigm* and an *ecology-of-language paradigm*" to call for ELT professionals' support for the latter. However 'tolerant', these two authors still show their firm stance on "the controversy about the multiple nature of the English language and about whose interests "world English" serves" (p.441). In their opinion, the *ecology-of-language paradigm* also faces serious problems relating to human rights and equality: "human rights are meaningless if they do not apply to speakers of all languages" (p.443) and if only certain languages are heavily weighted in the interest of some powerful nations. In the case of English, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas stress that as long as English still adheres to numerous ethics of linguistic human rights, its "useful purposes" become marginalised (p.447).

Pham Hoa Hiep (2001) takes a critical look at the issue of 'who owns English'. He clearly questions the "assumptions about international English" (p.4), arguing that it is native speakers who set the norms for what is called Standard English. He clarifies his argument by drawing on definitions of 'Standard English' made by a number of authors. For example, Strevens says that Standard English is "a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localised dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English, which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent" (cited in Pham Hoa Hiep 2001:5). Pham Hoa Hiep also refers to Quirk's discussion of Standard English, which Pham expresses in his own words as "the natural language that educated English native speakers use" (p.5). Thus, according to Pham, it cannot be assumed that English belongs to no particular culture, or is "culture-free" (p.4). Indeed, he argues that the use of English does play an important part in both one's desire to communicate with the world and one's will to preserve one's identity. Put differently, English does affect identity formation, and Pham urges EFL teachers to assist students in achieving these two aims.

However, apart from the pride of owning the language of international communication, it is now necessary to consider the voices of native speakers of English, who may see their language at risk of being 'corrupted' or 'polluted', since it has been modified and promoted everywhere without any control (Marzui 1975a, Crystal 1988, cited in Pennycook 1994). In order to oppose this trend, native speakers of English have found a way to protect Standard English by calling "anything that isn't 'standard' ... 'dialect' if lucky and slang if not" (McArthur 1998:200). For example, McArthur shows that the issue of Standard English versus Black English is a matter in educational agendas in the city of Oakland in California, USA. The English Afro-Americans speak is perceived by educators as "a distinct language spoken by the descendants of slaves" (Elaine Woo & Mary Curtius 1996, cited in McArthur 1998:198).

Let me now take a specific look at the forum on English as an international language (EIL) initiated and sustained by Widdowson (1997). Widdowson (1997), partly in response to authors, such as Phillipson (1992), takes a provocative position in the discussion of 'who owns English' when he proposes his own notion of EIL. I find a number of his arguments vulnerable. *Firstly*, Widdowson makes an analogy between Englishes and Latin languages, assuming it is the same between "French and Italian [developing] from Latin", and "Ghanaian and Nigerian [developing] out of English" (p.142). Although I understand that Widdowson wants to argue for the independent status of all languages that develop out of English, I still find this assertion problematic. It obviously ignores the fact that French and Italian are separate and independent from Latin, a dead language that was mainly confined to Europe. This is far different from the story of Ghanaian and Nigerian being dependent on English, the language of developing dominance and inherent hegemony. The names Widdowson uses, "Ghanaian and Nigerian", position these languages as other than English. They are not English, so there is only one English, and the question of whose English again comes implicitly onto the scene. I understand that Widdowson does not want his discussion to be viewed this way, but the politics associated with English deny his 'positive' assertion. Within the English-speaking world, there is a dichotomy between the superior Self and the inferior Other (Pennycook 1998). The political side of English does play an important role in this dichotomy, and thus the question turns to 'power': whose English is the standard? Whose norms are to be followed? At this point, the question is no longer as simple as 'French and Italian developing from Latin.' But it becomes a site of struggle

between the 'centre Englishes' and the peripheral ones. This argument has been challenged by Widdowson (1998) in his reply. He clearly states that he wants to argue for English as "a kind of composite lingua franca which is free of any specific allegiance to any primary variety of the language" (p.399-400) including the English from the Inner Circle. He strongly supports his view, asserting that it is because he is aware of the politics of English and its consequences that he attempts to urge English users to look at it as the language "used internationally across communities as a means of global communication" (p. 399), but not as the language owned by the Inner Circle. However, it is always easier said than done. As long as there are norms and requirements set by the Inner Circle in cross-cultural communication (Farrell 1997a, b, Purves 1988) or paradigms of nativeness/non-nativeness still function (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 1999), Widdowson's effort is weakened.

Secondly, Widdowson states that "we also need English as an international language for global communication" (p. 142). I agree with Deneire (1998) that Widdowson's statement has officially granted English the first status, while implicitly giving other languages subordinate positions. While linguists together with UNESCO have been making efforts to restore and rescue dead languages as well as promote language diversification, such supports for the dominance of English obviously go against public efforts. "It is diversity that breeds life, not uniformity" (Deneire 1998:394).

Thirdly, in an attempt to soften the debate about Englishes, Widdowson (1997) suggests using 'registers' in EIL, such as English for science and English for finance. Put differently, he argues that EIL "is English for specific purposes" (p.144). However, Brutt-Griffler (1998:382) points out contradictions and unreasonableness in his suggestion, arguing that "there are no free-standing registers." Thus, "the question inevitably poses itself: Registers of which language?" (p.382). Moreover, I find his use of 'register' unrealistic when he suggests taking ESP (English for Specific Purposes) away from the issues of "community and identity" and viewing it in terms of "communication and information" (p.143). Moreover, as Widdowson states in the article that it is impossible to control language once it is used, it is thus clear that ESP cannot be taken as the exception because language is intimately connected to culture (Hall 1997a). Since it is related to social issues, it cannot be neutral. Although he tries to avoid Quirk's (1987) view of "the importance of maintaining the standard language" (p. 143) by assuming that we can take a neutral view of English, he once again ignores

what lies beneath ESP. Many authors have showed that English embodies political and cultural missions that have made it a non-neutral language (Brutt-Griffler 1998, Phillipson 1992). Also, I argue that EAP (English for Academic Purposes) in cross-cultural settings acts as a harsh gatekeeper to keep many non-native speakers of English out of its game, as EAP norms are set based on the Self's standards (Farrell 1997a, b, Phan Le Ha 2001). So it obviously empowers the Self and at the same time prevents the Other from participating in many academic events. Thus, even though Widdowson tries to put 'the standard' aside, it cannot stay aside without causing trouble because it is problematic in its own right. Regarding registers, I believe Widdowson that many native speakers of English are incompetent in a number of English registers, but as a non-native speaker of English, I also believe that I need to know English before I can master any ESPs (registers). Hence, one has to cross the English barrier before one can equally communicate in the English-speaking world. At this point, either English or ESP could be neutral. One still needs to overcome English before one can reach ESP, the possibly neutral expertise that Widdowson argues for.

Finally, I appreciate Widdowson's proposal of "a more appropriate approach" to English teaching and learning (p.145), in which he recommends two possibilities. The first one is to "confirm English as a school subject," and the second one is "to associate English with specific purposes" (p.145). However, I find this proposal confined to only English-speaking and ESL countries. It is irrelevant and impractical to implement in EFL countries because people there do not need English that much in reality (Nunan 2003). From my experience, I totally agree with Deneire (1998:394) that in non-speaking English contexts, the universality of the need to use English appears to be "more myth than reality". Also, as Nunan (2003) points out, not all schools in EFL countries can afford to incorporate English with their curriculum as intensively and extensively as to the extent that Widdowson suggests. I have a feeling that while Widdowson is encouraging people to speak English as an international language, he is also romanticising the reality. Because his proposal may not work in vast areas of the world, his notion of EIL may fail to operate.

Thus far it is clear that the argument that English is an international and a world language is still problematic, although this seems obvious to many users. This argument needs to consider issues of ethics so as to make the idea truly beneficial for all users.

3.2.2.2 Is English for all, politics-and-ideology-free, and for the benefit of its users?

Above I have tried to judge whether English is an international and a world language based on the arguments about the ownership of English between speakers of English from the Centre and Periphery. Now it is time to consider how the possession of English has affected equality and justice within the Periphery itself.

Let us visit India first. It is well known that India is a highly hierarchical society, where there are clear-cut borders among classes. Thus, the Indian society is divided into the inner circle and the outer circle, and the classes that belong to the inner circle have more access to power and privilege (Ramanathan 1999:211). The middle class belongs to this inner circle. Ramanathan argues that the Indian middle class has used English as a tool to maintain its status and at the same time to lengthen its distance from particular groups of people in India. She finds that even in India, a country of the periphery, "an English-related inner-outer power dichotomy appears to exist" (p.212). This partly answers the question: power belongs to those who own English in this countr· In order to consolidate power, the Indian middle class has intentionally made English a gatekeeper keeping away those with lower income and lower caste. Institutional and educational practices with effective assistance of English go hand-in-hand to keep outer circle students "out of the more powerful circle" (p.218).

Now we move to Africa to investigate the issue of English-related power. Although English enjoys the highest status in a vast area of Africa, sufficient access to it still belongs to a small group of elites (Phillipson 1992). Although both the elites and the masses see the advantage of English and its connection to power and resources, English is still somehow a luxurious property owned by the powerful. So English obviously accompanies inequality and injustice in many African countries. Moreover, English - the language of power - has been given an active hand in silencing other African languages, as Phillipson (1992) puts it. "The colonial language [is] still … used in high status activities, a dominant local language … [is] … used for less prestigious functions, and local languages [are] used for other purposes" (p.27). This practice suggests that English really belongs to high-status groups of people, and their achievements are more guaranteed because they have most access to English. This also suggests the superiority of English over local African languages.

Some may argue that it is English that has healed racial and linguistic conflicts in many parts of Africa, but when we count this contribution of English, we cannot ignore the inequality suffered by everyday people who have equal right to access English by law but have limited opportunities in reality. Particularly, ESL programmes in South Africa have been described as "linguistic apartheid" (Gamaroff 2000:297). If South Africa used to be notorious for its apartheid between Black and White people, its ESL policies have now taken up the job of discriminating between speakers of English as a first language and speakers of English as a second language. The policies towards 'L1' and 'L2' courses contain obvious 'apartheid germs', which may not look harmful at the surface but may carry transmitted diseases in its core. "The 'apartheid' labels 'L1' and 'L2' should be discarded because they imply that black 'natives' are not able to assimilate western language and culture" (Young 1988:8, cited in Gamaroff 2000:297). It is noteworthy to cite Paikeday's (1985:76) views on this matter:

> When theoretical linguists claim an innate facility for competence in a language on behalf of the native speaker ... it seems like a white South African's claim that he [or she] can walk into a railway station in Pretoria any day, purchase a first-class ticket, get into any first-class coach, occupy a window seat, and travel all the way to Cape Town without getting thrown out at the first stop, as though a black or a coloured could not do it. (cited in Gamaroff 2000:297)

From Gamaroff's description of the two syllabuses, L1 and L2, it is noted that different focuses and contents of L1 and L2 levels reflect the automatic superiority of L1 speakers, when the L1 paradigm is considered the standard or the "native proficiency" level. This assumes that L2 speakers are lower-achievers in learning English and their performance will be judged based on the standard and norms of L1 speakers - native people of English.

I also need to document the role of English and its relation to power in other EFL countries, where English is learnt as a foreign language together with other languages. Welcome to Vietnam, where people are able to speak fluently many foreign languages. Since the early 1990s, English has played a relatively far more important role in Vietnam, compared to other languages, such as Chinese, French and Russian. It is introduced at almost all school levels and has been present in almost every corner of urbanised areas and has rapidly reached tourist attractions in remote areas. The early 1990s witnessed the explosive growth of the English language, resulting in "an official acknowledgement of the role and status of English" (Do Huy Thinh 1999:2). The Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam (MOET) conducted its first survey of

language needs in late 1993, contributing to the formation of "A National Strategy for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning throughout All Levels of Education" (MOET 1994c, cited in Do Huy Thinh 1992). The status of foreign languages, especially English, then was "reconfirmed by an Order, signed by the Prime Minister (August 15 1994), in which government officials are required to study foreign languages, usually English" (Do 1999:2). Do (1999:2) strongly states that "in contemporary Vietnam, there has never been a stronger, clearer decision concerning foreign language education policy and planning made at the highest-level authority." English in Vietnam does act as a gatekeeping tool in the society, particularly with employment and educational opportunities. Almost all jobs require a certificate in English, and even work promotion now starts considering English proficiency a criterion. The highest status of English has resulted in leaving those who do not have sufficient competency in English feeling out of the social and international orbit.

From Vietnam we continue the world trip to Japan, a country highly regarded by the West (Pennycook 1998). As an economic super power, Japan does not suffer from cultural, economic and structural inequalities between developed and developing countries. However, it is Japan's ideologies of English that raise a matter of concern. As observed by Kubota (1998:295)

> the dominance of English influences the Japanese language and people's views of language, culture, race, ethnicity and identity which are affected by the world view of native English speakers, and ... teaching English creates cultural and linguistic stereotypes not only of English but also of Japanese people.

Thus, "through learning English, the Japanese have identified themselves with Westerners while regarding non-Western peoples as the *Other*" (p.299). This apparently has to do with who has power, and hence supports Westernisation while turning a blind eye to "global socio-linguistic perspectives" (p.302). Power does matter and English has been inexhaustibly made use of by all parties to gain power. But within the game of power, the powerful play, and thus English is not an equal property for all.

Let me stop the trip here and make some comments. After all, whether learning English for good and practical concerns or for 'unpleasant' reasons, everyone or every country wants to gain power. If the Centre sets communication norms for the Periphery, then peripheral countries judge each other based very much on how high the average English level is in each country. I still remember when a group of Malaysian tourists came to Vietnam in 1996 and they were astonished to find out that Vietnamese students could

speak very good English (I was at university in Vietnam then). They commented "You're so intelligent. You can speak English so fluently. How come you can achieve that? We used to think in Vietnam few people could speak English or knew it, so before we came here we were afraid of facing a lot of problems." They, perhaps, subconsciously related fluency in English with "intelligence" and at the same time assumed that knowing English was more civilised, and thus superior. Not only does English measure the level of 'civilisation', it also plays the key role in threatening a country's international integration. Because English is used in regional and international conferences and forums, even Japan is afraid of being "under represented in the international community" if its leaders are not able to speak English "directly with their counterparts" (L'estrange 2000:11).

From the above discussions of the ownership of English, it is clear that the proposal that English is a global/world property is false and still very far to reach. No matter how much 'good' English has done in the world, its cultural, political and social aspects together with its continual adherence to the discourses of colonialism have confirmed its guilt and intentional engagement in 'oppressing' speakers of other languages with the assistance of the ELT industry. However, I do not think the story stops here. English users may be better served by taking ownership of its use and its teaching. The story of how this might go is elaborated in the conclusion to this chapter.

The next section takes a critical look at TESOL programmes conducted in English-speaking countries, since these programmes are part of ELT, and they are also the very context in which the participants in this study perceived themselves as teachers and individuals in local and global contexts.

3.2.3 TESOL programmes in English-speaking countries and criticisms

Together with spreading of English and ELT to the rest of the world, the Centre also offers TESOL programmes to train teachers of English for the Periphery and for whoever needs a TESOL qualification. TESOL programmes are normally conducted in the Centre's educational institutions, attracting an increasing number of overseas students, who tend to have better opportunities at home with a qualification from the Centre. These courses have been examined by scholars worldwide. Their nature, their contents and their operation have been brought to light, and received both compliments

and criticisms. However, within the scope of this section, I will only look at the criticisms of TESOL courses.

To begin with, let me take a look at Liu's (1998) study, which has raised valuable points regarding this issue. He criticises the ethnocentrism in TESOL courses in NABA (North America, Britain, and Australia) as neglecting the "needs of international TESOL students" (p.3). Firstly, such neglect has been seen in "L2 acquisition theories and TESOL methodologies" (p.4) where little consideration of other non-NABA contexts has been taken into account, and this may result in "impractical or ineffective" (p.4) adaptation of teaching methodologies in non-NABA countries. Accordingly, "NABA TESOL teacher education may do international TESOL students a great disservice" (p.6). Secondly, "language improvement" (p.7) is regarded as another area receiving insufficient attention. Few TESOL programmes pay specific attention to international TESOL students' language needs, because the focus of TESOL programmes is on "enhancing students' explicit knowledge of the language, rather than their ability to use it," and thus it "usually fails to meet [their] needs" (p.7). This obviously disadvantages these students by broadening the gap between native and non-native teachers of English. Thirdly, those students are believed not to achieve "cultural understanding" (p.8) in their NABA TESOL courses, since their "exposure is often confined to campus culture" (p.9). Liu suggests "a systematic study of culture via a course or research projec (p.9) should be embedded in TESOL courses. He supports this suggestion by stating that "studying another culture does not mean embracing it or following its socio-cultural customs, nor does it mean losing one's own culture" (p.8).

Brown (2000:227) also explores ELT teacher training and reveals some conflicts between contemporary ELT, "particularly but not exclusively in the 'importing' of new techniques associated with communicative language teaching" and the reality of implementing such techniques in developing countries. He argues that "cultural continuity" (p.227) and gradual changes should be "respected, by not losing contact with current [local] practice" (p.227).

Edge (1996) expresses his concerns about cross-cultural paradoxes in TESOL. As a native teacher of English in Britain, Edge feels that the TESOL industry has been advocated along the line of "the 'greed is good' governmental [British] philosophy," and thus it results in "a cross-cultural clash, a conflict of values at the heart of society" (p.14). The first paradox refers to the "sociopolitical context"; Edge believes that the

TESOL culture has made teachers and students heavily dependent on "the dominant social-market perspective" (p.14), and thus the question of value is challenged. The second paradox is called "liberation and domination" (p.16). Edge explains that TESOL liberates but also dominates the Other everywhere, opens doors to some yet kicks others out. "Foundations and fundamentalism" is the third paradox (p.20), and this refers to "respect for the right to be different" (p.21). Edge acknowledges that although the Centre's TESOL culture has not refused to take action to react to any challenge it may encounter, whether at home or overseas, it has still failed to respect others' values.

Chowdhury (2003) examines how relevant and useful international TESOL training is for EFL contexts. He also explores whether teachers in Bangladesh see western ideologies as informing and/or constraining and/or legitimising their teaching practices. He finds that these teachers experienced paradoxes, in which cultural factors seem to dominate. Moreover, norms assumed by international TESOL training appear irrelevant to the Bangladeshi context, where teachers work in a very different setting.

Thus far it is clear that if ELT is viewed as a commodity traded in a global market (Pennycook 1994), its products appear very narrow and fail to satisfy its customers in terms of course diversification and flexibility. If it aims to promote TESOL courses worldwide, then it should meet global demands. It only offers what it has got, not what the world needs. In the context of globalisation and internationalisation, the TESOL market needs to consider the Other's needs as well, not just those of the Self -- its own needs. This narrow market has partly reflected the "ethnocentrism" in NABA (North America, Britain, and Australia) TESOL teacher education (Liu, 1998:4). This very ethnocentrism has assumed that what the Self (NABA) offers is good and what is good for the Self is definitely good for the Other. Thus, the TESOL market and its products tend to ignore the Other's needs.

The fact that TESOL courses have insufficient subject choices may be part of what Phillipson (1992) argues, that no research has been done for the sake of Periphery, or for questioning the contemporary ELT in action since Centre knows well that they are in a comfortable and quite safe position to impose their ideas on others. This act at the same time devalues the Periphery's languages, education, and traditions, and disables the Periphery's capacities of domestic educational material development. Put differently, the Periphery has been made totally dependent on Centre. ELT is no longer non-political and acts as a 'missionary' to spread English linguistic imperialism. Many

of such ELT activities are culturally inappropriate in Periphery contexts. At this point, the issue of ELT's unethical behaviour is invoked.

When ELT is viewed as a social good, it also embodies problems of ethics and values. Although TESOL courses act as bridges to bring different cultures closer, they carry pre-assumptions and assumptions of the Other. These stereotypes normally suggest that the Other is inferior in terms of values and culture. This thus urges the Other to change to adjust to what was introduced in TESOL courses. As a result, the Other finds their cultural values being disrespected and disregarded. In this sense, ELT and TESOL act as colonising forces.

Now one can see clearly that the problems in TESOL programmes in NABA countries have been rooted in the ethnocentrism of English and ELT, in the belief that the West is better, and in commonly-held views in the ELT profession, that native teachers of English are better teachers, and after all, these problems are both consequences and products of colonialism.

The next section looks specifically at Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach and/or method, since it is often referred to as the West's advanced teaching method as opposed to traditional approaches practised elsewhere in the world. CLT is also known as the site where cultural and value clashes occur. As a widely promoted approach, it has caused tensions to teachers of English when they have to simultaneously consider their role as both a teacher and a culture conveyor.

3.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): the pride of the West

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach and/or method has become more and more popular in the teaching of foreign languages. It has been seen as more advanced and more effective than traditional approaches, such as the grammar-translation method. As a result, language teachers have tended to use more CLT in their teaching. However, as discussed by many authors, CLT has not emerged as 'the best' in reality (Li 1998, Liu 1998, Brown 2000).

Theoretically, according to many authors, such as Hymes (1972), Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Canale and Swain (1980), Littlewood (1981), Canale (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), and Nunan (1989), CLT enjoys the following principles. It is: learner-centred; meaning-based, and task-oriented. Moreover, authentic texts are used and all

four competences are addressed: grammatical (linguistic), sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. There is: toleration of error; student-student interaction; co-operative learning; teacher as facilitator; toleration of L1 and code-switching; meaningful and purposeful use of language, and genuine/real/authentic communication. As Larsen-Freeman (1986) suggests, CLT is most obviously seen as "almost everything that is done with a communicative intent" (cited in Li 1998:678). This notice links to Nunan's (1989:12) observation that "a great deal has been written and said about 'the communicative approach' as there is a family of approaches, each member of which claims to be 'communicative' (in fact, it is difficult to find approaches which claim not to be communicative!)". The above principles of CLT define the learner's roles as negotiator, interactor, giving as well as taking, and the teacher's roles as facilitator of the communication process, participants' tasks and texts, needs analyst, counsellor, and process manager (Nunan 1989).

CLT is often treated as the optimal way of teaching and learning a language, regardless of the context (Bax 2003). Bax argues that the CLT discourse implies two messages. The first one is that it is the teacher who generates communication, and the second one is that it is method that solves any problems in the classroom (p.281). CLT is thus interpreted as "the way we should teach" (p.280), and "the way to do it, no matter where you are, no matter what the context" (p.281). So, CLT is operated regardless of context. These features of CLT, as Bax argues, have resulted in the "CLT attitude" (p.279), which assumes that "a country without CLT is somehow backward" (p.279). He observes that this attitude is supported by both native and non-native teachers and trainers of English.

How CLT is often understood influences the teaching and learning manner in a language classroom, and this understanding has nurtured the discourses of colonialism when representing CLT as the Self's advanced way of teaching as opposed to the Other's traditional methods. Regarding this matter, Liu (1998:4) criticised current TESOL's 'methodological dogmatism' fervently promoting 'new' NABA methodologies, particularly those entitled 'communicative', while condemning tried and tested 'traditional' methods still popular in many other parts of the world".

In practice, however, many studies have proved that the implementation of CLT worldwide has been difficult. Although Liu (1998:5) claims that "teaching is process or discovery-oriented" in the West, where "interaction, group work, and student-

centredness are the order of the day in classes" and resources are far richer than their Asian equivalents, NABA's teaching methods entitled 'communicative', materials, and programmes often "face resistance or even rejection in Asia". But Liu (1998:5) also emphasises that Asia teachers and students "do not blindly resist or reject whatever is offered by NABA." Instead, they "welcome wholeheartedly assistance from the outside world" (p.5). This seems to match with what Li (1998:678) observes: "difficult as it is, many EFL countries are still striving to introduce CLT in the hope that it will improve English teaching there." By doing so, Asian teachers and students have been facing many difficulties, since CLT is developed from a "different cultural and economic milieux" (Li 1998:5).

Le Van Canh (2001) thoroughly documents how appropriate and effective CLT is in current Vietnam. In light of his observation and research, Canale and Swain's theory of CLT appears "unrealistic and impracticable in most Vietnamese settings" (p.35), as communicative needs of Vietnamese learners are not the same as for L1 or ESL learners. Secondly, the Vietnamese classroom culture and discourse does not accept a number of CLT constructs. He articulates that because education is "a ticket to ride" (p.36), and success in examination is most important, the teacher's role hence has more to do with ensuring their students' achievement. That is why being a facilitator as CLT requires may disservice students rather than help them to gain what the society expects. Also, if CLT theorists think that error-tolerance is better for students, then this assumption does not work in Vietnam where "corrective feedback is part of the teacher's role in the classroom" (p.36).

When CLT is applied in reality, its *pedagogical values* have conflicted with a number of values embedded in the practice of teaching and learning in Asia, for instance, the issue of 'respect between teacher and student' and the issue of 'expectation'. Also, because CLT often prepares learners of English to communicate with English native speakers, it obviously excludes many other learners whose purposes of learning English are far from that. Le Van Canh (2001) clearly asserts that the majority of students in Vietnam learn English "just to pass the national examinations" (p.35), then continue their tertiary study and secure guaranteed jobs, but only a small number of them wish to know English to have fluent communication with foreigners because they rarely have any chance. The situation in Japan is almost similar as L'estrange (2000) observes, when students learn English most importantly because of exams, whichever kind of exams.

Edge (1996:17) claims that by "deliberately moving away from a teacher-centred style of teaching", the TESOL professional shows "a lack of proper respect for teachers and, by extension, for elders in general". The respectful status of the teachers in many countries will thus be threatened. He is worried that other countries' future may suffer from "subversive and inappropriate" teaching methods offered by the Centre (p.17).

Tollefson (1991:102) suggests that ELT practices 'must be examined for their impact upon the relationship between students and teachers, and for their ideological assumptions about the roles of teachers and students in society'. Auerbach (1993:29) argues that 'commonly accepted everyday classroom practices, far from being neutral and natural, have ideological origins and consequences for relations of power both inside and outside the classroom' (cited in Pennycook 1994:168). Phillipson (1992) claims that the view of professionalism (language pedagogy) of ELT clearly excludes broader societal issues, the prerequisites and consequences of ELT activity. He strongly criticises the issue of 'Anglocentricity' which "devalues other languages, either explicitly or implicitly" (p.48), and thus, native English teachers give themselves the right to tell non-native teachers of English that their teaching methodologies are "old-fashioned" and "should be replaced", as Pennycook (1994:163) observes. In addition, both Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) assert that the nature of language teaching methods are generally 'western' and hence those methods carry in themselves the 'incompatibility' quality when applied in non-Western contexts. Pennycook (1994:159) makes this point clear when stating that

> the dominance of the western academy in defining concepts and practices and language teaching is leading to the ever greater incursion of such views into language teaching theory and practice around the world. The export of applied linguistic theory and of Western-trained language teachers constantly promotes inappropriate teaching approaches to diverse settings.

Therefore, non-native English teachers should notice this question in order not to be overinfluenced by the so-called 'superior' and 'advanced' Western teaching pedagogy. Teachers of English should be aware of the fact that ELT is far from neutral or natural. It is an act of cultural politics, which makes an English language classroom also a site of cultural politics (Pennycook 1994). More seriously, by regarding Western teaching pedagogies more highly than local ones, the Other teacher and student may undervalue their own 'flourishing' initiative that could promote local strengths and linguistic realities, as Phillipson (1992) observes.

Teachers of English in different countries have turned around and questioned CLT (Li 1998, Le Van Canh 2001, Bax 2003) and at the same time have tried to integrate traditional language teaching methods with some aspects of CLT to best benefit students. Le Van Canh (2001) strongly places his emphasis on what Vietnamese teachers of English mean by "reform":

> by reform, we do not mean throwing away all traditional values and practices. Practicality and applicability to specific teaching situations are factors of success in educational reform" (p.38).

Despite their success in their own teaching, these students and teachers, however, have still been perceived by the West as passive learners, rote-learners, and authoritarian (see Phan Le Ha 2004). At this point, Le Van Canh's (2001) thoughtful and constructive request, that we should not view teachers in training courses as "empty vessels ... they have their own experiences, beliefs and values" (p.38), really decolonises the whole literature of the ELT industry.

To conclude, in terms of theory, practice and pedagogical values, CLT does not do as much to teachers of English as it has been promoted and believed. Rather, it has caused tensions to teachers who have to play the roles of the teacher of English and the cultural model. Although different cultures possess different ways to approach knowledge, those ways that are different from CLT are perceived as deficit. Diversity in language teaching is thus not acknowledged and appreciated. Other cultures are not respected enough either. This has resulted in assumptions of teachers from non-Western cultures as being of lower quality. Likewise, the dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English has become an indispensable part of the ELT culture. This argument clearly connects the flow of the literature to the section of Self and Other discussed below.

3.3 Self and Other

Although the previous sections do not explicitly spell out the notions of Self and Other embedded in postcolonial literature, such notions do play an essential role in the whole repertoire. This section now looks specifically at general postcolonial notions of Self and Other. It then focuses on how the images of the Other student and teacher have been constructed by the Self. The postcolonial dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English is also explored.

3.3.1 General representation of Other in Self's eyes

As Pennycook (1998) argues, the global status of both the English language and ELT are bound up with the images of the **Self** (the coloniser) and the **Other** (the colonised) created and nurtured by both native and non-native speaking English people through the spread of English and the expansion of ELT worldwide. These images are cultural products of colonialism. General images of the Self (the coloniser) are seen as superior over the Other (the colonised) who are viewed as inferior. The Self appear to be the "cultured, the industrious, the adult, the masculine, the clean" as opposed to the Other "the natural, the indolent, the child, the feminine, and the dirty and diseased" (Pennycook 1998:57-64). Said (1978) also describes the images of the Other – the Orientals – perceived by Western people, as

> gullible, "devoid of energy and initiative", much given to "fulsome flattery," intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals; Orientals cannot walk on either a road or a pavement (their disordered minds fail to understand what the clever European grasps immediately, that roads and pavement are made for walking); Orientals are inveterate liars, they are "lethargic and suspicious," and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race.

(cited in Said 1978:38-39)

The above images of the Self and the Other have been seen in all aspects, and they are active in different forms. Although these images are created by the Self, they have now become part of what the Other have viewed themselves to be. Such notions of Self and Other are so powerful that they are treated as truth. The Other in most cases uncritically place themselves lower than the Self. They thus assume that everything from the West is better (I have discussed this point earlier). For example, teachers of English are considered more advanced if they receive some training in English-speaking countries; and native English speakers are better teachers of English. This belief has resulted in many language schools in Asian countries even employing native-English-speaking backpackers to teach English to their students. Many of these backpackers have no qualifications in teaching and have limited knowledge of English (my experience in Vietnam and Hong Kong, Viet Anh 2004). This belief is also part of the ELT culture, in which many negative images of the Other students and teachers are constructed. The following section discusses this point in detail.

3.3.2 Images of the Other student and teacher constructed by the Self

Pennycook (1998) argues that the general images of Self and Other shaped the English language and associated pedagogy. Importantly, the way the images of the Self and the Other were constructed is closely connected to colonial practices, and it is colonialism that positioned the superior Self over the inferior Other. In other words, the images of the Self and the Other are products of colonialism and these images are still based on similar underlying values in these days. Pennycook (1998) strongly emphasises the continuity of colonial discourses of the Self and the Other although these discourses have taken on different forms in the modern days. The author pays close attention to how colonialism and cultural constructs of colonialism have affected ELT, and how the Self (the TE in TESOL) has been seen in relationship to the Other (the SOL in TESOL). All of his discussions about the cultural constructs of colonialism are to support his arguments that English and ELT have been greatly influenced by colonial practices and are strongly in the service of imperialism, and that colonial constructs of the Self and the Other have powerfully adhered to English and ELT.

Images of the Self and the Other have been strongly consolidated by both the Self and the Other, and thus they have become taken-for-granted hardly-questioned truths. This has resulted in current assumptions of the way the Other learns English. Similarly, the images of the Other teacher have been looked down upon. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999:414) assert that "these images have found their way into the discourses of postcolonialism - including in the practice and theory of ELT". These negative images of the Other treat the Other's culture as fixed, resulting in the perception of the way the Other teaches and learns English, a 'superior' language accompanied by 'superior' pedagogical values as the Self believes.

3.3.2.1 The Other student in the eye of the Self

Regarding the theories and practices of ELT, Pennycook (1994, 1998) is much concerned about the position of the Other and how this position is treated through ELT. The continuity of colonial stereotypes of the Other consistently occurs in current assumptions about the Other's way of teaching and learning English. Pennycook (1994) provides a comprehensive picture of how native English-speaking academics perceive learning strategies used by some Oriental students. For example, a Chinese student's

resistance to "informal class discussion" (p.160) is interpreted as "backwardness" and "closed minds" (p.161); their acts of respect are decoded as a lack of "independent thinking" (p.161) and freedom of speech. Pennycook (1998) demonstrates that the West's perceptions of the Other (the SOL in TESOL) are not only taken-for-granted but fixed as well. He lists a number of statements made by Westerners about the Other: Chinese students are consistently seen as "passive, rote-learners, whose logic follows a strange spiral pattern" and who are products of a "static, unchanging, traditional" society (p.162); Malay people are described as being "good imitators, lacking originality in thought and culture" (Alatas 1977:115, cited in Pennycook 1998:167); Arabic peoples are viewed as being "a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellects lay fallow in incurious resignation" (Porter 1994:155, cited in Pennycook 1998:167).

Ballard and Clanchy (1997:12) argue that teaching strategies and learning styles in Asia are dominantly reproductive with the aim being a "simple (unreconstructed) transfer of knowledge and skills." Meanwhile, the authors see the Australian way as encouraging "development of speculative [and] critical intelligence" (Phan Le Ha 1999:5). They have implied (though not explicitly) a superior-inferior relationship between their way and the 'Asian' way. Asian students are also viewed as having a 'lack of confidence' or not participating in class and are good at only memorisation, reproduction and plagiarism (Ballard & Clanchy 1991, Barrett-Lennard 1997, Samuelowicz 1987). These authors emphasise that students from South-East Asia are 'rote learners' and 'passive learners' who adopt a "surface approach to learning", the stereotypes that Chalmers and Volet (1997:88-90) have challenged. Being seen as 'passive learners', Asian students are commonly perceived as those who 'really want to listen and obey', a quality which Littlewood (2000) and Kumaravadivelu (2003) have questioned. More seriously, Asian students are thought not to develop "the intellectual skills of comparing, evaluating different points of view, arguing and presenting one's point of view" (Samuelowicz 1987:124), which suggests they lack the skills for analysis and critical thinking.

3.3.2.2 The Other teacher in the eye of the Self

While a huge number of non-native teachers of English are devoted to the promotion of the language, their teaching may be judged according to cultural stereotypes that have served colonial and imperial interests. Accordingly, the way the Other teacher is viewed is reflected in a series of characteristics well matched with how the Self assumes the

Other students to be. The Other teacher is often compared with the Self teacher in light of the communicative approach. In other words, the Other teacher's teaching is commonly judged according to how much they conform with CLT. Thus, being a 'learning facilitator', a 'friend', or a 'counsellor' is often contrasted with being a 'knowledge transmitter', and/or an 'authoritarian teacher' (Phan Le Ha 2004). Below are some examples of stereotypical images of the Other teacher.

The teacher is seen as a "fount of knowledge, which is delivered without any concession to students and which students must struggle to attain" (Holliday 1994a:59, cited in Liu 1998:5). Thus, a teacher in Asia "is not seen as a facilitator" as Liu (1998:5) observes. Ballard and Clanchy (1997:17) also stress the "authority of the teacher in the Asian classroom," whom they see as transmitter of knowledge and authoritarian. Furthermore, Campbell and Zhao (1993, cited in Liu 1998:5) state specifically that "English teaching in Asia is still dominantly didactic, product-oriented, and teacher-centred".

If Holliday (1994a, cited in Liu 1998), Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) and Ellis (1996) show their appreciation of Asian teachers' effective teaching of English without applying Western teaching standards, there are authors who still hold negative and taken-for-granted views about ELT in Asia, believing it is by all means worse than that in the West. Pennycook (1994:159) demonstrates that the West assumes its ELT as "developed, modern, efficient and scientific" in contrast with the "backward, traditional, inefficient ... [and] unscientific" ELT in Asia. Phillipson (1992) also raises this problem when he teases out the issue of native versus non-native teachers of English. In his discussion, Phillipson strongly criticises the tenet that 'native teachers are better' by concluding teachers are made rather than born. To weaken the widely held belief that Western teaching methodologies are universal and can be applied to all settings, Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) raise concerns about the problems of ethics and inappropriateness of ELT pedagogy. The so-called and well claimed Western 'advanced methodologies' have in fact disadvantaged teachers and learners in many places for not acknowledging their socio-cultural and socio-political factors (Ellis 1996, Liu 1998).

I must say that the above notions of 'Asian' students and teachers are not necessarily false but they are inherently problematic and misleading. These notions do in fact reflect aspects of teaching English in some parts of Asia, such as Vietnam and Korea (Li 1998), but they only touch upon the surface without understanding it sufficiently. There

is much more going on under the surface in respect to terms such as 'rote-learning' or being an 'authoritarian' teacher. Moreover, as Kramsch and Sullivan (1996:201) observe, "appropriate communicative language teaching in Hanoi [Vietnam] ... might use the same pedagogic nomenclature as in London, but look very different in classroom practice." In other words, there are many ways to reach a target, but one can not claim that one's way is better than others' because every single way has to operate within its culture and environment. Therefore, images of Western teachers associated with CLT, such as 'facilitator' or 'counsellor' are not how Asian teachers necessarily view themselves, or if they do, their enactment of these roles may not be the same as it is in the West. Hence, the West should not assume its teaching methodologies are the best and more advanced.

The subsequent sections explore specifically the postcolonial dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English, since the existence of this dichotomy has been treated as norms in ELT. Thus, images of the Other teachers of English are constructed along the lines of these norms.

3.3.2.3   Postcolonial dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English

The postcolonial dichotomy between native and non-native teachers of English has been found in the ELT pedagogy and practice as well. Phillipson (1992) calls the tenet "the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker" (p.185) a fallacy. This tenet suggests that the native speaker teacher is regarded as "the best embodiment of the target and norm for learners" (p.194). He strongly attacks this tenet by providing his interpretation of it:

> The ideal teacher is a native speaker. Teachers are born not made. Therefore, 1) those who are not born native speakers of English cannot be ideal teachers, and 2) since teachers are born not made, native speakers do not need any training to become teachers. (p.221)

To argue against this, Phillipson finds a solution for the image of teachers: "teachers are made rather than born" (p.194), and thus regardless of nationalities and races, speakers of English all have potential to become ideal teachers. So, native speakers may also prove to be 'helpless' or 'bad' teachers. This argument helps Phillipson prove the unscientific and invalid claim of the tenet.

This dichotomy is not only insisted by the Centre but it is also strengthened by the Periphery. Researching into the professional identity of non-native teachers of English, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) find that the literature has actually drawn the

borderline between native and non-native teachers, explicitly articulating that the English language belongs to the native. This assumption suggests that the native speakers have control over the language and associated teaching methods, and hence shape "the perceptions of language learners" (p.417), for example: teachers' "self-esteem", the learner's belief in "an intrinsic connection between race and language ability" (p.417). Seriously, these facts have caused the non-native teacher to lack confidence in their profession, as well as made non-native learners regard their own teachers as lower in competence. Accordingly, White teachers are preferred to non-white teachers, and this has added more 'colours' to the picture of native and non-native. These colours, bitterly, help the native maintain the dominant status and also consolidate the taken-for-granted truth that non-native teachers do need assistance and standards from their native counterparts.

In light of these above discussions, I now see that if the Self was the one to create this dichotomy, then the Other has been made a vital agent in spreading and reinforcing it. Admittedly, the construct of colonialism has proved far more powerful than its founders could imagine. Let me revisit Galtung's idea of 'persuasion' (Phillipson 1992) and Fairclough's (1989) theory of 'consent' to reconfirm that the best solution for making anyone do what one wants is to make him/her believe that it is good and beneficial to him/her as well. Now I realise how subtle the situation has become, and I also know that the job I am doing in this research suddenly gets far more complicated because how can I say that I am 100 percent not involved in this fallacy? I am not at all now, but at least for some periods of time I used to be.

3.4 Conclusion: the conceptual tools

This chapter has so far investigated postcolonial notions of Self and Other and the politics of English and ELT. However, these notions and this kind of politics have also been questioned and re-examined by many authors, who have been investigating the tendency of English as a world language, and suggesting the establishment of critical literacy pedagogies (Canagarajah 1999, Gee 1999, Pennycook 2001, McKay 2002). Examples can be seen in their efforts to appreciate the role of speakers of other languages in spreading and transforming English into a world language (Modiano 2001, Brutt-Griffler 2002). Likewise, a critical approach to second language acquisition has

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been constructed to destabilise the L1 norms (Cook 1999, Kramsch 2000, 2001). Alternative teaching methods have been proposed to replace the problematic CLT, such as the Context Approach (Bax 2003). Also, some TESOL courses have been re-designed to make students from non-English-speaking backgrounds aware of how their images have been constructed through English and ELT, and in what way their voices can be heard (for example, the TESOL course for Masters students offered by the Faculty of Education, Monash University, with the subject Language, Society and Cultural Difference).

Let me discuss one point raised by Widdowson (1997) to seek a so. tion for more 'ethical' English and ELT. I agree with Widdowson that "as   ne [in this case, English] is used it cannot be kept under your control" (p.136). . ropi.   oropriate it. However, at this point, different views have been expressed. On the on. hand, Lin et al., (2001) show that no matter how people appropriate it, the Other is still seen as second-class users of English. These authors suggest a quite fixed story about the Self and Other, in which the Other is always inferior, just because they are the Other speakers of English. The word 'Other' in TESOL already carries this dichotomy and implication. On the other hand, Canagarajah (1999) demonstrates that Sri Lankans have been able to appropriate English for their own purposes taking into account local cultural and political factors. He offers an approach that resists "linguistic imperialism in English teaching" as the title of his book suggests. Pennycook (2001:71) also supports Canagarajah's view, suggesting change and possibilities of *"third spaces"* or *"third cultures"* (italics in the original), the notions that are discussed by Kramsch (1993).

Sharing her views in relation to how users of English can appropriate English, Kramsch (2001) stresses the importance of how English language teachers can assist students in acquiring their own voices in using English to "secure a *profit of distinction*" (italics in the original) (Kramsch 2001:16). She contends that language teachers' responsibility is

> to help students not only become acceptable and listened to users of English by adopting the culturally sanctioned genres, styles, and rhetorical conventions of the English speaking world, but how to gain a profit of distinction by using English in ways that are unique to their multilingual and multicultural sensibilities (Kramsch 2001:16).

The views expressed by Canagarajah (1999), Pennycook (2001) and Kramsch (2001) actually challenge and disrupt linguistic imperialism and the postcolonial dichotomy of Self and Other. However, they do not reject English. Instead, they support the use of

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English for one's own benefit and equality, but at the same time urge English users to work together to eliminate the discourses of colonialism active in current imperial forms. These views suggest a new and more sophisticated notion of 'appropriation', which consists of resistance and reconstitution.

So, appropriation, as I would argue, necessitates the Other's awareness of resistance and conscious selection to reach reconstitution under one's own control. Hashimoto (2000) provides an example of how a country resists Western globalisation and English dominance. He argues that "the commitment of the Japanese government to internationalisation in education actually means 'Japanisation' of Japanese learners of English" (p.39). Indeed, the use of English plays an important part in both one's desire to communicate with the world and one's will to preserve one's identity (Kubota 1998, Pham Hoa Hiep 2001). It also influences one's perception of one's identity (Kramsch 2001, Lin et al., 2001). Put differently, English contributes to identity formation, which constitutes both dynamics and the sense of belonging. This notion of appropriation, I believe, would somehow facilitate English to serve global citizens and at the same time would not take their sense of belonging away. However, if only the Other takes up this notion of appropriation, part of the effort is still left unsupported. The Self should also 'appropriate' its notion of the ownership of English for the sake of all. In the context of English and ELT, the above notion of appropriation is part of the job that world English language teachers and applied linguists need to fulfill. If this could be achieved, then the issue of power and the politics of language would become less pressing in the arena of English and ELT.

It is clear that I have presented so far in this chapter a range of ideas relating to the postcolonial notions of Self, Other and the politics of English and ELT. I do not want to construct a coherent model for data analysis. Rather, given the complexity and even inherent contradictions and paradoxes in the concepts of identity and identity formation in this and the previous chapter, I wish to draw on the range of ideas discussed to better interpret the data. Moreover, all these ideas claim to be pertinent to identity formation. For example, the concepts of appropriation, resistance and reconstitution based as they are on the notions of Self and Other have the potential to help me understand the processes of identity formation in the group of teacher participating in this study. The dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English is a useful conceptual tool in investigating whether this group of teachers described themselves in light of this

dichotomy. This would then help me judge how powerful or vulnerable this dichotomy is in understanding identity formation of English language teachers. Thus, by drawing on this range of conceptual tools, I wish to find whether and in what way they are relevant and adequate for understanding the processes of identify formation of the group of teachers participating in this study, the Vietnamese teachers of English, who were studying TESOL in Australian universities. Then, I wish to find out how we can add to these conceptual tools to enrich our understanding in this era of globalisation.

CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

I am writing this chapter as a story to tell about different stages of my research. The story begins with my "autoethnography" – the term I borrow from Broadkey (1994, 1996, cited in Kamler 2001:4-5) – which depicts my growth/development as a researcher and a scholar in reference to the research topic and its context. It then discusses the qualitative case study research approach which I employ to carry out the study. Various methods of collecting data are addressed and explained. The selection of the participants is next described. After that, the rationale for employing the methods used to analyse and interpret the data is presented.

4.2 My 'autoethnography'

The nature of my research necessitates the importance to define my positioning as the researcher in this study. As the study is located in the ELT context and the issues related to English and ELT, such as English as an international language and ELT and the constructs of colonialism, are discussed, I first need to define myself in the jungle consisting of varied and even conflicting viewpoints regarding these issues. Since the study focuses on the identity formation of Vietnamese teachers of English, who are trained in Australia, I find myself one of them. I am thus both the researcher and the insider.

Autoethnography, the genre suggested by Lionnet, "'opens up a space of resistance between the individual (auto-) and the collective (-ethno-) where the writing (-graphy) of singularity cannot be foreclosed' " (cited in Kamler 2001: 4). Brodkey develops her metaphor of autoethnography as a research method, in which "autoethnographies are grounded in data collected from 'interviews with the self', [and] memories are treated as 'data' which are discussed, analysed" (Kamler 2001:4). In light of these discussions, I now write my autoethnography.

4.2.1 Ha and English

After closing Pennycook's (1994, 1998) and Phillipson's (1992) books, I keep on thinking of how English has entered my world and shaped my identity. I have different stories to tell, not a story told by a person who speaks English as the mother tongue, not by a person who speaks it as a second language or not by a person who has had to use it painfully as it is the language of the coloniser. But my stories are told from myself, a person who learns and uses English as a foreign language, and has a 'boundless' love for the English language. Thus my experience can be very different from that of hooks (1994), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) and other people who come from different backgrounds. Both Ngugi wa Thiong'o and hooks write from their experiences as those who have used English as the language of the coloniser, the language that reminds them of the African slavery and the entire British colonisation over their own people. These two authors' writing shows that they on the one hand resent the English language but on the other hand accept it as the language they have to use in order to be heard and recognised. They accept it and resent it, use it and resent it. This is like a vicious circle. They are aware of such a circle and they moan and struggle within the circle. I hear their voices, feel the sadness and a 'national spirit' in their voices but at the same time sense that their voices are overpowered by the English language and what norms English has set upon their people.

Now this is my story with English. We have had English in our family for tens of years. Both my parents are university lecturers of English in Vietnam. They were university classmates when they both studied English for five years. By the time they entered university, Vietnam was having the war with America, so learning English was not liked by our people since English was the language of 'the enemy'. But we still actively learnt English in order to protect our country from being 'culturally' invaded, to understand our stronger enemy, and above all to appreciate the language as it is. We learnt it both in Vietnam and in other countries, such as Russia. Another reason why my parents learnt English at university was that they were appointed to the Faculty of English. They did not have the right to choose the language they liked at that time, Russian or Chinese or French. These languages had high status in Vietnam then due to historical and political reasons. It also meant that learning and teaching English then would lead people to an 'insecure' future with almost no chance for further study overseas. And going overseas in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s meant 'changing

one's material life' to 'wealthiness' or at least 'well-furnituredness'. But life still went on with teachers of English in Vietnam even though they had to struggle. I still remember clearly what/how I felt when my younger brother was standing outside a neighbour's window and watched their television through a tiny hole. That neighbour was a teacher of French. Then, my parents invested all to buy us a television, a very old one but more than enough to satisfy their two innocent children. No matter how difficult our life was, my parents still enjoyed their profession. They went on to do their postgraduate studies in English. They taught English every day at university although the number of students of English was far less than that of other foreign languages. And at home they spoke English with each other when they did not want us to know what they were talking about. That really made me want to know the language they spoke. I did not want to be the outsider. They sang English songs and their students taught me some English songs too. I imitated words for words without understanding the language at all but gradually I could sense the beauty of the words I sang. 'English must be something wonderful', I thought, and my desire to learn English was generated. I told my parents that I would study English when I grew up. They smiled happily and they knew that they had passed on to me their love of the language they taught.

I started secondary school when I was 11 years old. I went to a school for gifted students of Maths, and Russian was the only foreign language there. I took Russian naturally and loved the language more as I studied it. Four years of studying Russian made me like Russian, but at the same time my love for English was also increasing. I was very proud of the fact that I could sing some English songs to my friends whenever we had a gathering, and that my parents were teachers of English while most of my friends' parents did not know English. My unconditional love for the English football team (soccer) was another reason why I loved English then. I watched as many world football matches broadcast on T.V as possible. My parents and the majority of our people supported the former Soviet Union team while I myself was stubbornly in favour of the English team. I patiently tried to persuade my parents and other friends to like my favourite team and now all of my family vote for 'my team'.

Surprisingly, I did not know English but I could identify whether a person spoke English or other languages, and the sound of English fascinated me. I wanted to learn it, to learn it well and to be completely fluent in it. My chance came when I successfully passed the national exams to the Specialised High School for Foreign Languages in

1991. I picked English automatically without any hesitation. Compared with the time my parents first started learning English, things changed dramatically at my time. The Russian language was losing its 'privileged' status after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe. Chinese had already been 'hated' due to the tension between Vietnam and China since 1978. French started to 'keep silent' and 'watch out' for the 'right moment' to 'expand'. The government's 'open-door' policy in late 1986 had enabled the expanding of English in Vietnam with the emergence of foreign companies, services and tourism throughout the country. Hence, I had just the 'right' moment to study English. In addition to my high achievement in English, my attachment to English was strengthened by romantic English songs. These songs, either sent to me in a sealed envelope or placed inside my notebooks, helped my male friends express their admiration to me. This touched the 'young and emotional' heart of a 17-year-old girl like me. This was so sweet and unforgettable. Even now whenever I listen to those songs, I still feel my heart beat as it used to. My love for English has increased and increased as I use it more.

Now one can see that I study English because I wanted to learn it, because I like it and also because of my family's influence. Maybe the reason why people learn English now is different from mine since their motives are determined by their job constraint, opportunities in a globalised and internationalised world. I have multiple relationships with English, from a very personal level to a family level, from a 'local' level to a 'national' level, and from a 'national' level to an 'international' level. One can also see that, whether it was in my parents' time or in my time, our people choose to learn English and take control of it. We do not learn it just because it is the language of the powerful but because we want to use it to strengthen and protect our proudly rich and old culture. We are not forced to learn it. We have the right over the language we choose to learn.

4.2.2 Ha as a writer of English

My love for English and my academic achievement gave me the opportunity to do my Masters of TESOL in Australia. I started the course with high confidence because I had always been a good student in Vietnam. But I was 'knocked down' by my lecturers' comments that my English was good but the way I wrote in English was different from them and this was not the way expected. I interpreted these comments as 'I don't know

how to write in English yet'. But what was the way? I found nothing wrong with my writing. I thus became determined to find the answer.

The chance came when I was exposed to the literature of critical pedagogies introduced in the Masters course. I became aware of stereotypes made about Asian students studying in Australia, whose writing was described as being 'circular', 'unclear' and lacking a logical mind, as opposed to the 'linear', 'clear' and logical English writing. I got angry when I related these stereotypes to the way I wrote Vietnamese and English. I felt I must do something. I wanted to disrupt these stereotypes. I thus decided to take Vietnamese and English academic writing as the focus of my Masters thesis. I used the language to argue against its norms. That was when I really started to be a 'real' writer of English.

I write English with passion. I feel that I can 'communicate' very well with the language when I write it. English seems to 'understand' what I want to write. This doctoral thesis is thus like an arena where I hope I would be able to best communicate with readers through the medium of English. Again, I am using English to disrupt its colonial and imperial norms and decolonise the dichotomy of postcolonial Self and Other.

4.2.3 Ha as teacher of English

English is not only the language I have learnt but also the language I have taught. Learning English has actually given me a job as a teacher. So what does being a teacher mean to me? Born into an intellectual family, since I was little, I have realised how meaningful teaching is to my parents and their colleagues. I have known for sure that my parents receive much respect from their students and the society. Thus, a child of a teacher is often expected to have 'good characteristics', 'proper behaviour' and 'good academic performance', as teachers are believed to raise good children compared with people having other professions. So I have my own pride having two teacher parents. They are the mirrors through which I can see and judge positive and negative qualities of a teacher, so as to develop myself better. This is one factor that has influenced my self-perceptions of the teacher. When I was at school and at university in Vietnam, my image of a good teacher was also shaped by the concept of role models expected in the society. If my parents were role models of their students, then some of my teachers could be my role models too. For me, a good teacher was the one who was able to educate pupils well with both knowledge and moral development. This perception has

actually grown stronger particularly in the context of globalisation and international integration, when everything is more open and subject to change more rapidly and somehow uncontrollably. For me, this image of good teachers can be extended but needs to retain these two essential values. There is no doubt that what I think of a teacher has also been nurtured by this image.

Another factor that has brought me closer to the teaching profession is the tradition of 'respect for teacher and teaching' in our society. Every year, on the Vietnamese Teachers' Day 20th November, my house is full of flowers, my parents and I are deeply moved with the love, respect, gratitude and sincerity students have had for us. Yes, although we receive love and respect from students everyday, on the Teachers' Day our confidence is more strongly confirmed when different generations of students visit us with their best wishes, flowers and affection. I myself feel that I owe my country and my people so much for maintaining and promoting such a lovely tradition, so that we teachers, however hard our life is, are encouraged to dedicate ourselves to education.

4.2.4 Ha and dilemmas

I myself have been using English for over ten years now and recently I have used it even more often. It is now the main medium in my study, the language I use to communicate with the outside world. I feel comfortable to use the language, as it is an extremely useful and rich language. I have come to love it, as it has been part of my life, a very important part that I can not deny. To see it as an advantage, yes, I must say so. This is my identity. However, I have never let myself 'overuse' English against my mother tongue, Vietnamese. This is also my identity. I am aware of how my way of thinking is shaped by the language I speak and the language I use for my study. But after all, what I want to be is a Vietnamese and a global citizen, who firmly connects to the cultural pulse of Vietnam, and simultaneously operates globally through the medium of English. At this point, I would like to attach myself to my national identity 'Vietnamese' but at the same time I have to say that my love for English is willing. However, the more I read and observe, the more I understand the political and cultural side of English, the problems of ethics and lack of appropriacy of ELT pedagogy. I also understand how painful it can be for a person when he/she speaks the language that is used to define the 'Them' (the colonised) and the 'Other' (the coloniser). My pride and consciousness of my national identity has become more obvious and stronger than ever

when I think of how hard our people have been trying to construct a united 'Vietnamese' identity.

Now the story of one of my friends from Bangladesh is apparent in my mind. His concern about his identity reveals how much the English language has deeply influenced the way he behaves, lives and thinks. He told me his story and I have written up my notes of this as if it were his direct speech. I acknowledge my reconstruction of his story is honest.

> *I'm now writing in English more than I am in Bangla, our own language. Even when I write letters to my parents I write in English. I find it easier but at the same time I feel a sense of 'shame' that I'm not writing in my own language, the language that I was brought up with, the language that makes me a Bangla person, the language that gives me an identity. I'm so ashamed because sometimes I can't find a good Bangla word to express my ideas but I can always find English words for that purpose. And even when I can find a Bangla word, I still want to use English because this gives me a sense of 'being smarter' and 'being fashionable'. Oh, how much and how deeply this language – English – has changed my ways of thinking, my ways of life and my ways of doing things I had never thought of such political sides of English and ELT before I came to Australia and read the literature about how our ways of thinking are shaped by English. Now I try not to mix my Bangla with English whenever I speak with my students, either all English or all Bangla.*

With deep consciousness, my friend cries for his own 'remedy' to 'cure' his 'loss of Bangla identity' as he spelt it out. His concern shares parts of my concern. However, I believe that this dilemma can be resolved. That is why I conducted this research.

4.2.5 *How my positioning influences my research*

I am not only concerned about 'my own identity' but also identities of the participants in this study - the Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English - who might be aware of such an issue but might not identify what it is. Yes, I am one of them. I am the insider. I am a Vietnamese teacher of English being trained in Australia. I am expected to bring back home optimal teaching methodologies to improve ELT in Vietnam. I am having a conflict with my self: the conflict of retaining the image of a good Vietnamese teacher in terms of moral and cultural values and the desire to adopt good ways of Western teaching and learning. Thus, I see part of myself in the participants' stories. Their identities embrace part of my identity. So, when I analyse their stories and explore their inner world of a teacher, I am actually defining myself and trying to picture my identities. Likewise, my analyses and interpretations of the data definitely reflect my

subjective viewpoints as an insider, someone is also defined as a Western-trained Vietnamese Teacher of English.

Several years of living and studying in Australia, an English-speaking country, the 'Self' as defined by colonialism, has broadened and enriched my views of teaching. Being exposed to a more open and 'debating' society, I have had the opportunity to revise my views. In addition, researching into this very complicated and sophisticated topic, which requires self-engagement at the highest level, has helped define my views more clearly. However, the more I have read about the cultural politics of ELT, the more easily I fall into my own trap. That means, although my purpose is to contest the stereotypes made by the West about the East, in doing so I happen to reinforce such stereotypes. Why? Because the literature of colonialism is so powerful that wherever we go we crash into it. We find a way out here but we get stuck there. While we are trying to disrupt preconceptions to make the West appreciate our cultures, we subconsciously admit that we are 'lower'. Why? Because many of our fellows have been made to believe that the West is better, so their voices actually reassert such perceptions. This makes my desire grow stronger. Yes, I must find a way to fight against this, as Pennycook (1994, 1998) has succeeded in proving the 'guilt' of ELT while serving imperialism and colonising the Other. But what way? Please be patient and follow me toward the end of this thesis, and judge whether I have achieved the target.

At the crossroad of my own history with English, my own perceptions of teachers and the discourses of colonialism in connection with English and ELT, I find myself in the middle of the conflict between the need for maintaining teachers' traditional values and the need for acquiring new teaching and learning knowledge, so as to be a best teacher. I also find myself enthusiastic to tell all the participants of this study that you must be aware of and identify colonial values underlying ELT and your Masters courses in Australia, and by knowing all these we will hand in hand make the teaching of English in Vietnam better without lowering ourselves.

Teaching is not merely the work of the brain. It is the work of the heart, the work of the soul, and it cannot be separated from the education of good citizens. This is my point of view. However, one should not assume that this point is fixed. It will be extended as I have said elsewhere, but the extension or variation will take place along the lines of the main points. My exposure to the world through English has made me an international EFL teacher, and this status is part of my identity. This identity also influences my

views of teaching. The Vietnamese teacher permeates the global teacher in me, and a local teacher simultaneously shares her perceptions of teaching with other teachers at the global level while developing her cultural teaching values. This integration is thus a fluid process, and to what degree my views are extended and changed is determined by this process.

My perceptions of the teacher and teaching may also have influenced the way I interpret the participants' perceptions, whether we had shared views or whether they had different views, or even conflicting views to my own. I thus may have been tempted to judge their views through my lenses, and have convinced them to see the world the way I do. I may also have eagerly intruded and judged where I should not have. For example, when we discussed English and ELT in Vietnam in one group-interview, I was so enthusiastic that I 'gave them a long talk' on and engaged in discussion about how English was viewed in the literature with indirect reference to Pennycook's (1998) and Phillipson's (1992) views. The participants, then, admitted that they had only looked at English from a linguistic perspective. Hence, what I had said to them was something they had never thought of. This made me realise the fact that I should not 'feed' them and make them say what I wanted to hear. I then drew their attention to another topic. However, it should be noted that I only told them about the literature after we had already had an intensive discussion about English and ELT in Vietnam.

My engagement with the literature of English, ELT and postcolonial notions of Self and Other may have tempted me to lead the participants towards what I wanted them to say. I may also have rushed to ally myself to those participants who shared my views and thus silence those who did not. For instance, in one group-interview, when the participants commented on their Masters courses in Australia, they mentioned that they were not happy with the way some lecturers gave lectures in class. One participant added that before she came to Australia, she used to think that lecturers there were much better and more advanced than those in Vietnam, but what she experienced in her Masters course changed her assumption. I was so pleased to hear this comment, and I next eagerly talked about ethnocentrism and some implications about Self and Other, though not at all explicitly. After that, the participants became more open to talk about how they saw this issue in their TESOL course. However, I acknowledge that I did not lead the participants deliberately. It was they who initiated the topic and I extended their points of view.

The nature of myself as the insider researcher also makes me more aware of where I should be 'seen' in the process of data collection and data analysis and interpretation. This status makes me both engaged with and distant to the study. I am the insider but I am not allowed to speak for myself wherever I wish to. I have to wait until my voice is considered legitimate and valid by definitions of research. However, I must acknowledge that despite my awareness and intention to distance myself where necessary, I may still be subconsciously present in parts of my research.

4.3   Epistemology – ways of knowing

I acknowledge that my positioning as a lover of English, an English teacher and a researcher is important, because knowledge varies from one to another and thus ways of knowing are shaped by many things, including culture, society and individual experiences. Understanding these ways of knowing is fundamental in understanding identity. But it is also central to an understanding of the way in which it is most useful to go about the research. This section will first look at views about knowledge specifying those that serve as a basis for my research design. After that, I will talk about my research approach, which is a qualitative case study research.

The nature of my research requires my active involvement as the researcher in all stages. Hence, my ways of knowing play a significant part in carrying out the research. My ways of knowing are determined by my personal experiences as a lover of English, an English teacher and a researcher. These ways are also shaped by the way I have been brought up, the way I have been educated to see the world, and the way I have been developing myself as a scholar in the field of social and educational sciences. My perceptions of teacher and teaching, my awareness of the political side of English and ELT, my passion for English, and my necessarily required 'objective' role as the insider researcher all actively participate in my research design. They too give weight to my interpretation of my participants' perspectives, in part because I too am multiply shaped.

In order to acknowledge the multiplicity of ways of knowing I draw on both Western and Vietnamese theorists' views about language, culture and identity. The way we see the world as regarded by me and the Vietnamese theorists I draw on is constructed by the society we live in. Likewise, how I see the world is also formed by my experiences

as a researcher through the mode of Western thinking. Thus, when I look at the situations I am investigating, I need to understand the way in which influences, such as culture, history, education and position in the world, operate on people's perspectives. Moreover, this concept of multiplicity is becoming important in the TESOL context, in which we understand the need for a more global concept of English, that is English as an international language (EIL) (McKay 2002). This concept of language used interculturally without being the property of any one nation emphasises the need for interpretive/conceptual tools that are not products of any single culture.

The multiplicity of ways of knowing is also used for positive purposes through my employment of multiple frameworks, such as those of processes of identity formation and those of postcolonial notions of Self and Other. Different frameworks come up with different pictures of the context in which this research is located. Rich and multiple insights are thus more likely to be obtained.

With an awareness of my multiple positioning as the researcher in this study and my intention to draw on multiple perspectives in approaching data, I will now talk about my research approach, a qualitative case study research.

4.4   Research approach - Qualitative research

Qualitative research, first of all, "is a field of inquiry in its own right" (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:1). "It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter" (p.1) and "a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions surround it" (p.1). Qualitative research, defined by Krathwohl (1993) (cited in Wiersma 1995:12), is a type of research that "describes phenomena in words instead of numbers or measures". According to Wiersma (1995), qualitative research is informed by the following principles:

- ♦ Phenomena should be viewed holistically, and complex phenomena cannot be reduced to a few factors or partitioned into independent parts.

- ♦ The researcher operates in a natural setting and to the extent possible should maintain an openness about what will be observed, collected, etc., in order to avoid missing something important.

- It is the perceptions of those being studied that are important, and to the extent possible these perceptions are to be captured in order to obtain an accurate "measure" of reality.

- A priori assumptions, and certainly a priori conclusions, are to be avoided in favour of post hoc conclusions.

- That the "world," actually phenomena in the world, is perceived as described by Popper (1972) as cloudlike. This implies a somewhat loosely constructed model, one in which there is flexibility in prediction, for example, and one which is not run in a mechanistic manner according to a set of laws.

(Adapted from Wiersma 1995:211-212)

Qualitative research, in the definition of Minichiello et al., (1990:5) is designed to "capture people's meanings, definitions and descriptions of events". In other words, it attempts to unveil participants' thoughts, perceptions and feelings. Qualitative research does not merely aim to understand relationships, effects and causes. Instead, it seeks to "discover the nature of phenomena as humanly experienced" (Minichiello et al., 1990:7).

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), qualitative research is conducted to find out patterns emerging after completed observation, and thorough and thoughtful analysis. It places the researcher as an active and interactive insider in the research process. Simultaneously, the researcher is free to move aside to analyse and sense the experiences shared by participants.

In what way is this study considered a qualitative research study? To begin with, it is located in the ELT context. It looks at processes of identity formation of a group of Vietnamese teachers of English who were studying TESOL in Australian universities. These processes of identity formation were experienced and expressed by these teachers, and this study's goal is to understand these processes by trying to capture how these teachers identified themselves as teacher and individual in local and global contexts. Given their movement in space and time between teaching in Vietnam and studying teaching in Australia, their perceptions of their own identities are important, and thus this study aims to capture these perceptions "to obtain an accurate "measure" of reality" (Wiersma 1995:211-212). Furthermore, their thoughts, perceptions and feelings of themselves as teacher and individual were unveiled in the data, and these

data were collected "as humanly experienced" (Minichiello et al., 1990:7) through in-depth interviews and guided reflective writing. My positioning as the researcher in this study grants me an active and interactive status throughout the research, which was conducted in "a somewhat loosely constructed model" (Wiersma 1995:212), the very nature of qualitative research.

4.5   Research design – Case study

Since my research focuses on processes of teacher identity formation, it is essential to understand thoroughly, intensively and extensively how the teachers participating in this study experienced different roles and selves given their movement in time and space. Also, these processes of identity formation needed to be observed over a period of time, on different occasions, and in diverse manners. A case study approach appears to best satisfy these requirements.

The case study approach has been widely discussed and strongly supported by researchers. MacDonald and Walker (1975) define case study as "the examination of an instance in action" that allows generalisation out of a single case (cited in Bassey 1999:24). Sturman (1994:61) sees case study as "a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon". He then sees the case study researcher as one who can "understand a case, … explain why things happen as they do, and … generalise or predict from a single example, [which] requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge" (p.61).

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996:545) argue that "a case is a particular instance of the phenomenon" and "a case study is done to shed light on a **phenomenon**, which is the processes, events, persons, or things of interest to the researcher" (bold in the original). Since my study investigates processes of identity formation of a group of Vietnamese teachers who were studying TESOL in Australian universities, this aim fits in well with these authors' definition of a case study.

Yin (1994) insists that case study itself is a research strategy. This assertion is really important since it gives case study an independent position that is equally treated to other research methods. He remarks that "case study research is but one of several ways of doing social science research" (p.1) In his discussion, "case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed" (p.1). These discussions

strongly support my decision to pursue case study research, particularly because my study needed to answer many 'how' and 'why' questions. For example, how did the participants see themselves as teacher and individual, and why did they perceive these different roles and selves in certain ways?

Case study research and particularly qualitative case study is "a research design in its own right, one that can be distinguished from other approaches to a research problem" as Merriam (1988:5) claims. She further emphasises that case study, as a research design, "can be used to study a phenomenon systematically" (p.6). She states that it "is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (p.2). She also adds that case study research using qualitative methods to collect data focuses on "discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied" and this "offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p.3). My use of qualitative methods to collect data serves this purpose of case study, ar he making of the participants' perspectives of their experiences available to the reader helps extend "the reader's experience of what is known" (p.11), one out of many contributions of qualitative case study.

In case study research, data interpretation plays a significant role in making sense of the phenomenon being studied, since case study focuses on the meaning of the phenomenon (Merriam 1988, Stake 1995). Stake (1995:9) argues that the function of the qualitative researcher during data gathering "is to maintain vigorous interpretation". He suggests that in order to interpret a case convincingly, an interpreter needs to be in the field "to observe the workings of the case ... [to record] objectively what is happening but simultaneously [to examine] its meaning and [redirect] observation to refine or substantiate those meanings" (p.8-9). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996:543) also state that "a good case study brings a phenomenon to life for readers and helps them understand its meaning". Merriam (1988) stresses that qualitative case study research in education often requires researchers to select a data collection instrument that best helps reveal underlying meaning when data are gathered and interpreted. With a strong emphasis on meaning in context, it is a useful method that enables researchers to unveil and interpret what is associated with a phenomenon, a person, or a story. I find this argument extremely supportive to one of the focuses of my study, which is the investigation of

how contexts affect identity formation and how to make sense of contexts to interpret processes of identity formation.

I adopt a case study approach to examine processes of identity formation of a group of Vietnamese teachers of English, who were studying TESOL in Australian universities. But to what extent can the findings of this study apply to a wider population of Vietnamese teachers of English who have similar experiences? To what extent can we understand the teacher identity expressed by TESOL teachers based on the understandings of the teacher identity expressed by Vietnamese teachers of English in this study? Is the move from the particular to the general 'legitimate'? Can case study experts help find the answer for these questions?

Stake (2000) offers his solution, which suggests that the answer "lies in the nature of learning made possible through case study research" (cited in Brown 2003:51). Stake sees this learning as "naturalistic generalisation" (p.442), and in Brown's (2003:51) interpretations, this means "the reader is able to learn from the reported experiences of others as if the experiences had been personal":

> The reader comes to know some things told, as if he or she had experienced it. Enduring meanings come from encounter, and are modified and reinforced by repeated encounter. In life itself, this occurs seldom to the individual alone but in the presence of others. ... We come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their experience. ... Knowledge is socially constructed, so we constructionists believe, and, in their experiential and contextual accounts, case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge (Stake 2000:442, cited in Brown 2003:51).

Brown (2003) looks at Haas Dyson's (1997) argument of using case study as an approach to the study of children's literacy, and she observes that Haas Dyson and Stake share views about knowledge:

> In its careful grounding of important abstractions in mundane particulars, case study research offers diverse professionals a means for identifying and talking about the dimensions and dynamics of living and learning in classrooms (and other settings as well) (Haas Dyson 1997:177-178, cited in Brown 2003:51).

Brown (2003:51) presents her interpretation of Haas Dyson's argument, that is "the detailed richness of "singular experiences" offers opportunities to consider the complexities inherent in teaching and learning in ways that may be obscured in studies focused on mass, rather than individual, understandings." This discussion contributes to the legitimisation of developing from the particular cases points of attention in interpreting the phenomenon in a wider population.

Brown (2003:51) further observes that "it is the combination of varied individual experiences and shared interests which makes the development of meaningful understandings possible". She again turns to Haas Dyson's argument to strengthen her point:

> Crossing conceptual boundaries is thus linked to crossing human ones: when we, with our diverse experiences and our common concerns, converse, we push each other out of bounds, we help each other to attend to the world a bit differently (Haas Dyson 1997:179, cited in Brown 2003:51).

The above arguments have helped consolidate the legitimation and validity of case study approach in research. Our job as researchers is therefore dependent on how much we can contribute to the development of this approach.

4.6   Selection of participants

Before going on to talk about the methods used for data collection, I first explain how I selected and recruited the participants for this study.

4.6.1 Selection of participants

I carried out my research with Vietnamese postgraduates from different universities in Australia. I selected seven students who were doing their Masters of Education, specialising in TESOL to study as cases. These students were those who had had teaching experience at either teachers' training colleges/universities or universities where English was the major subject in different parts of Vietnam before they commenced their courses in Australia.

I selected these cases for the following reasons. To begin with, these postgraduates were very competent at English as attested by their IELTS entry scores, so they, I assumed, might not focus on explaining their English problems (e.g grammar, proficiency) but, instead, might be more likely to discuss their self identification as both teachers and learners of English, one of the targets which this research aimed to discuss. Secondly, because some of them were teachers of English at a teachers training college/university in Vietnam, they could perceive more deeply their roles as teacher trainers and could reveal their concerns about the teaching of English in Vietnam where English had been warmly welcomed as a companion of globalisation. These students, whose English proficiency was not a problem, I believed, could depict comprehensive pictures of

English teaching in their regions and I could then see how varied attitudes towards English and English language teaching might be within Vietnam. The last reason was that the disciplines of Education and TESOL had embodied in themselves cultural norms regulated by social structures of different authorities and various implementing guidelines. Because these postgraduate students had already studied and taught English in Vietnam and had also been trained in TESOL/Education in Australia, they could reveal their experiences and beliefs as well as expectations of being a teacher of English in Vietnam, a country of rich culture enjoying different pedagogical practices from those in Western countries. Thus, the aims of the research would be more likely to be achieved.

4.6.2 Recruitment of participants

Since I adopted the qualitative case study approach for my research, I intended to look for six to eight participants who would meet the research's requirements. I had already known three Vietnamese postgraduate students who had been enrolled in Masters courses in TESOL in three different Australian universities. They were willing to participate in my study. I asked them whether they knew any others who were also doing similar courses either in their universities or other universities. Through these three participants' introduction, I contacted another four potential participants who were doing the same course in one Australian university. They all agreed to help me with this research.

I had seven participants, six females and one male. Their ages ranged from the mid twenty to the early thirties. Their teaching experience ranged from three to over 10 years. Before coming to Australia, they had not been overseas for any training in TESOL. In Vietnam, they taught various subjects, for example, General English, Grammar, Theories of Language, and English Literature. Not all of them had started their Masters courses in Australia at the same time.

I gave them the pseudonyms Kien (the male participant), Linh, Vy, Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang.

4.7 Methods for data collection

For the features of the qualitative case study research discussed earlier, methods for data collection tend to be interviews, observations, participant observations, and reading documents (Merriam 1988, Yin 1994, Stake 1995, Bassey 1999, and others). These authors, at the same time, suggest the combination of multiple methods - triangulation - to make case study research more valid and more reliable. This helps a case study research stand firmly against criticisms of it as having "lack of rigor" and providing "little basis for scientific generalisation" (Yin 1994:9), being a waste of time, or a "mistaken" approach as Atkinson and Delamont (1985) observe (cited in Bassey 1999:35).

The data collection started when the participants reached their second semesters of their courses, and continued until they finished their study in Australia. A series of methods were employed to collect data, particularly in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and guided reflective writing, and additionally telephone conversations, face-to-face conversations, and email communication.

4.7.1 In-depth interview

Fontana and Frey (1994:361) stress the importance and significance of interviewing as "one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings." Moreover, those authors who write much about case study research highlight the importance of interviews in data collection. Merriam (1988) notes that interviews are one of the main sources of data in qualitative case study research. Stake (1995:64) is very clear when he remarks that "qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case [and] the interview is the main road to multiple realities." He also places emphasis on the necessity of "a short list of issue-oriented questions" (p.65) which helps the qualitative interviewer to not "get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation" (p.65). This method of collecting data, thus, strongly supports the aims of this research, particularly because it permits the researcher to pursue ideas generated at the time of interviews. The interview itself is an instance of identity formation, a vehicle that carries processes of identity construction.

Minichiello et al., (1990) and Oppenheim (1992) have discussed a number of advantages of in-depth interviews, which I have found very suitable for the aims and the manner of this research. In-depth interviewing, discussed by Minichiello et al., (1990), is ideal for the researcher to access participants' real life experiences, motives, actions, reactions, and meanings, that is particularly suitable for what I aimed to research. The in-depth interview method has the power to identify the understanding of participants about their own self-identifications, awareness, solutions, and responsibilities as teachers and learners of English in respect of problems of appropriacy and ethics in ELT pedagogy and appropriate pedagogical practice in the Vietnamese context. In-depth interviews provide more control, more flexibility, and more options to collect data. At the same time, they aid in eliciting information because they facilitate relaxed and friendly interactions. The fact that the interviewer, myself, and the participants were from the same culture has enabled ease of interchange of ideas. Moreover, the participants were postgraduate students, so they well understood how important thoughtful responses from participants were for research. In addition, in-depth interviews, varying from semi-structured to unstructured, created opportunities for both the interviewer and participants to listen to each other's opinions and voice their perspectives.

I conducted intensively individual in-depth interviews with the participants. The interviews were conducted at times and places convenient to the participants and were audiotaped. The interviews were semi-structured and based on specific questions. For example, I asked the participants to talk about their learning and teaching of English in Vietnam and their Masters courses in Australia. They also talked about various differences between the education in Australia and that in Vietnam. I always gave the participants time to express their opinions and focus on what they were interested in. Moreover, I let them drive the interviews to a certain extent, though I redirected them to my questions if I thought it necessary.

Because of the fact that the researcher, myself, and the participants were from the same cultural background, the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with occasional contributions in English.

4.7.2 Focus group interview

After the individual interviews, I divided the participants into two groups of four and three based on locality, and then focus group interviews were conducted with each group.

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) raise some advantages of group interviews reported by qualitative researchers. These researchers see that "the interactions among the participants stimulate them to state feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that they would not express if interviewed individually, [and the group interview technique] avoids putting the interviewers in a directive role" (p.308). The researcher may ask questions for discussion but participants then develop the discussion by stating their views, arguing with other participants or even suggesting more ideas which add more 'flavour' to the researcher's arguments. Fontana and Frey (1994:364) also contend that the group interview "can provide another level of data gathering or a perspective on the research problem not available through individual interviews."

That the individual interviews took place first, followed by the group interviews enabled the research to avoid some of the limitations of the group interview. In a group interview, there is a tendency of giving black and white opinions, as public statements (Minichiello et al., 1990). The individual interviews had helped collect more private interpretations of the participants' experiences. The group interviews then added more details to these without discouraging the participants to share their views already spelled out in the first round of interviews.

When I conducted focus group interviews, I assumed that the participants would provide some contradictory arguments, or would give different opinions about the literature. They would also discuss with one another to develop their arguments. Different perspectives would explain their own self-identification, awareness, and solutions as well as perceptions of responsibilities as a teacher of English in Vietnam in a globalised context. Contradictory opinions from the participants would of course be offered and these would identify new issues, which writers might discuss and explore further. Moreover, suggestions made by the participants would be more practical and suitable than those made by any outsiders. The group interviews, conducted as round-table discussions, would obtain unexpected results since they gave the chance to

examine the dynamics of the group and to objectively interpret contradictory or shared views of the participants.

Two group interviews were conducted by the time the participants were about to finish their courses. The interviews were audiotaped. They were conducted in Vietnamese with occasional contributions in English.

The first group interview was conducted with four participants who studied at the same university. Before I talked to them, I sent each of them a summary of the first round of interviews conducted individually, so that they could recall what we had discussed, and focus more on points that they thought important. I also sent them a summary of my interpretations of the data obtained in the first round of interviews. In the group interview, these four participants were asked to discuss what they had written to respond to my questions, and to discuss other issues, such as the role of teachers, the role of English, ELT and teachers of English in Vietnam, and several difficulties in introducing new teaching methods to their universities in Vietnam. By that stage, I assumed that the participants might provide some contradictory arguments, or might give different opinions from those discussed in the literature.

Due to the differences between the participants' length of courses, the second group interview with three participants was conducted several months after the first group interviews. These three participants studied at three different universities in the same state in Australia. I gave them the transcriptions of their individual interviews, so that they could reread, correct, suggest new issues, or extent some of their points. Based on the first group interview, I asked these participants similar questions and let them develop the discussion and debate of related issues, such as their perceptions of a teacher, their possible implementations of some teaching methods they had learned from their courses in Australia. I also drew on some points raised in the first group interview to make them discuss, for example, the issue of how the image of a teacher may change after his/her training overseas.

After the group interviews, I often e-mailed and phoned the participants to clarify some information and asked for more explanations. I also had a number of informal telephone conversations with each of the participants between the two rounds of interviews.

4.7.3 Guided reflective writing

Between these two rounds of individual and focus group interviews, I asked the participants to produce their reflective writing based on some topics which were either generated from the individual interviews or would act as pre-forum for the focus group interviews taking place afterwards. For example, they were asked to write about their perceptions of their Masters courses in Australian universities, discussing various issues, for example, Communicative Language Teaching as an approach to language teaching. They then wrote to express their ideas about the dark and bright sides of being native/non-native teachers of English. As Richards and Lockhart (1994:7) believe, this kind of writing can serve "as a discovery process" through which one gains more insights into one's own experiences. Moreover, "the act of writing itself is a way of structuring, formulating and reacting to [one's experiences]" (McDonough & McDonough 1997:122).

Reflective thinking, as Dewey (1933:12) puts it, "in distinction from other operations to which we apply the name of thought, involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity." Another interpretation of reflection is given by Kemmis (1986:5), who claims that "it is an action oriented, historically-embedded, social and political frame, to locate oneself in the history of a situation, to participate in a social activity and to take sides on issues."

Journals performing the above functions are of great help to the aims of my research since these have enabled me to obtain deep and conscious thinking and analyses from the participants. For example, when the participants wrote to describe how they had actually taught English in their classrooms, the participants wrote retrospectively and introspectively. They had to interact with their memories and formulate their writing to make sense of what they had to write. Although in the interviews they also talked about this matter, when they had to write it down, they had more time to think and organise their points. Their journals served as "a forum for reflection" (McDonough & McDonough 1997:126).

Another example was when the participants wrote about the dark and bright sides of being a native/non-native teacher of English. Together with providing factual

information, their feelings, attitudes and reactions were also apparent in their writing. Whether they saw the dichotomy as positive, negative or neutral was revealed, and whether they defined themselves along the lines of this dichotomy was also confirmed. As they reflected on their experiences as a non-native teacher of English and how they saw their position in comparison with native English teachers, their writing was like a critical conversation when they had to locate themselves in the situation and present their own awareness of self identification. Moreover, they had to argue for their points by referring to their own experiences, and thus their perceptions tended to be more useful and richer as data than generic information provided in other circumstances.

Since the participants wrote their journals to respond to my questions and prompts, their writing tended to be more focused. This helps minimise problems of "seeing the wood for the trees" (McDonough & McDonough 1997:124) or not seeing the wood for the trees, since there is time to both make sense out of experience, and to consider detail, which provides thick but focused data.

Since the participants could choose to write or not to write on the given topics, they were free from the pressure of having to answer me. If they chose to write, they could then freely and informally express their points of view in either English, Vietnamese or in both languages. What they wrote was confidential between them as each individual participant and me as the researcher. All of this contributed to their writing as "a discovery process" (Richards & Lockhart 1994:7) where they were able to make their subjective experiences become "tangible" and "accessible" (Progoff 1975:37, cited in McDonough & McDonough 1997:135) to them and then to me as the researcher.

The participants could choose to write to me in English or Vietnamese depending on their preference. The majorities of their writing were in Vietnamese, and only a few of them were in English.

4.7.4 Triangulation

As many authors argue, it is important to combine multiple methods - triangulation - to make case study research more valid and more reliable (Merriam 1988, Yin 1994, Stake 1995, Bassey 1999). That was why this study employed the combination of different methods, namely in-depth interviews, focus group interviews and guided reflective writing.

Apart from these main methods, additional data, such as further clarifications of any information arising in the data analysis process, were obtained through phone and e-mail conversations with individual participants. Notes were taken during these conversations. This helped me identify and clarify what I wanted to know more. Likewise, I wished to let the participants interpret contradictory or shared views raised by the other participants in the group interviews. The participants gave more information about anything that they had already said in the interviews or anything that suddenly came up at the time of conversation. This approach to data collection employs triangulation to help assess "the sufficiency of the data" (Wiersma 1995:264). In other words, this checked whether my interpretations were correct, whether I had represented the participants accurately, or whether I had made full use of any available information.

The fact that the interviews had taken place first and were followed by further clarifications enabled the research to avoid some of the limitations of bias, which easily happens in interviews (Minichiello et al., 1990). The individual interviews had helped collect more private interpretations of the participants' experience. Additional clarifications then added more details without discouraging the participants from confidently stating their views, which had already been spelled out in the interviews.

Since the focus of this study is processes of identity formation, each method used served as a vehicle carrying identity formation minute-by-minute. With each method, the participants presented themselves differently, and triangulation thus contributed greatly to achieving multiplicity and dynamism of identity formation.

Triangulation also involves participant input and checking of researcher understandings and interpretations. This helps the research minimise the limitations of bias and misleading or even false interpretations of the data which affects research validation. Thus, this is regarded as "one of the most needed forms of validation of qualitative research" (Stake 2000:450, cited in Brown 2003:52). Being aware of this, before the focus group interviews, I sent the participants a summary of my interpretations of the data obtained in the individual interviews and their reflective writing. One participant, after that, sent me her work on Communicative Language Teaching to add to what she had said and written earlier. The other participants added and corrected little. I myself found this method extremely useful and "reassuring", as Brown (2003:53) comments.

4.8 Methods for Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, I explain how I analysed and interpreted the data. Related issues, such as translation, how I used excerpts and how my relationship with the participants had influenced the data analysis and interpretation, are also discussed.

4.8.1 Using dichotomy/dichotomies as tools of inquiry

After the data collection, I first transcribed the interviews into the original Vietnamese, and then translated them into English. I also translated the guided reflective writing into English, since the participants wrote mainly in Vietnamese.

Based on the data obtained from the interviews and their writing, I identified themes according to the aims of the research, which are processes of teacher identity formation and the teacher and the politics of ELT. The focuses of this study, the way the participants identified themselves, and occasionally the way I asked questions, all suggested dichotomies which I later used as tools of inquiry for data analysis and interpretation. The way I organised themes in light of these dichotomies and the literature not only answered the research questions but also helped most efficiently boost the strength of case study research. Examples of themes are: 'sense of belonging', which was mainly based on the Vietnamese authors' arguments presented in Chapter 2; 'identity and difference', based on the discussions from the Western theorists illustrated in Chapter 2; 'asking questions in lectures' suggested by the participants when they talked about their experiences as students in Australia; and 'native and non-native teachers of English' which was partly generated from the topic I asked them to discuss in their writing.

It should be noted that I did not create dichotomies in the questions but the participants used dichotomies to express different roles and selves. Only on one occasion did I prompt them with one available and commonly-used-as-a-norm-in-ELT dichotomy, when I asked them to write about the dark and bright sides of native and non-native teachers of English. I wanted to explore how the participants reacted to the dichotomy, and then compare this with other occasions when they also applied the dichotomy to themselves. This helped understand better how the participants expressed complexity in identity formation.

It is important to note that I used 'dichotomy/dichotomies' more as a tool of inquiry, a means to interpret the data rather than the meaning underlying the word(s). In this way, dichotomy/dichotomies serve as a way to understand and identify variation in identification rather than a way of characterising the world from the postcolonial writers' eyes. Also, it is important to stress that I had different approaches to analyse the data in the three chapters of analysis, namely Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. How I did it will be explained clearly in each chapter.

In Chapter Five, I looked at the processes of identity formation with specific focus on the three dichotomies: the teacher and/or the student; the professional and/or the personal; and the moral guide and/or the teacher of English. These dichotomies were suggested by the way the participants identified themselves, such as self as teacher, self as student, self as Vietnamese teacher and self as teacher of English. These three dichotomies worked well with one another to provide a comprehensive picture of how the participants self-identify given their apparently contradictory roles and selves in both the Vietnamese and the Australian contexts. Also, the dichotomies assisted the understanding of different processes of identity formation, in which the teacher as the main identity had to negotiate with other related identities to guarantee its optimal status at personal, local and global levels.

In Chapter Six, I explored processes of identity formation with the emphasis on the teacher and the politics of ELT. Since postcolonial notions of Self and Other were emphasised, a framework based on both these notions and the participants' presentation of apparently contradictory roles and selves was applied for data analysis and interpretation.

Issues related to notions of Self and Other were brought into discussion to re-examine postcolonial theories where numerous commonly-held views about the Other have been firmly depicted. Self and Other in this Chapter were extended to stand for different roles and selves, not just those specifically connected to Englishness. Moreover, the theme developed in Chapter Six opened up new ways of treating the dichotomy of Self and Other.

In Chapter Seven, I focused intensively on one case, namely Kien, to investigate how processes of identity formation took place at the personal level. The data were presented in the forms of three stories, and each story focused on one specific social/cultural

context, which affected the ways his identities were shaped. This way of story-telling indicates that identities are shaped dynamically, that they are shaped by the social and cultural contexts that we experience, and that these identities are equally shaped by the contexts within which we express them.

4.8.2 Issues related to translation and quoting

This section first explains issues related to different ways of quoting, particularly why I used lengthy excerpts very often in some parts of the chapters of analysis. It then discusses issues related to the translation of the data from Vietnamese into English.

I used different ways of quoting for different purposes. Where I needed the participants to speak for themselves, I used lengthy excerpts. For example, in Chapter 5, when I presented the data on how the participants constructed their identities through constructing others in class activities, such as asking questions in lectures, I used long original excerpts. I wanted the reader to feel the processes of identity formation more vividly, and to follow the participants' shifts of identities closely with their own eyes and ears as if they were in the scene observing the participants.

Another example will be found in Chapter Six, when I provided lengthy texts written by the participants on the dark and bright sides of being native and non-native teachers of English. Since this dichotomy has dominated the ELT discourse and been used as a tool to define non-native teachers based on the standards of native teachers, I wanted to reflect honestly how the participants treated this dichotomy. I wanted them to speak for themselves as much as they could, since their voices as non-native teachers of English would 'affect' the ELT norms much more than my interpretations, as researcher, of their perceptions. I wanted to leave the reader some space too to 'communicate' directly with the participants' words. This triangulation, I believe, would make more sense than my interpretations alone.

Since the language used in all the interviews was Vietnamese, I had to translate the transcriptions into English. In the translation process, I had to stop and think hard many times, because I could not find good enough equivalent expressions in English to convey the meanings of some ideas expressed by the participants. For example, in the interview with Lien, she talked about the role of teachers in Vietnam, and she clearly defined a teacher as someone who should both '*teach*' and '*educate*' students. As she

used Vietnamese to express this idea '*day*' and '*do*', I tried to convey it in English although it is not completely equivalent to the original meaning.

Another example is the expression of teachers as "lam dau tram ho" (original Vietnamese) in one group interview. If I translate it literally, it can be understood as follows: being a teacher is like being a daughter-in-law of a hundred families. But this would not make sense to the reader. I need to provide a lengthy explanation to the reader to help them understand the expression. It is socially assumed in our Vietnamese society that being a daughter-in-law is tough, since a girl has to try hard to please her in-law family, particularly the mother-in-law. She will have to distribute her attention everywhere so as not to be judged as being bad. She has to 'please' many parties. So when being a teacher is compared with being a daughter-in-law, it suggests that being a teacher is already hard, but being a daughter-in-law of a hundred families is a hundred times more difficult. How can a teacher satisfy all expectations from multiple parties? This expression thus indicates how difficult it is to play the teacher role in the society, where whatever a teacher does is being judged by the whole society.

4.8.3 The influence of the relationship and friendship between and among the participants and the researcher

I have acknowledged earlier that I had known three participants more or less as friends before they participated in this study. This relationship and friendship somehow affected the data collection and data interpretation processes. This has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it made it easier for me to ask these three friends to be my participants. Through them, I gained access to more potential participants. My recruitment of participants was hence quite smooth. Moreover, their trust in me as friend also encouraged their openness in expressing their experiences and perceptions. We shared knowledge of contexts too. Thus, I got very rich and thick data.

On the other hand, this relationship and friendship caused me to be serious and conscious when I interpreted the data, since I did not want to make any mistakes of 'talking too much'. I knew them, so I had much to say, but I also needed to know the limit, so as not to reveal generously their personal information. I needed to get critical distance from them as well. I tried not to participate in the discussions. I tried not to show them that I had already known this or that piece of information about themselves or our shared knowledge, either. Instead, I tried to listen to them.

Since the participants know each other and can recognise each other, the information provided about each of them is thus not unidentifiable to the others. This somehow limited what information could be presented in the thesis, particularly the information that might cause negative results to their professional careers. Given my expressed concerns, I acknowledge I have done my best to protect their anonymity.

Three chapters of analysis follow this chapter. I hope this chapter would be useful for understanding my interpretations of the data better.

CHAPTER 5 – IDENTITY FORMATION: THE TEACHER AND/OR THE STUDENT. THE PROFESSIONAL AND/OR THE PERSONAL. THE MORAL GUIDE AND/OR THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH

5.1 Introduction

In order to achieve one of the research aims, namely, to investigate processes of teacher identity formation in movement in space and time between contexts of teaching in Vietnam and study and teaching in Australia, this chapter will answer the following question: how do Vietnamese teachers who have studied in Australian universities see themselves as teachers and as individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future?

I will explore how processes of identity formation take place by investigating the tensions between the apparently contradictory roles and selves manifested in the three dichotomies: the teacher and/or the student; the professional and/or the personal; and the moral guide and/or the teacher of English. These dichotomies arose from the interview data themselves. Since the question of identity has been explored widely by both Western and Vietnamese authors, I will specify in each discussion in the sections below the conceptual tools I will draw on for the section.

Why are these dichotomies important and significant? With regard to the first dichotomy, as Vietnamese teachers studying in Australia, the participants in this study were both Vietnamese teachers and Australian-oriented students at the same time. Thus, they tended to present themselves as students in parallel with their images as teachers. They had to constantly negotiate values and practices that students could engage with but teachers should not and vice versa. Likewise, the shift of space between Vietnam and Australia had made the tensions between these simultaneous dual roles more obvious and salient, since they were exposed to very different cultural and pedagogic values, which required them to negotiate these roles consciously, purposefully and rationally both against and according to their own desire and reasoning.

The dichotomy between the professional and the personal is important to these Vietnamese teachers, since the professional is socially constructed and governed by

norms and values of morality, and the personal tends to act accordingly. Thus, on the surface the personal and the professional seem to permeate each other and the latter tends to dominate. However, whether there are tensions in teachers' enactment of these roles needs to be explored.

The third dichotomy: the moral guide and/or the teacher of English, is closely connected to the first two dichotomies. It further explains the role of teachers in Vietnam and what kinds of tension teachers have in performing the Vietnamese teacher, the personal, and the teacher of English. Moreover, while the first dichotomy explores the participants' identity negotiation process in both the Australian and Vietnamese contexts, this dichotomy investigates their negotiation in the Vietnamese context only. Thus, by exploring these three dichotomies, I hope to capture the participants' teacher identity formation more fully.

I will first explore identity formation processes by investigating the first dichotomy: the teacher and/or the student. Theories related to identities, such as identity and difference (Woodward 1997, Hall 1997b, Dolby 2000), the construction of national identity (Phan Ngoc 1998, Wodak, de Cillia & Reisigl 1999, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c), identity fastening and unfastening (Reed 2001) and the sense of belonging (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c, Reed 2001) will be employed to understand how the identity formation takes place through the tensions manifested in the dichotomy. A similar approach will be applied to the second and third dichotomies.

5.2 How identity formation processes take place: The teacher and/or the student

The two most predominant tensions noticed in the participants' accounts are their roles and selves as Vietnamese students and/or Australian students, and Australian students and/or Vietnamese teachers. Identity formation processes will be investigated through these tensions.

In Australia, the participants were international postgraduate students, who at the same time viewed themselves as Vietnamese teachers of English. They were teachers being trained in a higher degree. I assumed that in their Australian lectures, they had to negotiate whether to behave like an Australian student or like a Vietnamese one. As the former, they should enjoy an open and equal relationship with the teachers. But as the

latter, they somehow needed to maintain a distance and show obvious respect to them. The former and the latter also involve different approaches to learning, because of different expectations.

The participants seemed to show very clearly the tensions between themselves as students in Australia and themselves as Vietnamese teachers. Because they were teachers/students, they tended to see themselves as teachers in parallel with themselves as students. Thus, what they said or expressed in the interviews and their journal entries shifted and moved between these two selves and roles. As students, they wanted to appropriate some of the Australian style. However, their teacher part in them found it hard to allow their students in Vietnam to follow such a style. In other words, their student selves and teacher selves were in constant conflict and negotiation.

5.2.1 Identity and difference

The participants identified themselves on the basis of difference. This confirms the argument that self/identity is constructed through the other (Hall 1997b, Woodward 1997, Dolby 2000). Others here are Australian students and teachers, from whom the participants felt different. At the same time, by contrasting Vietnamese students to Australian students and by describing how they performed in their lectures, they co-constructed their identities as both students studying in Australia and Vietnamese teachers.

5.2.1.1 Identifying self by defining and stereotyping other

The participants identified themselves by defining 'others'. Differences were noticed when the participants constructed images of Australian students and themselves regarding the way they asked questions in lectures. Australian students were generalised as those who were eager to ask any questions in lectures, including "ridiculous" and "irrelevant" ones. They were also described as those who sometimes did not consider others and asked questions for the sake of asking rather than contributing or co-constructing knowledge. The participants also implied that Australian students could be considered rude by their Vietnamese standards and values when they asked too much and their questions were too funny. Put differently, respect did not seem to be a concern for Australian students.

> Teachers here generally all encourage students to ask questions, so if we have any questions or aren't sure of anything we can ask... yeah, 'cause they want it that

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way. I think asking questions is a sign of 'reflective thinking' and 'critical thinking'... And the atmosphere in the class is very relaxing because Aussie students always ask questions, 'no matter what' and they don't care whether lecturers mind or not, they keep asking if they have anything to ask, and they even occupy lecture time. This really makes me feel comfortable and I tell myself 'why not ask questions if I have something to ask'... Students here make me act faster. I mean if I'm not quick enough then they'll take over my turn, for example they will keep asking questions and even occupy the lecture time while I can't ask anything. Aussie students are like that. They ask too much and this forces me to be braver to ask questions... Actually I don't often ask questions but when asked I often answer... At first, before I asked questions I thought my questions should make sense, and so I often asked, "Can I ask a silly question?" But then my teacher and another friend told me that 'there are no silly questions'. And so whenever I have questions, I'll ask (Linh, individual interview).

In Vietnam the teacher-student relationships are rather distant compared to those in Australia, but the distance has two sides. In terms of advantages, the distance is necessary because it defines who is teacher and who is student. It means students show hierarchical respect to teachers. It's not like here in Australia, teachers allow students to "feel free", so students can answer back or even challenge teachers in class. We, Vietnamese students in Australia are still shy and we still behave the way we do in Vietnam (Chi, individual interview).

In the group-interview between Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang, these participants also expressed their concern about asking questions in the classroom.

In my class there's a student who always asks questions. It seems that he has nothing to ask but he just wants to attract the lecturer's attention and to show that he's asking questions and that he's active. Many of his questions are nonsense and ridiculous and he just asks for the sake of asking. He says that he doesn't care whether his questions make sense or are relevant. What he cares is to make the lecturer know that he's keen to ask questions and he's interested. He even advises me to ask questions to draw the lecturer's attention to me. He says that studying in Australia is like that. If we have nothing to ask, we still have to make up some questions, even totally irrelevant ones. And in fact his questions are so funny but he still does it because he knows that lecturers are in favour of those who often ask questions. But in Vietnam it's very different. We students often think whether our questions are heavy-weight enough to ask before we ask them (Trang).

Chi added that Vietnamese students often considered whether their questions were worth asking before they asked any questions in class. Thu agreed and added that if students found that their questions were not important enough, they tended to find answers to those questions by themselves. Lien admitted that if students thought their questions were silly, then they never asked them. Trang once more confirmed her view on this matter:

Yeah, that's right. If questions are not worth to ask or not important or solvable, we can do it ourselves and don't have to ask. But here in Australia they ask and ask. They don't care... Our Vietnamese perceptions are different from theirs. If

we keep asking questions in class, it's like we challenge teachers or test their ability. Thus, we always have to consider our questions, whether we should ask or not. It's always like that and it makes the class environment quieter.

"They"- "I"/ "we" and "them"- "me" were used to mark the differences between the participants and Australian students.

One's identity is constructed partly by stereotyping others, and by assuming Australian students to act in certain ways, the participants stressed the differences. Such stereotypes fail to acknowledge that many Australian students may adopt a similar approach to Vietnamese ones and vice versa. They tended to identify differences and stereotype Australian students and simultaneously assume their own identity. They identified themselves by defining others.

5.2.1.2 'They are what they are not'

In contrast, the participants saw themselves as those who often thought twice before asking. They were also more reserved but often tried to ask questions. They considered their classmates as well as their lecturers. They also considered their face and their lecturers' face. They were different from Australians. They brought their existing values to their Australian lectures to find those values different from what took place there. They also found differences in expectations from lecturers and classmate interactions

Linh clearly drew a line between herself and the 'others' by using "them" and "me" and "they' and "I". As a Vietnamese student, she thought her questions should make sense and should not waste lecture time. This shows respect and is also a way to preserve one's face and the teacher's face. Asking questions is often considered as either challenging teachers or being silly because one does not understand what is given in the classroom. Thus, students in Vietnam tend to avoid asking questions in class and often find out answers themselves. However, as a student in Australia, Linh realised that she needed to ask questions first to meet her lecturers' expectations, second to show that she was keen to learn and third to compete with Australian students. Yet, she was different from them. While they asked any questions, "no matter what" and even occupied lecture time, she only asked if she had genuine questions. That means she still thought twice before she asked, although she admitted that she had become braver to ask questions. So, the tension lies between her Vietnamese self as a student and her present self in an Australian class.

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Chi was very clear about the differences between Vietnamese and Australian students. While the former show hierarchical respect to teachers, the latter can answer back or even challenge teachers. By stating "we Vietnamese students in Australia ... still behave the way we do in Vietnam", Chi emphasised the differences. Also, through what she claimed, she implied that she, as a Vietnamese teacher, was also different from an Australian teacher who allows students to "feel free".

They are what they are not (Woodward 1997). By describing Australian students as those who always asked many questions including silly ones and even occupied lecture time, they presented themselves as those who always thought before asking. By referring to Australian students as those who felt free to ask anything, they showed themselves as those who paid respect to teachers. It was clear from the data that they all pictured Australian students as those who always asked and somehow did not show enough respect to teachers. They also depicted students from other non-English-speaking backgrounds as those who did not ask many questions and were very respectful to teachers.

Though Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang all said earlier in the individual interviews that they liked the open and equal relationships with Australian lecturers and the quite relaxing environment in classes where students freely contributed to discussion, in the above debate about asking questions in lectures, they showed obvious tensions. Still, the Vietnamese part in them had a strong influence on how they behaved in the Australian classroom. On the one hand, they realised that asking questions showed that one was keen to learn and interested in lectures. It also contributed to satisfying their lecturers. On the other, they all set the extent to which they should ask questions. Their questions still needed to make sense and be important enough to be raised. They chose to consider the burden they would place on lecturers and their friends rather than just ask questions for the sake of asking. So, being present in the Australian classroom, they chose to let their Vietnamese part be active and somehow predominate in their decision whether to ask questions. They could not act in the Australian way, simply because as they all revealed, they were different. They were influenced and constrained by existing values and practices that made them Vietnamese students.

5.2.1.3 Why the participants constructed differences in this way but not in other ways

So what made the participants have such a conception in mind? Why did they construct images of Australian students and themselves in this way but not in other ways?

Firstly, it might be because it was easier to notice differences, although such differences did not necessarily represent Australian students; or *secondly* it might be the democracy and freedom students had with the teacher in the Australian classroom that attracted the participants' attention.

Thirdly, it was their response to existing stereotypes about how Asian students perform in Australian classes (see for example Samuelowicz 1987, Ballard & Clanchy 1997, Barrett-Lennard 1997). As they reported, they had heard or been told about such stereotypes before they came to Australia or became aware of them when reading books. While Linh seemed to show her willingness to be mixed with Australian students and thus challenged what had been said about passive Asians, the other participants tended to confirm some stereotypes by stressing different values that differentiate Vietnamese and Australian students. They tended to show resistance to Australian ways of performance to draw a border between Vietnamese and Australian values. This resonates with the construction of national identity which I will discuss in the next section.

Some stereotypes were made because the participants were misled by Australian students' performance. The example given by Trang demonstrated certain assumptions they held about Australian students who actively took the asking role, even when they had nothing to ask. This created some images of the other, 'the Australians', assuming 'they're like that', and thus any Australian student would be seen in the same way. Some existing stereotypes were also apparent in circumstances where Australian students assumed what Asian students were like. For example, Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang reported that in one lecture they observed that Australian students dominated discussion and they spoke as if no Asian students were there. When some Asian students were about to contribute, a number of Australian students stood up and left the class. Moreover, Lien admitted that it was very difficult to mix with Australian students on campus because both sides looked at each other with unwelcoming eyes. Thus, the participants assumed that many Australian students were not only different from them but also somewhat rude, and consequently they resisted being like them.

So on the one hand, the participants tended to take on identities others created for them, but on the other they resisted. By accepting and assuming differences, it did not mean that they thought of themselves as passive or shy. Instead, they had reasons for not being the same as Australian students, and their being silent or seemingly passive was determined by their Vietnamese values and past and current experiences. Thus, even in circumstances when they might behave like Australian students, particularly in Linh's case, they still perceived differences. In other words, since "difference is not a static, immobile reality, but a discursively constructed set of practices..." (Dolby 2000:902), the participants cor ructed these differences as they went on and experienced a new set of values. These di.. ences influenced the identity formation process and thus created certain identities among them.

5.2.2 The construction of national identity

When the participants identified themselves in relation to Australian students, they, by implication, constructed a Vietnamese national identity. In light of Wodak, de Cillia and Reisigl (1999), I will draw on instances and discursive practices to discuss how national identity was constructed, since the authors argue that "the national identity of individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a national collectivity is manifested, *inter alia*, in their social practices, one of which is discursive practice" (p.29). Also, arguments about identity made by several Vietnamese authors will be employed to interpret the construction of a Vietnamese national identity.

5.2.2.1   Assumption of sameness among Vietnamese students

The participants assumed sameness among Vietnamese students, who inherited a long and rich tradition of respecting teacher and the teaching profession.

> In Vietnam the teacher-student relationships are rather distant compared to those in Australia... The distance is necessary because it defines who is teacher and who is student. It means students show hierarchical respect to teachers. It's not like here in Australia, teachers allow students to "feel free", so students can answer back or even challenge teachers in class. We, Vietnamese students in Australia are still shy and we still behave the way we do in Vietnam...We need to show our respect to senior teachers/predecessors for their effort and dedication to constructing knowledge and teaching us (Chi, individual interview).

> In the educational environment, we often talk about, like what Vy has said earlier, the tradition of respecting teacher and the teaching profession, and like what Kien has mentioned, about teacher as role model. In my understanding, these are traditions of our people... And we need to preserve and promote these traditions

(Linh, group-interview).

We also have the tradition of learning how to behave before learning knowledge. And I think it's as important as respecting teacher and the teaching profession (Vy, group-interview).

They spelt out the word 'tradition', explicitly or implicitly referring to it by reifying how it operated. Among the participants, it seemed that they held a shared understanding of the traditions, particularly Kien, Linh and Vy.

They also assumed that Vietnamese students all perceived and practiced the tradition in similar ways. For example, they reported that they felt happy and rewarded when their former and current students greeted them respectfully both inside and outside the classroom; or they all observed that students at all levels in Vietnam respected teachers.

Regarding teacher-student relationships, many students are very emotionally close to teachers. As you know about our teaching profession, we have different generations of students and they still greet us when they see us in streets although they have already graduated, and many of them are even older than us. It's such a charming and respectful manner, and I feel very happy (Thu, individual interview).

The teacher-student relationships are close and students normally respect teachers (Chi, individual interview).

Students always respect teachers (Trang, individual interview).

Furthermore, they revealed that neither their students in Vietnam answered back to them nor they themselves did so to their lecturers, even when they were in Australian where they were encouraged to ask questions and argue quite freely in class. They paid respect to teachers and only asked worthy questions in lectures. The tradition seemed to hold them back and reminded them that they were Vietnamese.

In Vietnam, the tradition of respecting teachers and the teaching profession, often seen as attributed to the Confucian heritage, is an essential value embedded in moral lessons introduced to students at pre-school and school. Both teachers and students practise it consciously, and then it becomes a built-in quality which the society and its members appreciate and promote. Thus, whoever goes against the tradition is considered disrespectful and rude. It is the tradition that made the participants assume sameness among themselves, and thus create a Vietnamese identity. De Cillia et al., (1999:160-161) termed this means of constructing identity "perpetuation and justification strategies," in which the participants "attempt to maintain, support and reproduce national identities." In this case, the tradition of respecting teachers and the teaching profession was emphasized, advocated and shared among the participants.

5.2.2.2 Highlighting Vietnamese identity by emphasising differences

By emphasising their differences from Australian students, the participants highlighted their Vietnamese identity. They implied they were different and thus they had their own identity, the identity of Vietnamese students. Comments, such as "Aussie students are like that" (Linh) or "studying in Australia is like that" (Trang) or "but here in Australia they ask and ask. They don't care" (Trang) or "it's not like here in Australia" (Chi), gave Australian students a certain identity, and at the same time implied that Vietnamese students were not like that. Thus, an assumed unique Vietnamese identity was constructed, confirmed and made solid as differences were noticed and clearly identified.

5.2.2.3 Assumption of a shared Vietnamese iden..ty

By declaring explicitly that there was a Vietnamese way concerning asking questions, the participants confirmed a practice which they believed to be Vietnamese. Such instances as "but in Vietnam it's very different" (Trang) or "our Vietnamese perceptions are different from theirs" (Trang) suggested that they had in mind an idea of how students performed in the Vietnamese classroom, and they labeled that practice Vietnamese. Particularly, when Trang referred to "our Vietnamese perceptions", she assumed that the other group-mates and myself understood what she meant. She assumed a shared meaning (Hall 1997a) among her Vietnamese peers.

An assumed Vietnamese identity is also evident in Linh's argument in the group-interview with Vy and Kien whether or not to allow students to call teachers by their first names:

> To be honest, for example if a student sends me a letter and salutes me with "Dear Linh", I would feel extremely offended. No matter where we are and who we become we're still Vietnamese and we've had Vietnamese cultural values embedded inside us. Even though we're here [in Australia] we're still Vietnamese and there's no way we can lose our cultural values.

In Linh's argument, Vietnamese cultural values were something 'out there', available and inside her, something immutable that she would never lose, no matter how she grew or developed. By using the word "*lose*" and the expression "there's no way *we* can *lose our* cultural values", Linh assumed that her peers and myself possessed the same values, the Vietnamese ones. Thus, a group solidarity and union was formed. A Vietnamese identity became visible and it was actualised under a name "cultural values".

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It is also clear in Linh's argument that some practices are encoded 'Vietnamese' and some are labelled 'Australian' or 'Western'. Those encoded 'Vietnamese' seemed to have more to do with ethics or morality. Here the Vietnamese identity was not something abstract, but something specific. It was embodied in Linh's identity and it could not tolerate any acts violating such ethics/morality, even though she appeared to be open with her students. She showed a strong commitment to these Vietnamese values, the values that made her a Vietnamese no matter where she was and who she would become. Though she allowed herself to say 'I don't know' to students, she did not allow herself to compromise with their calling her by her first name. This was the very part in her argument where students were not equal to teachers. All of these arguments suggested that Linh selectively chose what to follow and what to avoid. She was open to some practices but conservative on others, and what influenced her decision was her Vietnamese identity, which she strongly stated she would never lose. This gave her a sense of belonging and continuity in her teacher self formation.

5.2.2.4 National identity seen in light of moral and ethical values

I observed that the participants tended to view the question of Vietnamese cultural/national identity in terms of moral and ethical values. This confirms what a number of Vietnamese and western authors (such as Tran Van Giau 1980, Claude Falazzoli 1981, Le Anh Tra 1983, Truong Chinh 1983) have argued and agreed upon (see Tran Ngoc Them 1999). Although each of them gives Vietnamese identity certain qualities, morality and ethical values appear to be their commonality. The debate 'how to preserve Vietnamese cultural/national identity in the context of regionalism and globalisation', which has continued in Vietnam since the early 1990s, shows a great concern about values that are believed to belong to Vietnam only. Among these values, morality and ethics play a central role. While morality is often coupled with behaviour and Eastern or Vietnamese goodness, it is also used as a criterion to judge Western values. Phan Ngoc (1998) expresses his concern about Western influences on Vietnamese culture and identity. He places an emphasis on how Western values may lead to the deconstruction of good traditions, morality and ethics of Vietnamese people. Sharing a similar view with Phan Ngoc (1998), Tran Ngoc Them (1999) observes that together with the adoption of Western advances and modernisation into Vietnam come poor and undesirable Western values and immoral lifestyles. These are the very things

that affect Vietnamese identity. Thus, he insists that it is necessary to both preserve, promote and deepen cultural/national identity.

Since morality and ethics are seen as criteria to differentiate Western and Vietnamese values by many Vietnamese authors and the participants in this study, they become constituents of the construction of national identity. Specifically, in the discussion among the participants and myself, values named include the tradition of respecting teachers and the teaching profession.

5.2.2.5 Linguistic means used to construct national identity

As discussed by Wodak, de Cillia and Reisigl (1999), "we" is a useful linguistic means to indicate sameness, and thus contributes to the construction of national identity. This way of doing so is termed using "constructive strategies" (p.160). The participants also used 'we' to assert their Vietnameseness and national solidarity. If in the beginning Trang gave an example of an Australian student advising her to make up any questions, even ridiculous ones, to ask in lectures, she concluded with "But in Vietnam it's very different. We students often think whether our questions are heavy-weight enough to ask before we ask them." She did not respond to that advice on her behalf but on Vietnamese students' behalf. She assumed sameness among her peers and other Vietnamese students. Instead of saying 'we' alone, Chi said "We Vietnamese students", which included herself and her peers as well: they were all Vietnamese students, (and not teachers), and thus they were the same or at least very similar in the way they asked questions in class.

The adverb of place 'here' was also used by the participants to make distinctions between the Vietnamese way and the Australian one, such as "teachers here" (Linh), "but here in Australia" (Trang and Chi). They implicitly meant 'here things are like that' and 'there things are like this' and 'here is Australia' but 'there is Vietnam'.

5.2.3 Identity as relational

Identity itself, as Dolby and Cornbleth (2001:293) argue, "is a relation – or set of relations and interrelations." Thus, "we see or define ourselves in relation to various individuals and groups, specific life situations and particular contexts" (p.293). This observation is true to what the participants experienced. They presented themselves in different roles and selves and these were related or interrelated. They defined

themselves in relation to other Vietnamese students, other Vietnamese teachers, their students in Vietnam, and Australian students and teachers. Such relations were contextualised, for example, when they were discussing with me in the individual interviews and when they were discussing with each other and with me in group-interviews. With different relations and in different situations, different roles and selves became predominant, forming their multiple identities. The following instances will support this argument.

5.2.3.1 Identifying self by taking on an implicitly positive value

To show that she could fit in the Australian classroom, Linh presented her appropriation of asking questions in lectures. She depicted her own image as an 'active' student, although simultaneously she let her Vietnamese self as a respectful and thoughtful student come into the scene. Clearly, she managed to balance the two selves and could still show that she had some say in the Australian classroom. So her identity as an active and respectful student was established. She described Australian students and through them she positioned herself.

5.2.3.2 Identifying self by submitting to group identity

The first example was seen in Trang's case. Through her peers and through the group discussion, Trang defined herself. When talking about 'students asking questions in lectures' in the group-interview, she tended to speak for her peers as she used 'we'.

> But in Vietnam it's very different. We students often think whether our questions are heavy-weight enough to ask before we ask them... Our Vietnamese perceptions are different from theirs...

She created her image in parallel with her peers' image and at the same time included them in one group, which, she assumed, had similar attitudes towards the matter.

The second example was manifested in how Chi constructed her identities. Chi's identity was established partly through her inclusion of herself with other teachers in Vietnam, whom she saw as having problem with knowledge and thus could not spend more time answering students' questions.

> I've got to admit that we've got problem with knowledge, so if we give students consultation time twice a week, we're not sure whether we can answer all of their questions. With senior teachers at home, they can cope with students' questions, but junior teachers like me, it's not possible. Thus, because of the ego problem, I can't give students more time and opportunities to ask me, because how can I assert myself if I say 'I don't know' to my students' questions?

Clearly, she saw herself in relation to other junior Vietnamese teachers, whom she thought were like her. Also, through her claims about her ego, her identity was constructed.

5.2.3.3 Identifying self through interactions and specific situations

Vy's case demonstrated this argument very clearly. Vy's identity was shaped and reshaped through her conversation with me and through the group discussion with Linh and Kien. In the individual interview, she considered whether she would be 'daring' enough to say 'I don't know' to her students in Vietnam. Although she admitted that saying 'I don't know' was unacceptable for both students and teachers there because it had to do with face and students' respect to teachers, she showed her determination to change:

> Vy: Yes, my perceptions have changed. Now if my student asks me something and I don't know, I will say 'I don't know' although I'll have to 'save all my energy' to say that. And I will tell my students that although I teach Literature, it doesn't mean that I've mastered everything about it. I can learn a lot from you, too. I will be brave to say 'I don't know', not like before when I couldn't say it.
>
> Ha: Do you think of the consequence if you say it?
>
> Vy: When I dare to say it, of course I'll dare to cope with any possible consequences. And if my students don't respect me because of this, I'll have to accept the fact.

However, in the group-interview, she showed more hesitancy and tension and seemed rather sceptical. She appeared less determined and she sought support and assurance from her peers, Kien and Linh. She did not share similar views with Kien and Linh. Since they both were quite positive about saying 'I don't know' to students, Vy challenged them, arguing that students normally had negative attitudes towards teachers who could not answer their questions. She asked how Kien and Linh could cope if they did not satisfy students. She insisted that teachers should be knowledgeable enough to answer students' questions. The feeling of being incompetent before students was her concern. She wanted to be knowledgeable enough to answer all students' questions. She aimed to achieve this rather than to encourage herself to say frankly 'I don't know' to her students. It was a position she was very hesitant to take up. However, after Kien and Linh had reasoned their arguments, she seemed to agree with them on the surface only. Kien claimed that saying 'I don't know' to students was a way to help them too. Linh's argument was that no one knew everything while students had millions of questions. Vy then finally spelt out what she thought:

> Before, now or in the future there's one thing that will never change. That is, in my opinion, teachers should always transmit useful knowledge to students. I've observed that in Australia if teachers don't satisfy students' questions, students accept it easily. But in Vietnam, students expect teachers to answer all their questions. I think it's good because it requires teachers to learn more and more and to develop themselves further.

Through interactions with her peers, she constructed her identity and reshaped it. Moreover, through her viewpoint on what teachers should do in response to students' expectation in Vietnam, she clearly constructed her own identity, which was different from Linh and Kien.

5.2.3.4 Identifying self by acting multiple roles

In Vietnam, the participants were university lecturers of English, but in Australia they were students who were instructed by lecturers. Their status was suddenly reversed, but they did not just see themselves as students. Instead, they were teacher learners, who were trained at a higher level. So, in relation to Australian lecturers, they were both equal in terms of profession and lower in terms of student-teacher relationship. Moreover, while they were considered expert language users in Vietnam, in Australia they were sometimes treated as language learners. These sets of relations influenced their identity formation.

In some cases, the participants presented more as students, for example, when they considered whether or not to ask questions in lectures and when they showed respect to their lecturers. In other cases, they saw themselves more as lecturers of English, who enjoyed an equal status to Australian lecturers. For example, Vy claimed that she did not like the way her lecturer marked her assignments:

> Generally I wasn't satisfied with the way the lecturer corrected my assignments. She even corrected very minor grammatical mistakes and my writing was full of red ink and I think it wasn't necessary although I still got a Distinction.

As a teacher of English, Vy taught her students how to use English and she was the one who corrected her students' grammatical mistakes. But here in Australia, her English was corrected in such a way as if she did not know it well enough. Moreover, she came to Australia to do her further study in teaching English. Thus, she thought she should be treated in a more respectful way. At this point, her identity as a teacher became predominant, although she still performed all duties as a student. Simultaneously, although this way of treatment also suppressed her identity as a good language user, she showed her resistance so as to assert this identity.

5.2.4 Identity fastening and unfastening

As Reed (2001:329) defines it, identity fastening refers to "the work that individuals do to claim insider status for themselves and for others." Meanwhile, "identity unfastening often happens when individuals move from one cultural context into another where the norms and rules for membership are different" (p.329). This metaphor of identity fastening and unfastening proves to be true to the participants in this study. Because of their movement from Vietnam to Australia, the membership rules and regulations became different. Thus, they had to both fasten and unfasten their identities consciously and subconsciously to adjust, belong and grow.

Identity fastening happened when the participants needed to build a way to belong. Where were they in this mixture of values, pedagogical practices, and mismatch of expectations? Where were they when they always had two spaces, Vietnam and Australia, in mind? Where were they when the reality in Vietnam was different from their experiences in Australia? Clearly, they needed a place where they belonged. This caused them consciously and subconsciously to fasten their identities to feel included. Different roles and selves in them gave them different group memberships. They were Vietnamese, Western-trained teachers of English, Vietnamese teachers, and students in Australia. They were individuals Linh, Vy, Thu, Chi, Lien, and Trang, but they were also teachers. These roles and selves were mediated by their existing values, new values and experiences, and by their own desire and reasoning. In each context and situation, one or more membership became dominant or weakened.

Positioned in a new context where their lecturer status was lowly considered and where their Vietnamese identity was threatened, the participants somehow unfastened their identities to fit in with the new environment, to feel included and to explore their own selves. Their exposure to Australia also made them feel their Vietnamese identity stronger, since most of the time they had to rely on it to negotiate new values and practices, and to situate themselves. This gave them a sense of belonging and also maintained the continuity in their self development. But their exposure to Australia made them different from before and disturbed their images of going back and fitting into the Vietnamese context, since they had changed and learnt new things.

But since "fastening and unfastening usually occur simultaneously and in multidimensional ways" (Reed 2001:329), the participants also unfasten their identities

while performing identity fastening. The following instances will exemplify this argument.

5.2.4.1 Asking questions in lectures

Although the participants knew that asking questions in lectures was a good way for students to construct knowledge, it is significant and vital for them to be regarded as teachers who enjoyed a higher status than students and who could not let students 'feel free' to ask any questions in class. For example, Chi insisted on the distance between teachers and students in Vietnam, but also appreciated the friendly environment in Australian classrooms. On the one hand, Linh unfastened her Vietnamese identity by trying to ask questions in lectures to mix with Australian students, but on the other she fastened it by claiming her Vietnameseness as a teacher to confirm that she belonged to the Vietnamese culture, which defines quite strictly the position of teacher and of student.

5.2.4.2 Saying 'I don't know' to students

Realising that saying 'I don't know' to students was perfectly acceptable, the participants still found it hard to do so. It was the face problem that made them hesitant and reluctant. Their identity formation was complicated because of the tensions between what they learnt in Australia and what was required at home. Implementing does not follow from knowing. But also because of this, they created their own identity, labelled 'Western-trained', a hybrid identity, which was always in constant construction and reconstruction. As students in Australia, they appreciated their lecturers for their honesty to say 'I don't know', but as teachers in Vietnam, they found it difficult to do the same thing in front of their students. Thus, they had to negotiate between what they observed in Australia with what they could actually do at home. This process of negotiation occurred when their two sets of values were in conflict. They all seemed to realise a number of advantages of the Australian one but tended to make their decision based on the Vietnamese identity, which gave them a sense of belonging.

5.2.4.3 Identity filters

Reed (2001:330) argues that "when individuals meet they employ a set of identity filters that fasten each other into one category or the other". When the participants were mixed with their Australian classmates, they also used different identity filters to group

themselves into one category and Australian students into the other. One visible identity filter is some difference in the teachers-student relationships. The very open and democratic Australian classroom environment was interpreted as lack of respect by the participants, who came from a highly hierarchical educational system where the role of teachers was well protected by norms of respect. This identity filter of difference is actually better understood as value or respect in the Vietnamese sense. In other words, the participants used their values of behaviour in the educational setting to identify themselves and therefore constructed images of Australian students who possessed different practices.

5.3 How identity formation processes take place: The professional and/or the personal

Since the teaching profession in Vietnam is partly governed by traditions, social norms and ideologies, teacher performance tends to reflect this. The personal and the professional are in constant negotiation with each other. In the interviews with the participants, I also found such negotiation. I found more evidence of compromises than of tensions, however, tensions were there.

The identity formation process within the professional and/or the personal particularly reveals how teacher identity is nurtured, formed, developed and reconstructed. Through discussion with the participants, I noticed a sense of being a Vietnamese teacher and its continuity throughout their professional and self development. This suggests that identity gives one a sense of belonging and connectedness (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c). This also suggests that identity is subject to reconstruction and changing but the process takes place along the lines of existing values and one's sense of self. Thus, in this section I will focus on the discussion of identity and belonging. Also, since the participants tended to identify themselves as teachers, they fastened their identities to claim membership status. Together with their identities defined by social norms and institutional regulations, they constructed their own identities. Arguments about identity fastening and unfastening will be mainly used to support the discussion of identity and belonging.

When the participants discussed issues of the professional and/or the personal, although I noticed two worlds, the professional and the personal, these appeared to be a unitary

and integrated entity within teacher identity, but not two separate selves. These two parts were complementary in the participants' teacher self development.

What I mean by "sense of belonging" here refers more to group membership/insider status/professional identity than merely national identity.

5.3.1 Negotiating teacher identities: how teacher identities are formed

As Reed (2001:329) argues, although "identities are sometimes fastened by laws and conventions, they are also negotiated." In the group-interviews, when the participants discussed how their teacher identity was formed, their points supported Reed's argument. I explicitly asked them to discuss this matter. The data used in this sections were from the group-interviews.

According to Linh, Vy, Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang, teacher identity is mainly formed by ideologies and social norms. They govern teachers' behaviour and performance. More importantly, they define teachers and teachers tend to take on this definition to form their identity. In Vietnam, it is believed that teaching is a noble job. Also, besides knowledge, teachers are respected because of their moral education role and their being good examples in the society.

> In the Vietnamese moral traditions, the images of teachers are closely associated with morality and standard and decent performance. Vietnamese people also have a long tradition of respecting teachers, so I think once we've chosen to become a teacher we'll always try to achieve what the society expects from us and not to do things that have bad impact on our long tradition (Lien).

> I think my teacher self is influenced by the tradition of pedagogy in Vietnam. As teachers, we're viewed differently from others in the society. Thus, we need to be aware and conscious of whatever we do (Trang).

> [Teachers need to have many good qualities to be role models for students], such as sense of responsibility, enthusiasm in whatever circumstance, empathy with students because we used to be students, and so on (Thu).

> I find that teacher identity is formed based on three bases. Firstly, we look at our teachers teaching us, of course excluding bad teachers. Most of our teachers pay close attention to students' performance. I remember they always gave advice to poorly-performed students, warning them that if they didn't concentrate on their study, how they could survive later. So I thought these teachers they gave moral lessons to students and I tended to copy it in my teaching later. Secondly, we observe our own family, how our fathers teach us and how we teach our children. Then I realise everybody needs both knowledge and morality education, and thus I bring this idea into my teacher self. And thirdly, I think teacher identity is also based on our conscience. For example, I've observed that many kids and

teenagers have become so bold/rude in their speech and I want to do something. Thus I want to educate students morally because I care for the future of Vietnam. What if they all became that rude? So, to conclude, teacher identity comes from three dimensions, family, school or teachers, and conscience. But of course it's not true that all teachers teach students morality. Some may claim that what they're paid for is only for teaching knowledge, and students' parents will teach them morality at home. But many others never care about low or high pay. What they care is students' morality because they see it as their job and what they should do (Chi).

I think values attached to teaching are related to many things. Firstly, for example, when I was a pupil, I observed my teachers and I wanted to learn good things from them, like a good sense of responsibility, generosity with and kindness to pupils. And secondly what called social norms, they also influence teacher identity formation. We should follow them and I think it's right to do so. Thirdly, teacher values are influenced by our colleagues' performance, for example we tend to follow their positive acts (Linh).

The participants' perceptions of how teacher identity was formed reminded me of what Chi said toward the end of the group-interview with Thu, Lien and Trang, that "a teacher is a daughter-in-law of a hundred families". Teachers have to please all parties. The following sections also consolidate this metaphor of the image of teachers in Vietnam.

5.3.1.1   The role of morality and conscience in teacher identity

Although the participants either directly or indirectly spelt out the word "morality" and "conscience", they all make their arguments based on these concepts. Being a teacher always accompanies demonstrating morality. Morality here is co-constructed by the society and the tradition of pedagogy in Vietnam. It is also institutionalised by norms, regulations and disciplines set by the teaching profession. Moreover, besides commonsensical norms, morality is variably perceived and practised by teachers and it is thus constantly re-constructed and renewed. This creates the flexibility of the concept and this flexibility explains why Linh, Thu, Lien and Trang gave different perceptions of teacher identity. Also, what makes their perceptions different is what they define as 'conscience'. Conscience is not a separate entity. Instead, it is integrated with morality. Morality and its associated norms influence teachers' acts and behaviour. However, different teachers may come up with different ways of performing conscience. For example, Lien claimed that teachers should not do anything that would bring about bad impact on the teaching profession. Trang argued that teachers should be aware and conscious of whatever they did, since teachers were viewed differently in the society.

Chi explicitly defined what she meant by 'conscience'. She felt it was her responsibility (a teacher's responsibility) to teach morality to students.

5.3.1.2   Assuming a shared teacher identity

From the participants' points, a shared teacher identity was first assumed and then constructed. It seems that teacher identity is 'out there' and 'available' and the participants tended to group themselves under this identity. They all started with 'I' but continued their discussion with 'we'. For example, "so *I* think once *we*'ve chosen to become a teacher *we*'ll always try to achieve what the society expects from *us* ..."(Lien); "*I* think *my* teacher self is... As teachers, *we*'re viewed differently from others in the society. Thus, *we* need to be aware and conscious of whatever *we* do" (Trang); "*I* find that... *we* look at our teachers teaching *us*... *I* think teacher identity is also based on *our* conscience" (Chi); and "*I* think... *We* should follow them [social norms]... Teacher values are influenced by *our* colleagues' performance, for example *we* tend to follow their positive acts" (Linh). They assumed that any Vietnamese teacher would agree with their perceptions of teachers. From their viewpoints, teacher morality and conscience played an essential role in how they defined teachers in Vietnam. These held them together and gave them an identity – teacher identity, which the society had clearly coded and reified in sets of teacher behaviour, performance and lifestyles.

5.3.1.3   Constructing a teacher identity

Together with assuming the identities the society and others constructed for them, the participants also contributed to building teacher identities. They constructed in a sense that they tended to take on those identities by conforming to those 'available' socially constructed teacher values and qualities. Simultaneously, they formed their own group by asserting their teacher identities as well as by excluding those who were not teachers. Their arguments suggested that they [teachers] were different because of their own professional values and their efforts in pursuing teaching. Since the society viewed them differently from others, they tended to create their self-images which were different accordingly. Not only were they different because of social expectations, but they were also different because of how they submitted to those 'available' norms. This strengthens Reed's (2001:329) argument that "identities a . fastened by the categories that we have available and by the ways that we submit · ..rise categories and subject others to them."

5.3.1.4   Negotiating teacher identities: the professional and/or the   personal

Although the participants seemed to perform their teacher roles as socially and institutionally expected, they negotiated their teacher identity as well. This was when the personal wanted to be heard and thus it came to the foreground with the professional.

> But I think my teacher values are greatly formed by my own personality, my own self... If I am a responsible and enthusiastic person, then I can do my job well... Our teachers tend to act on standard norms in the society, but the point is whether we're willing to do it or do it unwillingly (Linh)

> I think teacher identity is also based on our conscience (Chi).

Linh was very clear about her perceptions of teacher values when she explicitly used "I" and "my" to express her viewpoints. She placed an emphasis on the personal, her own personality and her own self. Chi raised the importance of conscience, which, as I have discussed earlier, varies from one teacher to another. Thus, one's conscience and personality tended to play an important role in the teaching profession.

Vy also claimed that her personality played an important part in her teacher identity formation. She said she could not pretend to be a teacher with good qualities while in reality she was not that good. So for her she was confident that she possessed necessary qualities required by a teacher. Her profession reflected her self more so than the other way. However, she later admitted this two-way interdependency.

It was noted in the participants' points that the personal tended to fit in with the professional. Put differently, it seemed that to be teachers they needed certain built-in qualities, such as 'responsible' and 'enthusiastic', which were required by their profession. Although they voiced that their teacher values were partly formed by their personality, their personality happened to be constructed along the lines of their profession. Here it raises a question of what qualities/personality traits one is thought to need to be a good teacher. Again this falls into the category of morality and conscience discussed above. Thus, it seemed that the participants did not have to negotiate their personal at the cost of the professional. The former did not go against the latter. So the participants also constructed their teacher identity based on their personalities which served the benefit of their profession. They fastened their identities to claim their insider status.

5.3.2 Negotiating teacher identities: how the professional colonises the personal

Reed (2001:329) argues that "identity unfastening ... might be perceived as either constructive or destructive from the standpoint of the individual." This proves to be true when the participants judged each other and other teachers based on how the other unfastened their identities.

5.3.2.1 Identity unfastening as destructive

For example, Chi expressed her view of teachers and morality education:

> I find that teacher identity is formed based on three bases. Firstly, we look at our teachers teaching us, of course excluding *bad teachers*... But of course it's not true that all teachers teach students morality. Some may claim that what they're paid for is only for teaching knowledge, and students' parents will teach them morality at home.

"Bad teachers" implies those who have 'bad' morality and behaviour, and those teachers cannot be seen as role models or good examples for other teachers and students. They are seen as unfastening their professional identities in the wrong way.

Another example was also presented in the group-interview. When Kien said he wanted to learn English swear words, Linh and Vy were against him, asking him the rhetorical question "is it how a teacher should be?". They seemed to assume that Kien had unfastened his teacher identities improperly. Also, they seemed to question his identity unfastening: a teacher of English needed to possess rich vocabulary, but swear words should not be learnt, since those words represented a bad image of Vietnamese teachers who were expected to teach students how to behave. They seemed to treat knowing swear words and using them as one single act. I realised they viewed each other as teachers and judged each other's acts based on assumed norms of teachers. Their teacher selves appeared dominant even in such a non-academic situation. This partly helps strengthen and promote images of teachers in the society.

It was clear that those teachers who did not teach students how to behave or wanted to do something against the norms were not viewed as 'standard' teachers. In other words, they were thought of as lacking teacher morality or conscience or as 'out-of-track' teachers. Those teachers unfastened their identities and that act was seen as destructive by Linh, Vy and Chi. Together with employing morality and conscience as "identity

filters" (Reed 2001:330) to group themselves and exclude those who were not teachers, the participants also used the concepts to marginalise 'less standard' teachers.

5.3.2.2   Identity fastening/unfastening as constructive

In contrast, the participants' proactive act of conforming to social norms of teacher values was all agreed upon among them because this act was considered 'constructive'. Examples were found in their debate of how the professional colonised the personal.

Linh admitted that she always saw herself as a teacher, since she met her students everywhere, in markets, at airports and all other places. She clearly described how her personal was influenced by her teaching profession.

> Not only does my personal influence my profession, but also the other way around... It's like I always think that I'm a teacher so I should do this and that, and this gradually becomes part of me... Wherever I am, I feel that people look at me the way they look at a teacher... I tend to be maturer in conversations with others and behave more properly. Yes, it's like that. But I think because I'm myself already a serious person, so I don't find it's changed me into a serious one, but it certainly influences my behaviour... It's made me a calmer person, not as aggressive as I used to be. I also become more patient. Truly it's how the professional influences the personal.

Vy at first claimed that it was not because she was a teacher she had to force herself to act certain ways. However, after having listened to Linh and Kien's points, she realised her behaviour was also influenced by her profession.

> Like Linh, I feel that thanks to my profession I can control myself better in dealing with people. I tend to be calmer... And I also tell myself that I'm a teacher I shouldn't talk without thinking. I should behave like a teacher.

Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang did not spell out explicitly how the professional colonised the personal. However, they implied this in their discussion about how teacher identity was formed, which has just been addressed above.

5.3.3 Concluding ideas

Thus far, we have examined how a Vietnamese identity together with a sense of belonging and connectedness were established and sustained among the participants.

Teaching and its underlying values have been made a tradition and this tradition is passed on from generation to generation. Moreover, the aim of education is to educate people to become good citizens in both knowledge and morality. Teachers themselves are automatically assumed to be role models. Thus, their identity is heavily formed by

external factors that are powerful enough to largely silence their personal voices. But the point is that the teachers in this study chose to act this way because they appeared to appreciate the tradition in most cases.

One question often to be asked is whose morality should be taught to students. That is the morality constructed by the society, embedded in the tradition and manifested in teacher definitions. The society views and judges teachers based on the morality, and the teachers do the same way with themselves and each other. The morality becomes something taken-for-granted and it largely contributes to teacher identity formation. Teachers assume that they need to have certain qualities to be good teachers, among which morality appears dominant. Thus, they train themselves in certain ways and shape their perceptions along these lines. However, this does not suggest that the identity formation process takes place naturally and easily. Rather, it is made a conscious process, in which the common overshadows the personal and the personal is mixed with the common. The degree of mixture between the common and the personal makes teachers different from one another, despite their shared values. Chi might be less controlled by the common while Lien seemed to confine herself to it. Trang, Linh and Vy appeared to be more articulate about the personal while Thu seemed to be more concerned with social norms and regulations. However, their perceptions of the representation of the personal were not the same. If Linh was more concerned with her will, Vy asserted her personality in relation to her job. This observation suggested that individual choice or volition played an influential part in the negotiation between the personal and the professional.

The participants' perceptions of teacher morality and ethics showed the human side of the concepts. They included a good sense of responsibility, love and kindness to students, enthusiasm to the profession, and awareness of moral responsibility to young generations. This is the meaning and value of the Vietnamese educational practices, which the West often misread as 'authoritarian' and 'imposing' (Phan Le Ha 2004). I will discuss this point in detail in the subsequent sections. It is the close association of morality and ethics with teachers' images that gives them an identity. Both the society and the participants fastened their identities and thus gave them an insider status. Also, these values and their negotiation of identities make them Vietnamese teachers, not teachers from Australia for example.

5.4 How identity formation processes take place: the moral guide and/or the teacher of English

When defining themselves as teachers, the participants in the study located themselves under two identity umbrellas: a teacher of English and a Vietnamese teacher. As the former, they wanted to be facilitators and get students involved in communicative activities to improve their English. But as the latter, they also saw themselves as taking responsibility for their students' moral development. So the moral guide walks side by side with the 'facilitator' teacher of English in them, in which the former constitutes an imperative role and the latter means little interference. How the participants accommodated the situation and dealt with the tensions revealed their identity negotiation process, in which identity fastening and unfastening seemed to dominate.

Since this section focuses on the teacher as moral guide and/or the teacher of English, it has much in common with the previous one, where the dichotomy of the personal and/or the professional was discussed. The most noticeable commonality is the role of demonstrating morality in teaching in Vietnam, and how teachers take up this role.

When the participants expressed their opinions about a teacher's role, the role of 'moral guide' appeared equal to the role of knowledge knower or facilitator, and in certain cases, the former even played a more important part. Being a teacher includes being a moral educator. Thus, although the participants were teachers of English, they did not forget their role as moral guide. However, this does not suggest that they performed these two roles separately or they divided themselves into two different parts to fulfil their duties as both teachers of English and Vietnamese teachers. Instead, their constant identity fastening, unfastening and refastening allowed them to harmoniously and efficiently play these dual roles, without doing a disservice to their students and their perceptions of being teachers.

5.4.1 Perceptions of 'moral guide' role

I will now look at the participants' perceptions of 'moral guide'. As Reed (2001) argues, identity fastening occurs as individuals submit to available categories, I will show that the participants defined themselves by both adopting the 'moral guide' role – the identity available to them in Vietnam – and constructing it.

Presenting themselves as both Vietnamese teachers and teachers of English, the participants seemed to emphasise the former role. Teachers in Vietnam often find it necessary and important to educate students morally, no matter what subject they teach. They care for personal development as well as knowledge achievement, and the former is closely associated with morality education. Thus, teachers are moral educators or moral guides. For the participants in this study, being teachers of English did not stop or prevent them from performing their 'moral guide' role, the role that made them Vietnamese teachers.

In the individual interviews, the participants either directed their answers to this matter or developed their answers based on my questions about a teacher's role. They expressed various ways of performing the 'moral guide' role.

Linh saw teachers' 'moral guide' role as showing students what "proper behaviour" was.

> When my students don't behave properly, I'll tell them what proper behaviour is. … Ah, I remember one class they often had private talk. I was quite easy when they had group work, 'no problem', but when someone in the class spoke, others should listen. Yeah, these students, they didn't listen, and in such a situation, I normally interfere. I told them gently that when someone spoke, you should listen to him or her and you should show that you knew how to listen. I used English to tell them that 'if you want to be a good speaker, be a good listener first'. Normally I only educate my students when they don't behave properly. If not, I won't say anything because they're all grown-ups. I mean I don't give them moral lessons but I do tell them how to behave when an incident occurs as I've just mentioned.… When they behave badly I'm willing to tell them that they're wrong and they should do this or that. For example, they should know how to listen to other people because listening is a way of support.

Vy and Thu perceived their 'moral guide' role as introducing students to literary works or reading passages that carried moral lessons, and from those lessons, students would be directed to 'good behaviour'.

> We always select what we teach. We tend to select works that have moral or ethical lessons to teach students. In my subject, after each lesson, I often draw some values or my students and I all draw good things from every work we study. Sometimes we also choose works full of negative images but the purpose of it is to highlight works with positive moral lessons. I mean we introduce both 'bad' and 'good' characters to our students but through the introduction of 'bad' characters, we direct our students to 'good' behaviour in life. I think it's good to do so (Vy).

> Conveying a somewhat like an ethics message to students often occurs in teaching languages because, for example, when we teach them reading or teach them a

story, there is always a moral lesson embedded in the reading or in the story, and students draw their own lessons and I give them some feedback. ... I myself like such readings because I can absorb them as I'm reading, then I present them to my students who often like them too because they think they learn a lot from them... One of the advantages of learning languages is that it's more humanity-oriented (Thu).

Vy gave one example of the selected works, Hamlet, in which her students would have to discuss whether or not Hamlet should take revenge.

Chi explicitly defined herself as a moral educator, who consciously directed students towards good behaviour and proper personality development.

Since I started teaching at university, I've always been aware of my role as somewhat like a moral educator. I often spend my break time to talk with students, listen to them and try to understand their problems and why they behave in such a way... I also tell them stories about how to become a good person. I don't know whether they think of me as a young teacher who likes to teach morality, but I believe that those who listen to me will become better. I tell them such stories to realize them that besides learning English well, they also need to know many other things, like how to behave properly in different social situations. I often teach them such things through the teaching of English. In other words, through my teaching, I also concentrate on moral education and teach them how to become a person with good morality and personality. I think all teachers can do such things... There are so many opportunities to do so through teaching.

Lien clearly defined a teacher as someone who should both 'teach' and 'educate' students (as she used Vietnamese to express this idea 'day' and 'do', I tried to convey it in English although it is not completely equivalent to the original meaning). Thus, she reported that she developed her teacher self in light of this definition. She emphasised the necessity and importance of educating morality to teachers-to-be, since morality was the very quality that could make them good teachers later.

Besides teaching, I want to be close to my students... I know that university students are grownups but many of them still need advice from someone older on how to behave or what to do. And I want to become one of those older people who can give them advice... I always think that a teacher should both teach and educate students, especially those who would later become teachers. They need to be directed. When they're students, they need to follow standards and moral norms. This will make them good teachers in the future...

Trang talked about teacher morality and in her perception, the 'moral guide' role could also involve setting a good example for students.

For me teacher morality is very important, morality towards my university, students and myself... I want to become a good example for my students. I play many roles with them

It is clear that although the participants all talked about morality and the 'moral guide' role, their perceptions were not exactly the same. Each of them performed their roles in their own ways but all were based on shared concepts of morality. They took on the available identity the society and others constructed for them, the 'moral guide', but they also enriched the notion by submitting their own interpretations and enactments to it. Put differently, they contributed to constructing the 'moral guide' role along the line of the morality concept, which I discussed in earlier sections. Here the 'moral guide' role expressed by the participants confirmed the humanist side of morality. Morality was taught through examples, works, experiences and incidents that embodied moral lessons. Teaching morality, as the participants' perceptions suggested, served two main purposes, fulfilling their role as teachers and making their students morally good individuals. They did not teach morality by imposing on students or forcing them to learn it through 'dry' norms. Neither did they feel forced to do it. Instead, they did it as it was a felt responsibility coming from a teacher's morality and conscience.

Their perceptions of the 'moral guide' role suggest a shared identity among Vietnamese teachers. It also confirms their belonging to the Vietnamese community of teachers. The participants taught English, a foreign language accompanied by a foreign culture, but they seemed to develop their teacher selves along the line of the Vietnamese pedagogical culture. They fastened their identities to find a way to belong, as argued by Reed.

5.4.2 Negotiating two identities: the moral guide and/or the teacher of English

As the participants taught English, the participants unfastened their identities to feel they belonged to the community of teachers of English and at the same time fulfilling their 'moral guide' role. This combination allowed them to identify themselves with both groups of teachers and simultaneously constructed their own identity, the identity of Vietnamese teachers of English. I will explore how the participants' enactment of 'moral guide' was incorporated with being a teacher of English, whom they described more or less as 'facilitator'.

All the participants performed their 'moral guide' role through the teaching of English. That means they did not treat their university students as small school pupils, who needed explicit moral lessons. Instead, they maintained an active 'moral guide' role

while performing the 'facilitator' role by shifting and incorporating their multiple identities harmoniously. By doing so, they presented themselves as Vietnamese teachers, who could teach both English and morality well. At the same time, they did not alienate themselves from those teachers of English worldwide, who claimed to know how to teach English most effectively by acting the so-called 'facilitator' role.

5.4.2.1 The teacher of English

The participants viewed the 'facilitator' role in their own way, and their perceptions were not the same as what CLT theories often mean. They did not think that they were imposing on their students or applying the teacher-centred method in an inflexible way to teach English. Following are examples of how they taught their students.

As a teacher of General English, Linh taught first and second-year students, and thus the focus on Grammar was strong. The criticism the West often has towards ELT is that Asian teachers heavily depend on a grammar-translation method giving students almost no chance to speak. But looking at how she taught, it is clear that on the one hand, Linh did introduce grammar rules and structures to her students with thorough explanations and repeated homework, on the other hand she developed activities based on her students' grammatical knowledge to help them master both their linguistic and communicative competences. With first-year students who undertake a subject called 'English Grammar', and whose language proficiencies range from elementary to upper-intermediate or even advanced, teachers normally have to spend the whole lesson revising, explaining or teaching some grammatical structures to make sure that all students can benefit from the teaching. So did Linh. For second-year students, who do not have a Grammar subject, Linh felt she had more flexibility to design her own syllabus and more freedom to create activities for her students. To prove herself as a teacher who is "very flexible" in her teaching methods, Linh gave examples of how she made her grammar lessons more diverse and communicative.

> [When teaching grammar,] I create many activities to get students involved. And these 'communicative-oriented' activities are designed in relation to a specific grammar structure. After these activities, students will have to sum up what has been studied, and based on these they will ask more questions to further their understanding. Other students can help answer, or I can help them if necessary. In general, the way I teach is very flexible (Linh, journal entry).

So even though Linh focused on Grammar when teaching, the way she taught was not "boring" (her own words) or did not lack a communicative orientation as the West may

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assume. Importantly, she offered what her students needed, and was very confident that she always performed at the highest level.

Linh expressed her perception of teaching and what she thought was important when teaching languages. She stated that "I encourage my students to do things by themselves and ask questions instead of 'pouring knowledge into their minds'." To make this stronger, she asserted "I never impose my ideas on my students, I never force them to be for or against anything or never force those who're for to be against or vice versa." For her, she did not impose her ideas for the sake of having "a meaningful argument" in her classes. Linh confidently saw herself as a "very flexible" teacher who "created many activities for [students] to speak and let them speak more." How Linh helped her students in class is an accurate reflection of what she expressed as being her pedagogical role; encouraging students to ask questions helps them to become engaged in "reflective thinking and critical thinking."

As a Literature lecturer, in the individual interview Vy clearly asserted that she liked to be her students' friend, "a facilitator, a companion, but not a controller." She stated that English Literature was not just English. However, she also expressed the idea that students did need a good command of English to study the subject well. Obviously, her subject requires a lot of writing and writing cannot be perfect without good grammar knowledge. Vy emphasised the importance of equipping students with grammatical knowledge prior to and through her Literature teaching, although teaching Grammar was not her focus.

Seeing Literature as having much to do with personal attachment, Vy always reminded her students that not all she said was correct, "I want them to express what they think and feel rather than me standing in the lecturing area imposing them." This is a sign of encouraging students to explore and develop their own voice, particularly in Literature, a world of the soul, the heart and inner thinking. Vy saw her "students' satisfaction" as being "very important." She often gave priority to her students' eagerness to explore knowledge, and this challenges the West's perception of the Other teacher who likes to impose ideas on students. Vy had strong confidence and high self-esteem as a teacher when she stated: "I'm very confident with my way of teaching, and my students really like it."

> [When teaching Literature,] I divide the class into several groups and each group reads one chapter, then each group presents the chapter to the class. By doing so,

all students understand the whole book (Vy, individual interview).

Vy reported that she often encouraged her students to tell her what they thought:

> Why should I be angry with you [if you don't agree with my opinions]? Not everything teachers tell you is correct, particularly in the Literature subject, which requires you to have your own ideas depending on your own feelings and appreciation. You've got your own appreciation (Vy, individual interview).

As a teacher of Morphology, a theory-oriented subject and a compulsory subject included in the final examination, Thu was aware of how she should teach it best to make sure that students could meet the examination's requirements. She described her way of teaching as 'traditional', but also stressed that this traditional method was the very way her subject needed, given a limited time she had to teach it.

> Traditional methods are the very ones morphology teaching needs. Different activities need different methods. For example, because morphology is a difficult subject, I need to lecture a lot and give students time to take notes, and so it's traditional. Moreover, I have a very limited time to teach such a difficult subject, only 30 sessions (each lasts 45 minutes), so I don't have much time for discussion or giving feedback on students' exercises. If I had more time, I would divide students into small groups and each group would study a particular part of the subject, then they would discuss with each other, and I would give them some feedback. It would be interesting to do that way, and it is assumed CLT, if I had more time (Thu, individual interview).

Feeling that she had more freedom in designing her own syllabus, since her subject, which was about cultures, was not the main one, Trang seemed to give her students more chances to explore the subject. She also revealed that the nature of the subject enabled her to diversify class activities.

> [When teaching a cross-cultural subject] I often don't follow any particular textbook. Instead, I introduce students to a number of books needed in the course. In the first lesson, I normally give them an introduction of the subject, and this introduction follows different theme and has some questions. I want students to realise that they will have the chance to explore those themes and answer those questions in the subject. I also want to generate students' interest in the subject by making them more curious about the subject through those themes and questions, since they may ask themselves 'do I know this or that?'. For example, I ask them 'what is the favourite sports of American people?', and students may have different answers, like 'football', 'baseball', and so on. And then I may or may not give them the answer. I draw their attention by telling them that they will have the chance to know the answer while they are learning the subject. I mean I really have to motivate them. I then divide the class into groups and each group is responsible for one topic. And each week as I teach a particular topic, one group presents the topic to the class, then all students will discuss, and ask questions. And then I play the videotape covering the topic to the whole class, ask students questions, let them discuss and withdraw some lessons in comparison with

Vietnam. (Trang, individual interview).

It seemed that the participants knew how to teach their subjects best. Moreover, they appeared to leave necessary space for their students to co-construct knowledge and develop interest in what they were learning. They also seemed to be aware of how they taught, whether they gave students enough discussion time or whether students participated actively enough in class activities, as seen in Thu and Vy's cases. They seemed to be familiar with CLT norms, though they did not explicitly refer to it, except Thu. However, they asserted their optimal ways to teach their own subjects, which did not necessarily reflect the CLT approach, but still benefited their students.

5.4.2.2   The teacher of English and the Vietnamese teacher

As Ellis (1996:215) suggests, in ESL contexts, teachers "act more as a facilitator". But this does not mean EFL teachers do not see themselves as facilitators. What I would like to argue here is that, how these Vietnamese teachers performed "teacher as facilitator" is not necessarily the same as the way their Western counterparts do. When asserting themselves as 'facilitator', they located themselves under two identity umbrellas: a teacher of English and a Vietnamese teacher. In other words, they did 'facilitator' in harmony with their cultural expectations. As a good teacher of English, they wanted to encourage their students to have free and stimulating discussion or to take part in as many language activities as possible for the sake of learning English. But as a good Vietnamese teacher, they also needed to perform their duty as 'behaviour educators' or 'moral guides'. Put differently, they instigated cultural performance, such as politeness, which is not the same as what the West expects.

As discussed in **5.4.1 (Perceptions of moral guide role)**, the participants performed their 'moral guide' role in various ways. Linh used English to direct students towards good behaviour, such as 'if you want to be a good speaker, be a good listener first'. She said she told her students how to behave when she observed that they did something wrong. She did it as if she was teaching them an expression in English which would make them think, but not as an explicit moral lesson. She achieved both aims, teaching English and norms of behaviour.

Vy and Thu performed their teacher roles differently from Linh. Vy proactively selected works with moral or ethical lessons to teach students. Thu let her students raise moral issues from the readings she introduced to them. Then they both gave feedback to

students and helped students aware of moral lessons and what they should follow. In doing so, they were able to teach English and educate students morally.

Chi, even though she explicitly defined herself as a moral educator, did not introduce obvious moral lessons to her students. Instead, she found her own way to incorporate teaching morality with English lessons. She took any possible opportunities in her English teaching to draw students' attention towards moral messages. She made her students realise that English was just one thing, and besides it they also needed so many other things, among which norms of behaviour or morality appeared significant. In other words, knowledge should be accompanied by good personality, and good personality requires good moral education.

As both an "expert knower of the language" and a 'moral guide' ((Kramsch & Sullivan 1996:206), these Vietnamese teachers seemed to have succeeded in providing their students with the knowledge they wanted, without alienating them from their familiar home culture. In other words, they had taken into consideration both the culture of the target language and the culture of the students.

The participants unfastened their identities by making their English lessons a means of conveying moral messages. Instead of making themselves dependent on the so-called 'facilitator' role assumed by CLT theories, they made English serve their purposes. Still, they perceived themselves as good teachers of English and good Vietnamese teachers. They fastened their identities by confirming their 'moral guide' role. They refastened their identities as they invented their own ways of incorporating both English and morality lessons in one.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined processes of identity formation manifested in the three dichotomies, namely the teacher and/or the student, the professional and/or the personal, and the moral guide and/or the teacher of English. These apparently contradictory roles and selves have been explored to understand how these Vietnamese teachers studying TESOL in Australian universities saw themselves as teachers and as individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future.

Though the participants expressed tensions presented in these apparently contradictory roles and selves, they all suggested ways to accommodate these tensions. By fastening, unfastening, and refastening their individual identities, and co-constructing a shared teacher identity, they claimed a professional identity and a national identity, which gave them a sense of belonging and continuity in the development of their teacher selves.

Although they all emphasized differences between Australian students and themselves and stated that they were different, the participants did not isolate themselves in Australian lectures. They tended to keep a certain distance and showed that they were Vietnamese and thus different. However, perceiving differences did not seem to make them as absolutely different from Australians as chalk and cheese. They showed a degree of mixing and adjusting, particularly Linh. Their identities, thus, were reshaped and negotiated within their awareness of differences. Their identities are thus subject to reconstruction but along the line of existing values embedded in them. This may suggest stability but rather it is a sense of connectedness in the fluid negotiation of values. All of these give them a sense of belonging.

Morality plays an important and significant role in the participants' negotiation of identities, particularly when they referred to the second and third dichotomies, the professional and/or the personal, and the moral guide and/or the teacher of English. Morality becomes an identity filter, through which they grouped themselves and others. Their negotiations often came down to their perceptions of morality and how to demonstrate morality, so as to measure one identity up against the other. Although they showed certain resistance to new values as teachers of English, a foreign language, they demonstrated an awareness of such values, which in collaboration with their existing values gave them an identity – Vietnamese teachers of English.

Identity is multiple, constructed and dynamic, as Farrell (2000) argues. Thus, the participants constantly constructed their identities as they went through different stages of the data collection. Their identities continued to be shaped and reshaped, as they negotiated their existing values with other new values. They tended to present themselves through their multiple identities, which seemed to hold on together on the basis of a shared professional and national identity. This suggested a sense of continuity in their identity formation processes, despite the obvious tensions, contradictions and fragmentation they experienced in the movement in space and time between Vietnam and Australia.

The examination of the three dichotomies, particularly the third one, the moral guide and/or the teacher of English, acts as a bridge to Chapter 6, since it partly opens up a new direction of looking at teacher identity formation. In contributing to the disapproval of commonly held Western views about Asian teachers of English, it links to the politics of Self and Other, which will be explored in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 - APPARENTLY CONTRADICTORY ROLES AND SELVES: THE TEACHER AND THE POLITICS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

6.1 Introduction

To achieve the second aim of the research, namely to explore the explanatory power of postcolonial notions of Self and Other in investigating the processes of identity formation, this chapter will answer the following questions: in what ways can postcolonial notions of Self and Other help us understand the processes of identity formation?; and how can we add to these conceptual tools to enrich our understandings in this era of globalization?

Similar conceptual tools used in Chapter 5, such as identity fastening and unfastening, and the notions that construct national identity as a central aspect of identity formation in Vietnam, will be used in a cumulative way to interpret the data. However, in this chapter I will adopt a different approach to look further at the issue of identity formation by using postcolonial theories as another dimension to help understand better the relationship between teacher identity and the politics of ELT.

The notions of teacher identity illustrated in postcolonial theories (Phillipson 1992, Pennycook 1994, 1998) will be re-examined in light of the data obtained from the participants. Issues arising from dichotomies suggested by the data such as native and/or non-native teachers of English, Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained teachers of English, and teacher of English in Vietnam in relation to language, culture and identity will be explored. Furthermore, how the data helped reveal resistance to such dichotomies will also be investigated.

Self and Other discussed here have moved very far from their original images of the coloniser and the colonised. In this study, apart from representing the dichotomy of native and/or non-native teachers of English, they refer to Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English, and teachers of English and/or teachers of Russian. Through their discussion, it was evident how the participants' teacher identity was constructed, shifted, negotiated and reshaped within these dichotomies.

In order to convey the flavour and clear ideas of the participants' stories, I will first let the participants speak for themselves in their own words, then my discussion will follow.

6.2 Vietnamese teacher and/or teacher of English: how are these roles and selves mediated, shaped and reshaped?

The tensions between themselves as Vietnamese teachers and themselves as teachers of English were also apparent in the interviews. As the former, the participants were expected to perform and behave in certain ways, which are socially and culturally appropriate. But as the latter, they were also required to 'do' teacher in ways embedded in the ELT norms. These ways meet one another at some points but contradict in many other points. Moreover, as teachers of English – a global language – they both benefited and were affected by the language and its underlying values. As they were trained in Australia, they were more exposed to English and the norms of ELT. At this point, the politics of ELT is called into question. Whether or not they became more aware of the tensions between their existing teacher values and the values presented to them in their course will be explored. The shift of contexts from Vietnam to Australia also contributed to their awareness.

Thus, together with what has been discussed in Chapter 5 about 'The moral guide role and/or the teacher of English', the following contexts and instances, which cause tensions, will be examined.

6.2.1 The curriculum: English as a global language

In this section, I would like to talk about the politics of Self and Other and the politics of 'English as a global language', presented as a subject in the TESOL Master course introduced to some of the participants. It is not something general, something theoretical or ideological discussed in books, but it is something real that four participants of this study experienced in their classroom in Australia. It is incorporated in the curriculum, pedagogies and classroom interactions. It is clearly presented with powerful and concrete instances given by the participants. Such a sensitive issue like this could only be broached in a group discussion, where the participants supported each other and held on together to assert their professional values and their Vietnamese

identity. Not all of them were equally articulate about the issue, but however resistant or reluctant, they all showed their attitudes, clearly expressing when and how they were affected.

As teachers of English in Vietnam, the participants had a certain position in the society, and they somehow were proud of mastering English, a global language. However, when they faced the issue of English as a global language presented in their Masters course, they realised that they were no longer masters of it. Instead, they were assumed to be its 'servants'. Thus, the tensions between themselves as teachers of English and themselves as Vietnamese became visible. The Vietnamese part in them seemed to win over the other part, the part that made them feel inferior rather than proud of what they taught. Data from the group-interview between Thu, Chi, Lien, Trang and myself were used.

When talking about their TESOL program, these four participants pointed directly to one subject called "English as a global language". Trang saw the subject as problematic. Thu shared her views, admitting that Vietnamese people generally were so tolerant that the participants themselves did not want to criticise the unethical side of the subject. Although they were somewhat aware of unethical performance in their course (as they reported), they found excuses to tolerate it. For example, Lien gave her opinion "if we think our course has some problems of ethics, then it sounds insulting to Australian lecturers." Nevertheless, no matter how hard the participants tried to resist their true feelings, they finally, in the interview, reported on the issue of "English as a global language" and how the subject was presented. Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang all stated that the subject really made them feel uncomfortable and 'hurt' because it boasted of the power and global status of English.

6.2.1.1 Unethical representations of 'Other' in teaching examples

The participants first commented on the lecturer and how she addressed the subject.

> The way she lectures is very untactful. She always gives negative examples of developing countries. So we don't feel easy at all in such lectures (Trang).

> She always gives very negative examples of how English is taught in Vietnam (Chi).

> She only came to a workshop in Hanoi for a few days [in late 1980s or early 1990s], but she has seen everything in Vietnam in a negative way, and her examples of Vietnam are negative, too.... And she generalises everything there in such a negative way.... She never gives any positive examples of other countries (Thu).

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She also uses the word 'barbaric' in her lectures (Chi).

In terms of pedagogy, the lecturer was obviously excluded from the category of what might be considered a good teacher by the participants. Also, she clearly defined herself as belonging to developed countries as opposed to the participants who came from "developing countries" or "barbaric" ones, as they reported the lecturer having said. By emphasising negative examples of how English was taught in Vietnam, she made the participants feel as if their own practices were looked down upon. This helped unite them together as one solid group of Vietnamese teachers, who were non-native teachers of English and all confronted the lecturer, a representative of the other tongue – English. They encouraged each other 'to be prepared' to listen to the lecturer's examples.

> We often tease each other that we should 'get ready' to face her examples about Vietnam. She assumes that the teaching of English in Vietnam has nothing good, all memorisation, not exactly her words but something like that (Lien).

The participants continued to show their disagreement with the lecturer's 'fixed' points of view.

> When she talks about Vietnam, she talks as if what she saw there would never change (Thu).

> And she always affirms that Vietnam or ELT in Vietnam is like this or like that (Lien).

> Because she always stereotypes how English is taught in other countries, we students feel very hurt and this makes us think that teaching is only good in Australia or America (Trang).

The participants seemed to work together to contest the stereotype. On the one hand, as insiders, they knew much better about how English was taught in Vietnam than the lecturer. Moreover, what they said suggested that the teaching of English had changed, and thus the teacher identity had also changed compared to the time the lecturer went to Vietnam. On the other, they teamed up to argue that ELT in Vietnam might not be best but it was not as negative as the lecturer described. It needed to take into account social and cultural factors. They denied the lecturer's assumptions, and by doing it they grouped themselves under a unitary identity. They fastened their identities to find a way to resist the imposition of a negative identity.

6.2.1.2 Unethical representations of 'Other' as teachers

When the participants described how other international students in their classes felt when the issue of English as a global language was presented to them, they revealed unethical issues embedded in the subject.

> She wants to 'advise' us that English is a global language and as we come here to study, we have to learn it, no matter what; and compared to English, other languages are only sub-languages. And the way she lectures is very insulting as one overseas student comments. He says that we come here to learn how to teach English, but not to serve English. Other overseas students feel insulted too. Teaching this subject is like boasting of English-speaking countries' power, implying that other countries are not good, and we would lose our identities one day. So, such a subject shouldn't be taught in TESOL courses.... This subject obviously reflects discrimination (Trang).

Suddenly, the participants were defined as 'servants of English'. Rather than being seen as teachers of English, they were seen as agents who served the benefit of English-speaking countries and English itself as a global language. Moreover, they felt that their mother tongues were suddenly assumed to be sub-languages, acting as subordinate forces besides the bullying growth and flowering of English. However, they did not accept this idea. Instead, they disapproved the introduction of the uncritical focus on 'English as a global language'. As they came to Australia to study different teaching methodologies, they were aware of their roles as teachers of English, but not as 'servants of English' as part of their courses might assume. So, instead of appropriating what had been presented to them, the participants questioned the given knowledge. They confirmed their status as equal and thus disapproved the fixity of representation.

6.2.2 Discussion

6.2.2.1 Identify fastening and unfastening

I can see multiple identities within the participants. Their Vietnamese identity came to the fore while their identity as teacher of English stayed in the background when they together fought against stereotypes about Vietnam. But the latter became stronger when they faced negative examples about ELT in Vietnam. Their identity as non-native teachers of English became predominant when their classmates shared their feelings. Their identity as teachers of English who enjoyed an equal status to teachers from any other country appeared strong when they denied the fixity of representation. The shift in identity seemed to be the same with the participants but they also showed different degrees of being affected by the issue. Trang appeared to be most concerned and

articulate about it while Chi did not often express her views. Rather, she listened and nodded her head. If at first Lien tried to deny the unethical side of the subject, she could not do it anymore after Trang had pinpointed the problem. Although Thu was not the first one who thought of the subject, she then became actively engaged and critical about it.

The nature of group-interviews and open discussions allowed the participants to unveil such a sensitive matter. They felt supported and they could rely on each other to contest the values attached to English. As teachers of English, they might not be sensitive enough to realise such things or they might think of them but might not be brave enough to accept the unethical aspects of their course. But when they talked together, they found themselves stronger and more unified as one group who belonged to a unitary identity. This identity could be a hybrid one, a mixture of their multiple identities, but most importantly it gave them power to assert themselves and criticise their course. The participants constantly fastened and unfastened their identities to create this power, which ran throughout the fluidity of their hybrid identities.

6.2.2.2 Co-constructing a professional identity and a national identity

The tensions between themselves as teachers of English and Vietnamese teachers were seen when the participants assumed themselves as good Vietnamese teachers who did not teach in such an untactful way as their Australian lecturer did. At least they considered both what they taught and how they performed it. Thus, although they were non-native teachers of English, they considered themselves better than a native one who failed to make them love English. They did not appropriate what was given to them because inside them there was another voice wanting to be heard. The voice of the Vietnamese teacher identity did not allow them to adopt such unethical values of English. It also prevented them from seeing Vietnamese as a subordinate language. Hence, although the tensions were not transparent to be seen, their shift of identities helped reveal them.

6.3 Native and/or non-native teacher of English: how are these roles and selves mediated, shaped and reshaped?

The dichotomy between native (NS) and non-native (NNS) teachers of English was both explicit and implied in the perceptions of the participants. When it was explicit, the tensions between these two selves were clear, but when it was implied, there seemed to be no tensions or the tensions transformed into a discussion of the productive nature of differences.

It is often assumed in the literature that there is a clear-cut distinction between non-native and native teachers of English (Phillipson 1992, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 1999), but what the participants of this study reported did not support this view. Rather, they seldom defined themselves based on the dichotomy. They addressed it when I asked them to write about it in their reflective writing and to talk about it in one group-interview. I noticed only one time when several of them indirectly described themselves in relation to native English-speaking teachers.

Whether colonial and postcolonial paradigms of non-native speaker and native speaker affected the way the participants defined themselves, it was found in this study that they constructed their own ways of identifying their teacher selves. They did not actively employ the dichotomy to view themselves in relation to the so-called superiority and inferiority between the former and the latter, as the literature has pointed out (Pennycook 1994, 1998, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 1999). Instead, they viewed the dichotomy in their own ways, which were different from conventional views (Phillipson 1992). The dichotomy was not necessarily seen as 'negative' or 'colonial' or 'deficit'. It was mainly used as 'different' and 'complementary'. From the data, it was also clear that the dichotomy itself did not work sufficiently to understand the complication of identity formation, particularly when the participants shifted their identities.

What did emerge was that the participants clearly defined themselves (and others) in terms of their competence and their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) rather than in relation to their condition as native speakers or non-native speakers. Shulman (1987:8) defines pedagogical content knowledge as a "special amalgam of pedagogy and content".

6.3.1 Seeing the dichotomy not as 'negative' but as 'different'

Before the group-interviews, when I asked them to write about the dark and bright sides of being NNS and NS, the participants appeared to believe that both NNS and NS had weak and strong points. Thus, it was impossible to say which was better. They did not see the other (NS) as the primary object against which they defined themselves. This supports Phillipson's (1992) argument that teachers are made rather than born. Also, this disapproves of the assumption that NS are ideal models for NNS in language teaching and learning, which Carrier (2003) implies (though I assume that the author does not intentionally argue for the implication).

Kien and Linh answered the question, while Vy did it after the group-interviews. Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang did not reply to the question. Linh, Vy and Kien commented on the issue from their own experience as both learners and teachers of English. They clearly defined themselves as non-native teachers of English and different from the native ones. But they did not at all see themselves as inferior to the native. They presented the dichotomy between the two to reveal differences rather than tensions or contradictions. By defining the other, they identified themselves, or their images were constructed through their descriptions of others. This confirms that identity is constructed through difference discussed in Chapter 5.

Linh wrote in both English and Vietnamese:

> Vietnamese teachers of English have the following *advantages*:
>
> - Being bilingual in both English and Vietnamese helps them communicate better with students, and thus helps them understand better underlying messages, requirements, explanations and so on. This is certainly better when English fails to prove its efficient role. L1 is especially important at beginners' level and when advanced students come across complicated notions. L2 often fails to satisfy them, while using L1 saves more time and makes things clearer.
>
> - Knowing students' L1 facilitates student-teacher contact, to a certain extent, because students can be sure that they can let teachers know their problem, by explaining to teachers in L1.
>
> - Moreover, as non-native speakers, teachers also share the same culture with students, the general culture, and thus they can adjust materials/activities to make them more culturally appropriate. Also, if teachers teach L2's culture, they still know which parts needing more focus. Furthermore, they understand their students' learning styles better, for example, some students feel shy to ask questions or take part in speaking activities. Thanks to this, they can think of activities to gradually promote effective learning habits, such as group-work or presentation.

- One more advantage of sharing the same mother tongue with students is that it helps teachers understand better difficulties faced by students when learning L2, since teachers themselves have experienced those. They thus have empathy and understanding for students. One example of difficulties in learning L2 is pronunciation, and teachers tend to know what kind of mistakes students often have, such as l-n, s-sh. They thus have solutions for teaching pronunciation. An example in teaching writing is that teachers know when students write by thinking in English and when they write by translating from Vietnamese.

- There are more advantages, of course; otherwise non-native teachers of English might be fed up with their job. Isn't it true?

Vietnamese teachers of English have the following *disadvantages*:

- They're not able to speak English as fluently as native speakers and of course they can't master the language as the native speakers. This thus causes difficulties in teaching, for example, intonation, rhythm, listening and even pronunciation. In shorts, being a non-native teacher of English causes certain disadvantages in teaching for some teachers. I don't say all teachers because in Vietnam many teachers are extremely good at English and teaching methodologies.

- Another disadvantage is background and culture. Materials used for teaching in Vietnam are mainly written by native speakers. These materials require teachers to have understandings of L1's culture and societies. For example, not all teachers can explain 'first class mail', or they can't explain how 'validating tickets' works if they don't know about the train and tram system in Australia, etc. These things seem to be taken for granted with native teachers of English, because these are part of their life. However, with our teachers, particularly those who don't have many contacts with real-life and authentic materials, media and culture of L2, it's a big difficulty for them.

There may be more disadvantages but I think that's enough for now.

Kien wrote mainly in Vietnamese:

Non-native teachers of English often understand better the difficulties faced by their students because they share L1 with their students. Moreover, they tend to know grammar of the target language better than native speakers. They can explain in L1 if their students don't understand properly in L2. However, their language proficiency is not as good as native teachers' of English.

Native teachers of English have some advantages. Because they teach their mother-tongue, they don't have language difficulties. However, they don't often analyse their grammar as well [as non-native teachers]. They have the advantage with pronunciation. They can also know what is appropriate to say, since they're more familiar with their mother-tongue styles. They also understand their cultures, and they can explain many concepts only existing in English.

Vy wrote in English:

The *bright side* of a native teacher:

- good at 4 macro-skills; have a deep knowledge and understanding of culture and history of his country, so that he will not have any trouble in explaining the language he is teaching; have plenty of experiences and illustration to make his

lectures more vivid and interesting; take less time for preparing vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar.

The *dark side* of a native teacher:

-can not catch up the difficulties that non-native students get involved in their expression, writing or speaking; sometimes there's no understanding between teacher and students due to different culture, different style of living; don't know where and when they need to stop in their lecture to give more explanation to their students.

The dark and bright sides of non-native teachers of English are opposite to what I've mentioned above.

I observed that they all wrote about the issue in a similar manner, in which none saw the dichotomy as a negative criterion to judge who was better. Instead, they pointed out the advantages and disadvantages each possessed, to conclude that being a non-native teacher of English was not necessarily less advantageous. The other also had disadvantages. The overall balance seemed to fall into the question of 'who owns English' and 'who knows how to teach English better', in which, as Kien, Linh and Vy suggested, the NS tended to take over the former, while the NNS seemed to be masters of the latter. This point will be extended further when they discussed the matter in a group-interview. So, the dichotomy in this case proved its positiveness rather than negativeness as shown in the literature; or it has changed into different forms to fit in different cases produced by the complexity of identity formation.

6.3.2 'Who I am' as teacher in parallel with the politics of difference

In the group-interviews later, Kien, Linh and Vy brought into the discussion the notion of "who I am" as teacher in parallel with the politics of difference. They were different from the native teacher of English because English was not their mother tongue, but not because they were non-native teachers of English rather than native ones. They differentiated the language they taught from their profession and professional practices. Speaking English as L1 or L2 was not a matter to make them at all inferior in terms of teaching methodologies. It was the quality and values teachers from both sides owned and practiced that mattered, and superiority in methods did not depend on who they were, native or non native. In fact, these teachers defined themselves more through their pedagogical content knowledge than through their English knowledge alone.

Linh and Kien were consistent with what they had written and further extended their views. Kien stated that there were things Vietnamese teachers could never do as well as native English ones, such as pronunciation. He later added that from a learner's

perspective, he would choose native and non-native English teachers to learn some skills, such as speaking and listening from the former and grammar from the latter. Linh agreed with Kien, while Kien balanced his views, saying that teachers from two sides had both advantages and disadvantages. Linh affirmed what Kien had said. She said it was not because they preferred Vietnamese or Western teach.ʳ, it was because they learnt different things from different teachers.

As teachers of English, the participants admitted that they sometimes lacked confidence about their English. But their lack of confidence, again, resided in the question of 'who owns English'. English was not their mother tongue.

> I sometimes don't have enough confidence about some things but they're only related to language alone. I lack confidence not because I'm a teacher, but because I'm a non-native speaker of English. For example, I can't be sure of intonation or stress in English. But I never compare my teaching methodologies with those of native English teachers (Linh).

> I'm not confident about my intonation and my fluency, but my writing is not at all worse than theirs (Vy).

Kien agreed with Linh and Vy. Despite these disadvantages, the participants affirmed that they were not afraid of teaching speaking and listening to students. They also agreed with each other that native English speakers had better speaking and listening in English, but it did not guarantee that they had a better method to teach these skills. Moreover, they could not train students in TOEFL or IELTS better than Vietnamese teachers because they had never experienced taking these tests.

The participants, in the discussion, apparently defined themselves as non-native speakers of English, but at the same time they were competent teachers of the language. So as speakers, they were non-native, but as teachers, they were equal to native teachers of English, since they all taught English. They marked the difference on 'speakers' instead of 'teachers' of English. They also differentiated the language they taught from their profession and professional practices. They defined themselves in relation to their pedagogical content knowledge.

6.3.3 Being able to speak English at native level versus being an English person

In the group interview, the tensions became visible when the participants discussed whether they ever wished they were a native English teacher. Although they were quite consistent with what they wrote in their reflective writing, instant peer-interactions and

questions raised in the group-interviews teased out feelings and thinking behind their written words.

The participants seemed to have a high self-esteem and they highly valued their images as non-native teachers of English. Particularly, Linh was highly aware of her status. She saw herself equal to a very good university lecturer in Australia. Not all native speakers of English were considered to reach her standard. What she wanted was to possess extremely good academic English, and not all lecturers were a good enough model. Linh's tensions were not only between her Vietnamese self and English, but also between general English and academic English.

> If I ever wished, then as a teacher I only wish that my English were as good as that of an English-speaking academic, but definitely not any native speakers, not any one in the street (Linh).

Kien said he only wished his English were as good as a native English speaker's, but he never wished to become a native speaker. Linh once more confirmed Kien's point and added that she never wished to become an English person, either.

Vy participated in the discussion, saying that she agreed with Linh's point. She only wished her English were perfect but she never wanted to become an English person. Linh again affirmed herself:

> I'm myself and I always want to maintain everything I have in me. I only want my English to be as good as that of, if I have to compare, then a very good university lecturer here [in Australia].

When the participants had to assert themselves as they did in the interviews, it seemed to be a process of re-affirming their right to self-esteem. They clearly wanted their English to be at native level, but they did not desire any other features typically possessed by native speaking teachers. They did not want to change their status and they were confident of their status as Vietnamese and as non-native teachers of English. Being 'an English person' or 'a native speaker' did not necessarily mean 'better' in English and teaching English, and the participants seemed to treat 'being an English person' as something irreconcilable with their selves. I found a strong sense of national identity among them when the participants discussed this matter.

6.3.4 Work quality as the most significant criterion of teachers' performance

The tensions transformed into satisfaction when the participants discussed whether students in Vietnam discriminated between non-native and native teachers of English. By denying the dichotomy as a criterion for judging teachers and by seeing it as a basis to reveal differences between native and non-native teachers of English, the participants made the tensions acceptable, since this helped avoid naming them as 'non-native teachers of English'. Instead, this made teachers equal to each other in terms of status by emphasising the quality of work as among the most significant criteria of teachers' performance.

Although the participants tried to avoid the dichotomy, they still used it, but they used it to assert that it was not the right criterion to judge teachers. For them, quality of work was the most important and thus they did not look at a teacher based on where he/she came from. Instead of using the dichotomy to judge teachers, they offered a different parameter to compare teachers' teaching ability:

> I don't base on the dichotomy to judge teachers. What I'm more concerned about is teachers' personalities and their ways of teaching. I don't generalise. I don't pay attention where they come from and who they are, but I care how they perform and how they teach. That's all (Linh).

Kien did not think that native or non-native teachers were better. For him, whether he liked a native teacher of English, it depended on specific contexts.

Again, the dichotomy of Self and Other did not work here. These teachers did not identify themselves in line with this dichotomy. Specifically, they saw themselves as having equal status with native teachers of English. The dichotomy was not the first and most important matter for them to think of when they identified themselves. For them, all teachers needed to make students appreciate their lessons, no matter who they were. This was the shared thing that both native and non-native teachers of English needed to have so as to be liked by students.

The participants also reported that they had the same attitude towards their lecturers in Australia. They did not treat them differently because they were Anglo or Asian. They all said that work efficiency and quality was more important than who was the teacher, native or non-native. So, the value the participants tended to use to view their lecturers rejected the postcolonial dichotomy of Self and Other, in which the Self is often seen as

superior and more civilised than the Other. This discussion disrupted it and opened up a different way to look at teacher identity formation, a way that takes into account teacher voices comprehensively rather than treating it in such a closed and fixed dichotomy.

6.3.5 *Experiences in Australia disrupting the belief that native teachers are better teachers*

Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang did not write about the dark and bright sides of being a native and non-native English-speaking teacher, but they indirectly spelt it out in individual and group-interviews. Their experiences in Australia helped disrupt their belief that native teachers are better teachers, and thus made their assertion of their identities as Vietnamese teachers of English stronger.

They reported that they had all had pre-assumptions about native teachers of English, specifically Australian lecturers. They had believed Australian lecturers possessed somewhat better, more interesting, more advanced and more communicative-oriented teaching approaches than their counterparts in non-English-speaking countries. This had an impact on their teacher identity formation. They thus reported that they had had a sense of an inferiority complex when comparing themselves with Australian lecturers, although professionally speaking they were all university lecturers. However, when they observed that not all Australian lecturers performed well, while one lecturer originally coming from China was very good, for example, they realised teaching well did not depend on where one came from or what language one spoke as L1.

The participants realised that it was appropriate pedagogical content knowledge that served as a measure for professional identity and a rejection of commonly held views about native and non-native teachers of English. The following examples support this argument.

Although these participants had been encouraged by both their lecturers and their subjects to introduce more Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to their teaching in Vietnam, they remarked that a number of their Australian lecturers themselves did not use 'CLT' in their lectures.

> They only give lectures and we listen and take notes. They sometimes ask questions, but it's mainly teacher-centred (Trang, reflective writing).

Trang expressed what she thought of the lecturer, who had a good education and was in a really good position to teach:

> She's got her PhD, so she should be really good [in terms of knowledge]. And she lectures the 'methodology' subject, which teaches others how to teach, but the way she teaches is so so boring. She reads her lecture notes while students all feel sleepy. Well, she's a native speaker [of English], and she's well-trained, so you can't say that she has difficulties in communication (group-interview).

Lien added, "she has researched a lot too, but..." (group-interview). Trang clarified her observation, "well, she writes her lesson plans very carefully, but it's unbearable to listen to her reading nine pages long. It's obvious that she doesn't have any difficulties with her knowledge or anything, but the way she lectures...." Thu made fun of the way the lecturer taught, "you know, although she reads her lecture notes from the beginning to the end, she still can't finish all, and there are three pages left undone after each lesson. Do you know how much we have to suffer?"

Another example was that Chi used to think that Western teachers were all very good before she commenced her course in Australia, but from what she had experienced in her course, she concluded that "human beings are the same everywhere, have good and bad qualities" (individual interview).

It is obvious that these participants tended to believe that CLT was a better way of teaching and that all Australian lecturers applied CLT in their lectures. However, what they saw in their course led to their conclusion that there were good and bad teachers everywhere, and native teachers did not necessarily mean better teachers, and what mattered was not 'who you are' but 'how you teach'. This helped them realize that native teachers of English were not guaranteed to be better teachers.

The participants in this study did not apply the dichotomy of NS and NNS to define themselves. They referred to the dichotomy to highlight the nature of productive differences between native and non-native teachers of English. They saw appropriate teaching methods and pedagogical content knowledge as the most important criteria to define teachers.

6.4 Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained teacher of English: How are these roles and selves mediated, shaped and reshaped?

This section partly explores the politics of Self and Other, in which I will discuss the participants' processes of identity formation. The notion of Self and Other will be used

very differently from its original meaning, in which Self refers to Western-trained teachers of English, while Other represents non-Western-trained ones. Self also represents Western teachers, while Other stands for Vietnamese ones. My intention is not to create dichotomies. Rather, I aim to employ these notions to draw a more comprehensive picture of identity construction, which contains fluidity, fragmentation, appropriation, resistance, contradiction, conflict, and a sense of national identity and belonging.

6.4.1 Teachers being trained in Australia and/or teachers in Vietnam

Data obtained from the group-interview between Thu, Chi, Lien, Trang and myself, and from individual interviews with Linh and Vy are used in this section.

Although the data disrupted the postcolonial dichotomy of native and non-native teachers of English as discussed earlier, there seemed to be a clear-cut distinction made between Western-trained and non-Western-trained teachers of English, particularly suggested in the group-interview. Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang implied that those teachers who were trained in the West were worthier, and thus better than those trained in Vietnam only. They also implied that non-Western-trained teachers at home would never change the way they taught. This suggested fixity in ELT in Vietnam, and at the same time strengthened the assumption that the introduction of Western-trained teachers and practices would bring about changes and enhancement in language teaching. Moreover, teachers at home were seen as conservative forces who held back the movements of teaching as well as turned a blind eye to changes. Thus, these participants defined themselves as somewhat different from and worthier than their colleagues at home. However, when aligning themselves with Vietnamese teachers, they seemed to merge with them and consider themselves part of the community.

Linh did not at all suggest that Western-trained teachers were better or worthier, while Vy implicitly suggested that those teachers who proposed changes in teaching were mainly trained in the West.

6.4.1.1 Non-cooperation from non-Western-trained colleagues

When Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang discussed how they would apply methods they had learnt in their Masters course in their teaching in Vietnam, they predicted a number of constraints, among which non-cooperation from their colleagues appeared dominant.

They argued that they could not improve and change teaching practices if other teachers did not support them. In their eyes, other teachers were depicted as those who envied Western-trained ones so much that they would probably not support changes.

> We're now trained in Australia, how come they would cooperate with us (Lien).
>
> It's difficult to make changes because the way they look at us would be the same, full of envy (Chi).
>
> It's difficult because how can those who are not trained overseas like us support changes? (Thu).

The dichotomy 'Us' and 'Them' was clear-cut in these statements. Teachers at home were pictured as those who would not cooperate, were full of envy and separated from Western-trained ones. This also suggested that before going to Australia, these participants might also be like those teachers at home. By being exposed to the West, they changed their views, and they distanced themselves from their colleagues in Vietnam. They had absorbed something new and they were no longer the same as they were before. Their colleagues at home might also change, but the participants did not see it and assumed that only they could change thanks to their exposure to new practices and values. No tensions seemed to exist here. Rather, the clear-cut dichotomy appeared to dominate.

Vy also observed that older teachers trained in Vietnam had a fixed viewpoint about language teaching, even though may of them received further training through workshops operated by British Council or other organizations from English-speaking countries.

> They're not open but very sceptical. For them, applying new teaching methods or not doesn't matter. They're very sceptical and they still follow their own way, the traditional method. Although they've attended workshops held by the British Council or Australians or Americans, they don't change their way. I mean they're very sceptical. One of them, an old male teacher in my faculty, voiced to me 'well, you're young and you can act or play with your students. But I'm old now and imagine an old man with grey hair like me jumps and makes jokes in class, it's unacceptable.' I think he has valid reasons (Vy, individual interview).

The politics of identity and difference was clear in Vy's example. By defining others, Vy defined herself and likewise excluded herself from 'Them', who were sceptical and traditional. She also saw their tensions and why they did not welcome changes. Change meant implementing new practices and they could not afford the time and effort to do it, given their familiarity with the existing conventions and their age. It did not mean they denied the advantages of new teaching approaches, but the notion of 'acceptable and

unacceptable behaviour' caused tensions and discouraged them from trying those approaches. Still, face and images of teachers in terms of behaviour appeared extremely important in whether or not to change. By seeing such tensions, Vy was convinced that those teachers had their reasons not to do certain things, but not because they were not trained in the West. Clearly, she was not one of them, and she could not share their feelings, since she did not belong to that group. To assert herself more strongly, she stated that when she grew older, she would develop her own way of adjustment taking into account proper behaviour as well, but this did not mean she would be conservative about changes. So, to some extent, Vy aligned herself with those Vietnamese teachers in terms of behaviour, but presented herself more as Western-trained and one who was eager and open to change. This compromise did not contain tensions; in other words, tensions led to compromises.

6.4.1.2   Social judgements about Western/foreign values

The participants in the group-interview suggested that the society also had its judgements about Western-trained and non-Western-trained teachers, in which the former were highly regarded.

> The society has a different look towards Western-trained teachers. They're regarded more highly than teachers at home (Chi).

However, they were subject to prejudices, too.

> We want to bring about changes because we think changes are good and necessary, but they may think that we like to show off (Lien).

"They" here referred to both the society and teachers at home. Lien's point revealed a social prejudice against those who adopted foreign values and wanted to implement these in Vietnam. Such teachers faced resistance and non-cooperation because they created a clash of values that forced traditional practices to be examined and contested. Teachers at home are the ones who are affected if new teaching techniques are introduced because they will have to adjust. Moreover, changes in teaching methodologies will affect social and cultural values embedded in local teaching practices.

Why the society has prejudices against those who are trained in the West is partly because of the idea that anything hybrid or foreignised tends to have a negative effect on Vietnam. It is due to its long history of contacts with and fighting against the West and its assumption that anything unhealthy or ill-cultured is a result of Western

influence, as is highlighted by Phan Ngoc (1998) and Tran Ngoc Them (1999) in their discussions of the importance of national identity in identity formation for Vietnamese. Western teaching methods are thus not exceptions.

6.4.1.3 Training in the West bringing about broad-mindedness

The participants in the group-interview proposed that after being trained in the West, unlike teachers at home, they became more broad-minded and tended not to take things personally. This suggests a positive change in their performance, and simultaneously implies that other teachers are narrow-minded, closed-minded and easily affected. Trang gave one example:

> I've observed that in my Faculty in Vietnam, after each semester, all teachers have to write a self-evaluation to help them evaluate whether the way they teach is efficient or whether they need to change anything. Those who have been trained overseas find this a normal, impersonal and necessary practice. They want to get feedback from their students too. But those who haven't been trained overseas find this irritating because they explain that self-evaluation is nothing but a way to let students freely express their views. They're afraid that their students will say something negative about their teaching, so they think they will lose their face. So, you now can see clearly that the difference in these two perspectives... Additionally, they don't like class observation at all because they always assume that class observation is mainly for fiercely criticising and thus devaluing each other. So I think it's not easy to change such perceptions in one day or two.

Trang admitted that she used to be like the teachers at home before she came to Australia for training. Chi challenged Trang, stating that class observation was sometimes aimed at fiercely criticising each other. She sourly revealed that teaching well even sometimes attracted unfriendly attitudes from colleagues. However, the participants all said that they wanted to implement changes but not at the cost of causing mismatch between their way and that of teachers at home. They admitted that they did not want to bear too much responsibility, either.

It seems to me that at the surface the participants identified themselves more with Western teachers, who they assumed not to have 'bad' but very 'human' qualities as teachers in Vietnam. Being exposed to a new set of practices, they tended to appropriate new values and build up a new identity, which was labelled "Western-trained". They formed their own circle of Western-trained teachers, by whom they felt they were better understood. At the same time, they seemed to exclude themselves from their previous circle. One might think that they betrayed their own values, but it was more like they tended to view Western values uncritically and superficially. Instead of judging the

pedagogy in Vietnam, they judged the Vietnamese teachers' psychological and impulsive feelings that they saw as rather personal. They noted that this emphasis on the personal was rooted in their society's ways of making judgements.

The reason why Vietnamese teachers feel uneasy to ask students to give feedback on their teaching is partly because of a powerful notion of 'face' given to and taken from teachers according to how well they perform. Losing face to students is a humiliating experience. Meanwhile, Western-trained teachers may feel it much easier to do so, since they are well-labelled as being trained in the West. That means they are assumed to be more open and democratic with students. This also makes students tolerate them more easily because students may benefit much from their teachers' Western-oriented styles. Furthermore, the aim of having class observation in Vietnamese universities is very different from that in Australian ones. If in Australia, teachers have more autonomy in their classrooms and they can decide whether they allow class observation, in Vietnam, teachers have no say if the authority wants their lessons to be observed. So, they feel they are under pressure and tend to see class observation as an instance of criticising each other more so than self-improving their teaching. However, the participants tended to see the idea of getting students' feedback and class observation as related to open-mindedness thanks to being trained in the West.

The participants of this study sought support from one another in such a discussion to strengthen their appropriation and absorption of Western values. They once more confirmed what they had spelt out in the individual interviews with me. My feeling is that they consciously aligned themselves with Western teachers without considering their role in Australia sufficiently. In Australia they were teacher learners but not teachers. Their observation was based on their experience as learners and their engagement with Western ideologies and theories written in books and provided in their lectures. They could not see critically the politics of Australian teachers and what values attached to the Australian pedagogy. Thus, they were more inclined to appropriate what they saw on the surface. Hence, by the time they made their appropriation, they somehow became idealised.

Being exposed to the West resulted in changing these teachers' ways of thinking and ways of doing. This related to their ideology and value changes. The story now becomes more complicated, since teacher training programs have dual effects: changing both teachers' teaching methods and teachers' values and ideology. The construction of

identity takes place in this process of changing. Superficially, it is very tempting to judge that these teachers easily became westernised in many ways. But a closer look at the issue demonstrates that they had been undergoing complicated processes of negotiation. Although they seemed to be eloquent about changes for improvement, they also knew their limitations. In terms of ideology, they might like to be identified with Western teachers. But regarding reality, they showed hesitation to draw a clear-cut border between Western-trained and teachers at home. They were both but they were not either of them in full because they had been trained in two different modes of pedagogies, which present clashing values and practices. They required instant negotiation to mediate between the two to find a place where they belonged.

6.4.2 Vietnamese teachers versus Western teachers

Data from the group-interview between Kien, Linh, Vy and myself are used in this section.

Tensions between themselves as Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained teachers of English were also shown indirectly between themselves as Vietnamese teachers versus Western teachers. If they seemed to suggest a clear-cut distinction between Western-trained and non-Western-trained teachers of English, they tended to deny the dichotomy of Vietnamese teachers and Western ones. Simultaneously, their viewpoints contributed to disrupting the assumption that the West and anything related to it was better. In doing so, they constructed a professional identity as well as a strong Vietnamese national identity.

6.4.2.1 Denying stereotypes about Asian teachers

In the group-interview, I had a feeling that the participants somehow subconsciously created a dichotomy between Vietnamese and Western teachers. It was embedded in their comparisons and judgements about the two. To clarify my feeling, I told Kien, Linh and Vy common stereotypes Westerners often had about Asian students and teachers to explore their perceptions, such as that Asian teachers were mainly knowledge transmitters, authoritarian and imposing, and Asian students were passive. Linh interrupted me and denied those stereotypes. She said:

> It's not like that. I think any generalisation or stereotype is not always true. We need to place them in contexts to justify their reliability. We can't just believe in them naively.

Vy asked me whether those stereotypes were specifically about Vietnamese teachers and students. I told her that they were about Asian students in general and they were very powerful. Then, I decided to challenge them to obtain my aim. I told them that what they had said in the interview seemed to indicate that they indirectly supported the stereotypes and that they might not be aware of it. I gave one example: Linh had said that when she was in Vietnam she created many activities in her teaching and did not know what to name them. When she came to study in Australia, she could theorise what she had done at home. I told her that what she told me applied to anyone and anywhere. I asked her whether she thought that teachers in Australia could all name exactly what teaching activities they used everyday at university. Linh disagreed with me, saying:

> What I meant is general to everybody, no matter what nationalities they have, British, Westerner or American. If one doesn't learn how to teach and one self-learns teaching, then one can only teach impulsively. One can't clarify or theorise what one is doing. One isn't conscious of what values attached to one's ways of teaching, either. For example, one may observe that having group-works encourages students to speak, but one doesn't know the underlying "values" of this activity. That is we respect individual learners and treat them as "potential learners" who can "generate knowledge." These are the underneath values that one can't think of. So I think everybody is the same if they don't study. There is no difference between Asian and Westerner. I think we're not at all inferior to Westerners.

Kien agreed with Linh and then referred to pragmatic reasons, the lack of resources and facilities, to explain why teachers and students in Vietnam could not fully develop their skills.

After the participants had all agreed on the pragmatic reality, I asked them to compare Vietnamese with Western teachers in terms of ability. Linh strongly expressed her views:

> We can't talk about ability because it's very difficult to judge it and because of the fact that people can't show their ability due to a lack of opportunities/chances or some reasons, for example. It's not because they're unable.

Vy confirmed Linh's opinion and admitted that in her university in Vietnam, both teachers' and students' potential were affected by the lack of facilities and resources. Linh further explained that students and teachers in Vietnam could reach higher if they had been better equipped.

Apparently, what the participants had said helped disrupt the commonly held view that Western teachers were better. The participants appeared confident. They did not place

themselves any lower than Western teachers. Also, they seemed to be familiar with stereotypes the West often had towards Asian teachers. They did not get shocked or surprised. Instead, they denied the stereotypes to assert their status. Regarding teacher ability or potential, there was no difference between Vietnamese and Western teachers. The difference fell into how teachers' potential was fostered by facilities and resources. This supports Phillipson's (1992) argument that teachers were made rather than born. This also suggests that the postcolonial dichotomy of Self and Other does not work effectively with how the participants presented themselves.

6.4.2.2 Constructing a professional identity and a national identity

By denying Western stereotypes about Asian teachers and students, the participants implicitly constructed a professional identity and a national identity. Their construction was first based on the difference between 'Us' and 'Them', for example in Linh's expressions "*we* need to place [generalisations or stereotypes] in contexts... *We* can't just believe in *them* [Westerners] naively," or "*we*'re not at all inferior to *Westerners*." Then, the participants constructed their professional and national identities by shifting their generic observations about teachers in general to specifying the situation in Vietnam. They shifted the third person pronoun '*one*' to the first person plural pronoun '*we*' to assume a group solidarity. This can be seen in Linh's case, "if *one* doesn't learn how to teach.... *one* can only teach impulsively. *One* can't clarify... *One* isn't conscious of what values attached to *one's* ways of teaching... I think *we*'re not at all inferior to Westerners." This is also evident in Linh and Kien's views when they specifically used the word '*Vietnam*' as opposite to Australia – a representative of the West, and the word '*our*' to assert a shared identity: "*our* teachers in *Vietnam*... in *our* institutions..." (Linh), and "in *Vietnam*, we.... Whereas in Australia..." (Kien).

By constructing a professional identity and a national identity, the participants indirectly highlighted the difference between themselves as Vietnamese teachers and the Other as Western teachers. However, the difference did not suggest 'deficit' or 'superior' as versus 'inferior' between the two.

6.5 Teacher of English in Vietnam in relation to the politics of language, culture and identity: How are these roles and selves mediated, shaped and reshaped?

In this section, I will explore how the participants defined themselves as teachers of English in relation to the politics of language, culture and identity. Particularly, in the context of English as a global language and Russian having lost its dominant status in Vietnam, I am interested in how languages and politics have influenced teacher identity.

English has given the participants a certain status in Vietnam and it has simultaneously made teachers of Russian 'jobless'. English intrinsically is not to blame but what accompanied it carries issues of ethics. All of the participants began either teaching or learning English in the 90s when English had been establishing its dominance in Vietnam. They all eye-witnessed the decline of Russian and people's eagerness to learn English. Let me take an example from Linh's story to demonstrate it:

> I started learning English in 1989 when I was in grade 10… At that time we didn't have the right to choose what language to learn but we had to kind of play lottery to try our luck. They had plenty of secret ballots in a box and in each ballot they wrote the name of a foreign language. We had to pick a ballot to see what language we would learn. You know I was so nervous when I had to do it that I didn't see clearly what was written in my ballot and I told the person in charge there that it was Russian. Then she read the ballot again and told me "Silly. It isn't Russian. It's English." You know I was so excited that I jumped and shouted and cheered. Yeah, that's how I started learning English (individual interview).

My story with English was somewhat similar to Linh's. Learning English meant opportunity while learning Russian was subject to risk. Thus, those who learnt English felt advantaged while those who learnt Russian became disappointed. Since almost all students wanted to learn English, a 'lottery' game acting as a gate-keeper was set up to make some students learn Russian.

I will talk about the role of English and ELT in Vietnam seen by the participants to first set the scene for language and politics to operate, and then to see the participants' tensions and how they dealt with the tensions.

6.5.1 English and ELT in Vietnam

Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang talked about the role of English and ELT in Vietnam in the group-interview.

6.5.1.1 The important and dominant role of English

The participants first stressed the importance and dominance of English, and then discussed whether learning English was an inevitable and natural choice, and whether Vietnamese people chose to learn it actively or they felt obliged to learn it.

> Compared with Russian and French, English has a higher status. The learning of English has been blooming since the government introduced the reform policy in 1986. Particularly, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Russian became less and less attractive, giving way to English to blossom. However, the learning of English varies according to educational levels. At school level, more and more students learn English, but at tertiary level it has become saturated. Learning English at universities now is more like learning a means to serve other purposes than taking English as a major. More and more students of other majors learn English but the number of English major students is decreasing... The role of English? Why does it have such a dominant status? It's because English-speaking countries have become more and more economically and politically powerful, thus making English a global language. Therefore, Vietnamese people now have the need to go overseas for study, business or cultural exchange. And we need to use English more often. If French and Russian used to be dominant, then English has now replaced them. Knowing English gives one a better chance to get a job (Thu).

> I don't know whether my observation means generalisation or not, but I think learning English is like a social habit. It's not something we do willingly and neither are we forced to learn it. It's like a social habit and we're either forced or feel necessary to learn it. Let's take example of children whose parents want them to learn English when they're only 3 or 4 years old. Yes, they think it's necessary to know a foreign language and English is now the very language their children should learn. Or people in general think they need to learn English because others learn it (Chi).

> I think it's because of socio-cultural changes in Vietnam that makes people want to learn English. During the Vietnam-America war, people had to learn English to communicate or work for Americans, because then the US poured a lot of money in American-Vietnamese associations or the like. After the war, there were still people learning English. But since Russia had won influence throughout Vietnam, people rushed to learn Russian. And then when the former Soviet Union collapsed, they turned to English. Why? Because capitalist countries invest a lot in Vietnam and people see knowing English as an economic advantage. English closely attaches to opportunities. So I think learning English is a result of social reality. I still remember some years ago when Francophone countries invested in Vietnam and offered scholarships for students to study in France, a lot of students chose to learn French as their major. I personally think people choose a foreign language to learn because of underlying benefits rather than their real interest. Vietnam is still a developing country and we tend to choose the language that brings more benefits to us (Trang).

Chi challenged Trang, arguing that what Trang had said constituted in fact a social habit.

Everything including politics, economy or technology is nothing but a social habit, because a social habit is something people become aware of. Besides economic reasons as you've said, there are other reasons too. Not all people learn English to get a good job or to use it at work because not all companies are foreign or joint ventures that need to use English. There are those who learn it to read books, or simply to decorate themselves. It's like a fashion.

After having listened to Trang and Chi, Lien concluded that no matter what reason people had to learn English, it was due to social reality. Lien revised the history of different foreign languages in Vietnam and she concluded that the welcoming of English closely attached to economic development and was suited to the government's current policies. If Vietnam wanted to boost its economy, it must use English because it was the language used by super powers and considered a world language. English was also a means to establish diplomatic relations. Lien said maybe the choice of English was a historical turning point, however she could not predict the future of English. Likewise, Trang affirmed that because Vietnam was still dependent on other countries' investments and support, it needed English to prove its ability to cooperate with its counterparts. Thu concluded it was a common reality worldwide.

Given its dominant and important role, how English was used appropriately in Vietnam was also discussed, when the participants said that English should only be spoken in classrooms. Outside classrooms, it was not proper to use English because others might think speaking English meant showing off or being 'derooted' or foreignised.

So far it is clear that although English is popular and dominant in Vietnam, as the participants said, its presence is only confined to some school corners and a number of companies and businesses. It is also clear that Vietnamese people are so sensitive to socio-cultural changes that they have proper approaches to English. From the discussion, it seems to me that learning English is not something vital in Vietnam despite people's realisation of its dominant status and accompanying benefits. Also, learning English carries problems of ethics and identity formation.

6.5.1.2   The imperative idea of English as a global language

The fact that Chi described people's learning English as a "social habit" in Vietnam proved how powerful and imperative the idea of English as a global language has been. While Trang, Thu and Lien saw it as more attached to pragmatic reasons, Chi perceived it profoundly as a social habit. She saw it as something one was expected to do and something one could even do subconsciously. Her observation suggested that learning

English had become part of social practices in Vietnam. Chi might not agree with this interpretation but her statement clearly embodied it. However, she also viewed the learning of English as "a fashion". This was in conflict with a social habit. A fashion did not live long and would soon be replaced by other fashions, whereas what she and her peers spelt out about the role of English did not support her argument of "a fashion". English was needed for more practical purposes.

6.5.2 Language, culture and identity

The intimate connection of language, culture and identity was both implicit and explicit in Thu, Chi, Lien and Tra 's discussion about English and ELT in Vietnam.

The participants discussed how learning and teaching English had influenced their performance, professional values and personalities. Their discussion confirmed the intimate relationship between language, culture and identity, discussed by Fairclough (1989), Hall (1997a), and Gee (1999).

6.5.2.1 Learning and teaching English change one's identity

The participants suggested that learning and teaching English contributed to changing their performance and thus their identities.

> Teachers in my Faculty used to be commented as somewhat open in the way we dress. They often assume that those who learn foreign languages tend to be open and foreignised. But it's not exactly like that. But from my observation, I find that whenever Faculties of foreign languages have meetings, we don't either sit quietly and formally or criticise one another as other faculties do. Instead, we laugh a lot and make jokes and tell jokes. Why is that? Maybe because we have absorbed some Western culture and tended not to pick out for hostile criticisms among one another. I think definitely there's some kind of influence (Chi).

Trang added, "even our teaching methodologies are more open and casual." Lien made it more explicit:

> English lessons are always more relaxing than other lessons. I don't know whether by saying this I'm in favour of English teachers, but I think that English teachers know how to make their lessons less boring. Of course there are still boring English lessons but less than those in other subjects. In English lessons, students don't have to suffer for hours from listening to lectures. From what I've heard from you all, I know that not only teachers of English in your universities are like that. Same as teachers of English in my university. Their ways of teaching and their performance seem more special.

Lien saw all teachers in her English Faculty as having a good sense of humour. This made students more relaxed and enjoyable. She even saw her learning and teaching of

English change her personality. It helped change her from a serious and quiet person to a cheerful and humorous one. She said she was influenced by her classmates, teachers and colleagues. She felt she could see this influence and change more clearly.

Thu commented that Vietnamese people were often afraid of rumours. They also tended to criticise others. But since she came to Australia, she realised differences between the two practices. In Australia, people looked at two sides of everything and they often respected others' private life so as not to criticise people's ways of living.

What the participants had said showed their belief that English and ELT had brought about more positives than negatives. They affirmed that English and ELT not only helped change their performance such as teaching methodologies but these also converted English teachers' values and personalities. This suggested that the influence was deeper and more serious than it appeared on the surface. This on the one hand rejected Liu's (1998) assertion that learning English did not mean losing one's identity. Once the participants realised that they had been changed, they at the same time realised a hybridity in their values. On the other hand, this confirmed the argument about the relationship between language, culture and identity. How the participants saw English changed their values and practices consolidates Fairclough's (1989) perception of language as social practice. The more we use a language the more familiar it becomes, and the more familiar it becomes the more likely it turns into a social habit.

6.5.2.2   Learning and teaching English: negative influences

Although "learning a language broadens our minds", as Thu stated, and learning and teaching English brought about positive changes, as the participants suggested, they were also concerned with negative influences resulting from their attachment to English.

> I think learning a foreign language is to learn others' culture. And when learning culture, two people have two different viewpoints. For example, if one adopts the foreign culture, he/she will view the one who refuses to adopt it very differently. Neither of them are bad, but one will accuse the other as bad and vice versa the other one will blame one as being foreignised. But no culture is bad or good. For example, if you think both Vietnamese and English values are good and it's necessary to adopt some English values too, but if I am very conservative and blame you as being de-rooted, then? I think these problems do exist. I don't know whether they're good or bad but we do face them when we learn a foreign language (Chi).

> But [the way teachers of English teach and perform, as praised by Lien earlier] could lead to bad habits as well, not necessarily bad habits but definitely there will be teachers who are too open and cross the allowed border. Thus, this is a

shortcoming (Chi).

I told them a story of a teacher who after being trained in an English-speaking country wore shorts to class and often sat on the table to teach students. Chi commented:

> Like I've just said, learning a language means learning its culture. But in many cases, the introduction of foreign cultures isn't accepted in the society. And I think this is the shortcoming of learning a foreign language.

Lien further commented:

> Our educational environment can't accept that way of dressing, so students feel shocked at how that Western-trained teacher changes his way of dressing. That teacher might teach very well and students still respect his knowledge, but his way of dressing reduces students' respect. If he goes out with shorts, it's fine. But it's definitely unacceptable to wear it at university.

Trang shared her views:

> From administrators' perspective, teachers of English are criticised for their casual and undisciplined teaching. We can start earlier and also can finish a lesson sooner than scheduled. We can also plan lessons in our own ways, very different from standard samples. We even organise classes more freely. For all of these, we're assumed to have less sense of discipline and order than teachers of other subjects. Particularly for those who hold traditional views of teachers, they can't accept the teachers of English's performance. Thus, they tend to complain to us rather than try to understand the nature of language teaching. Those English teachers who're trained overseas are even more open in everything. They sometimes sit on tables or do things to show that they've been trained abroad. Some teachers also copy Western teachers' performance from workshops, and then practise it in their teaching.

The participants did show their awareness of how their values and beliefs had changed, and raised issues of inappropriacy in some English teachers' performance. However, they seemed to appropriate new values attached to English and ELT they had absorbed. They criticised the teacher who wore shorts to university but they legitimised their casual and open ways of teaching and dressing, assuming that the nature of language teaching allowed them to have such practices.

6.5.3 Teachers of English in Vietnam

6.5.3.1 Scepticism about the future of being a teacher of English

Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang expressed their concerns about their position as teachers of English in the group-interview. I could see their anxiety and worry, which resulted from their scepticism about the future of English. Although they emphasised the dominance and importance of English, they also observed that English was no longer the only

language needed. English was the top language now but nothing could guarantee its status forever. Thus, their position as teachers of English was threatened. Moreover, they were worried that they only knew English, whereas others in the society knew both English and at least one major. They, hence, became somewhat disadvantaged.

> When I have my children, I want them to learn majors other than English. They will also need to learn English as a means to research. Like myself now, I'm a teacher of English. I know no other majors but only linguistic skills to teach English. If I have to interpret for a conference on Agriculture for instance, I can't do the job as well as a lecturer whose major is Agriculture and also knows English. So I observe that besides teaching, teachers of English can't do any thing. Compared to teachers of other subjects who also know English, they're in a much better position (Lien).

Thu said that teachers of English owned no expertise in other fields. Chi indirectly asserted the role of English teachers by jokingly suggesting the possibility of writing books for EFL. Trang also admitted that recently she felt her position to be not more important than any other professions, when the number of students of English was decreasing. Other faculties now had their own teachers who could teach English for Specific Purposes, whereas these participants could only teach the English language. Lien felt suspicious and doubtful if people showed their admiration for her job as an English teacher. She said it was no longer true. Lien had had unsure feelings of the future even during the heyday. Her experience with and observation of the reality that teachers of Russian were facing scared her and created uncertainties. Trang said although she loved her profession, she could not agree with the assumption that being a teacher of English in Vietnam was more desirable than other jobs. I could feel they grieved over what was far off – the golden era of teachers of English in Vietnam in the early and mid 1990s. As they revealed, even if they had had high self-esteem of their position and often received admiration from the society in those days, they still felt very modest about themselves. Thu related the situation to what was taking place in English language centres in Vietnam. She said those places had become much quieter as compared to the heyday when teachers had to take several classes in the evening. Lien sighed and recalled that there was time when teachers of English had to teach until they were almost "out of breath", but now they had become less in demand.

Although she shared her anxiety and worry with her peers about their position, Chi proposed a positive solution for herself. Chi asserted herself as a pedagogue. If several years ago she thought of doing another degree to meet the society's demand, she now

felt satisfied with her job as a teacher of English. Apart from being a good teacher, she wanted to become a pedagogue and she adored pedagogics. It was her choice and she seemed happy with this conscious decision. She did not and could not compare her job with others' because she believed if she performed her job well, she could survive well too. So, if the other participants seemed to be trapped in their anxiety, scepticism and tensions, Chi seemed to be able to transform the tensions into solutions.

At this stage, I decided to interfere in their discussion by suggesting that even though many people in Vietnam had learnt English, there were only a few people who really mastered it. Thus, teachers of English could still have the status that many others wished to have. This seemed to raise the participants' confidence but they again faced another problem: feeling humble compared with Australian lecturers. Thu and Chi admitted that in Vietnam they saw their position and English relatively good, but when they were in Australia they saw themselves nobody and too small compared to everything there. Chi commented that if in Vietnam they were regarded as having achieved mastery of English, they saw their English proficiency too modestly as they were in an English-speaking country. They then compared what they did at home and what lecturers did in Australia to conclude that at home people thought they were somebody but until they went overseas they realised they were nobody.

I observed that the participants showed their self-assertion quite clearly. Their feelings, moods and attitudes were expressed and exchanged. They did not see themselves as still having a desirable status, in spite of the dominance of English and the triumphant status of ELT. There was a mixed feeling inside them: happy, proud, unsure, worried and empathetic. I could sense their worry about the future of English because like them I had eye-witnessed difficulties teachers of Russian faced when English replaced Russian. The participants now still enjoyed the advantages of being English teachers and they did not want to lose these. They knew for sure that English was still dominant all over the world, but they could not help imagining its bad future. Nothing was absolute, neither was English. Thus, they seemed to lose confidence of orientation. Chi was the only one who seemed to have solutions for that future. While the other teachers felt unsafe because they had no expertise in other fields, Chi clearly demonstrated her way to cope with any kind of future: becoming a pedagogue. She showed strong commitment to her profession and more confidence about her ability.

I also found the participants facing complicated assertions of self. In Vietnam, they no longer felt assured as teachers of English, although their jobs were still very ideal in many people's eyes. In Australia, they also felt lower and humble when they compared their jobs with their counterparts there. Their feelings in Vietnam had more to do with reality, but their feelings in Australia were associated with ideology and representation. They felt inferior and tended to assign a lower status to their values and practices. They subconsciously assumed that Australian teachers who were well facilitated with technology and did all kinds of research were better than them, whose job was teaching English and their English was still inferior. Woodward (1997) argues that one's identity is shaped through one's comparison with others, and this seemed true of the participants. Additionally, their perceptions embodied traits of colonial Self and Other. In Australia, they felt lower because they compared themselves with teachers there. They defined themselves as non-native speakers of English as opposite to native speakers of English. In contrast, in Vietnam they felt better because the subject they taught carried power and those who owned English were made players of the power game. They might not see it but their perceptions suggested how the politics of power in relation to language affected their sense of self.

6.5.3.2   English, ELT and the role of Russian in Vietnam

If earlier the participants implicitly referred to the role of Russian in Vietnam, they now became more explicit, particularly when Trang mentioned Russian teachers' attitudes towards the victory of English and its teachers.

> I don't know about other universities but at my university teachers of Russian fiercely confront teachers of English. There is a teacher who used to publicly declare that she would never ever learn English because she hated it. She said she would rather learn something else than learn English. But the reality in the Faculty of Russian is that there are more teachers than students. Thus, the abovementioned teacher who used to make the declaration and terribly hate English then had to learn English. What if one day we faced the same reality? We aren't feeling assured, are we?

So far the discussion of English and ELT had been connected to the role of Russian and the status of Russian teachers in Vietnam today. Through the words of the participants, I discovered that teachers of Russian disliked and were jealous of teachers of English. The rise of English meant the fall of Russian. Likewise, the more wanted English had become, the more neglected Russian was. Thus, teachers of Russian had lost their status and attached benefits. They fell from the sky to the ground and at the same time were

seeing teachers of English changing their lives overnight. This had confirmed what I said in Chapter Four about how uncomfortable life was for teachers of English before the late 1980s. Obviously, English has contributed to unhealthy treatment of certain groups in the Vietnamese society. English and ELT have lent a hand to creating distance and even confrontation between teachers of different languages. The participants felt empathetic to teachers of Russian and they were also worried about their future, though only vaguely. It seemed that the status of teachers of English was very much driven by political and economic pictures. They suddenly felt unsupported. Teaching and learning a language is no longer neutral or politics free. Rather, it is controlled by forces having power. This confirms Phillipson's (1992) and Pennycook's (1994, 1998) points that English and ELT are not neutral and power free. Teachers of English may have power today but they might lose it one day as happened to teachers of Russian. The participants saw the necessity for others to learn English but at the same time saw it necessary for them to learn other majors. More than anyone else, they knew that knowing English alone was not enough.

6.6   How does the identity formation take place?

This section has so far explored the teacher in relation to the politics of ELT. It has also partly explored how different roles and selves in the teacher have been constantly shifted, mediated, negotiated, shaped and reshaped. Now I would like to use theories of identity, as well as the literature of language, culture and identity to interpret processes of identity formation. The literature on the politics of English and ELT will be used as the context for all the roles and selves to self-present and self-operate. However, this context is subject to revisiting, disruption, confirmation and disconfirmation.

6.6.1 Identity fastening and unfastening

I would like to employ Reed's (2001) metaphor of identity fastening and unfastening to set the context for the participants in this study. *Identity unfastening* is obvious since the participants moved from the Vietnamese cultural context into the Australian one, where the membership norms and rules are different. Thus, their insider status is challenged as well as extended and somehow changed. On the one hand, their moving from Vietnam to Australia challenged their membership status. They defined themselves as teachers of English in Vietnam, who enjoyed a respectable status as teachers who taught English in

the society. They then came to Australia for their Masters degree in TESOL finding themselves losing the status and being marginalised by ELT norms. They suddenly 'became' teachers from underdeveloped and developing countries who possessed backward teaching methods. They were assumed to be 'servants' of English instead of its 'masters'. They were described as the Other, who did not belong to that top circle of teachers of English. As their mother tongue was seen as sub-language compared to English, their status was accordingly subordinate to that of the Self. They were excluded, and thus their insider status was challenged and denied. They were made to see themselves as Vietnamese teachers who found it uneasy to fit in the norms of ELT. They were teachers of English, yet, they were still the Other.

On the other hand, their moving from Vietnam to Australia enabled their membership status to extend and renew. They had opportunities to experience differences, interact with teachers of English from many countries, and question their own teaching methods. Their views had been widened and they became more willing to change, or at least willing to negotiate different practices. They were given the chance to identify different roles and selves embedded in their teacher selves. If in Vietnam they were more concerned with how to mediate between the personal and the professional, and the facilitator and the moral guide, in Australia, they became aware of how they were seen in the ELT norms. They were exposed to dichotomies of Self and Other. They were labelled 'Western-trained' and tended to take a different look at non-Western-trained teachers in Vietnam. Moreover, their exposure to new values and practices enabled them to disrupt the commonly-held view that 'the West is better'. If some of them used to think that Western/Australian lecturers were better, they then realised there were good and bad teachers everywhere. Also, their self-presentation and exposure helped deny the literature of ELT about the native and non-native teachers of English. In this study, the participants did not see the dichotomy as a deficit, or as tensions or contradictions. Instead, they saw it as differences so as to recognise and appreciate diversity in language teaching.

Identity fastening happened as the participants experienced different sets of pedagogic performance, which governed their acts to claim insider status for themselves and others. Before going to Australia, they were members of Vietnamese teachers of English in general. While in Australia and being exposed to new values and practices, they found themselves different from both the Australian and Vietnamese. They suddenly

became non-members of either. But to be included in the circle of teachers of English, they needed to mediate the differences. They had to accommodate so as to fit in the given circumstances. They needed to build a way to belong. Thus, their identity fastening was somehow a conscious and aware act. Through their mediation of tensions discussed above, they were tempted to align themselves with Western teachers in terms of teaching methodologies, but they were inclined to align themselves with Vietnamese teachers in terms of teachers' roles. They grouped with teachers of English from other non-English-speaking countries to form a unitary identity when they felt confronted by discrimination and insulting acts from their Australian lecturer. But when their turn came, they pictured their colleagues in Vietnam with similar images, such as those teachers who always opposed changes and stuck to out-of-date teaching methods. As they claimed insider status for themselves, they did the same thing with others. Others were created through their visions, and as their visions changed, others' images would accordingly change.

Since identities are always subject to being unfastened, as individuals are in constant contacts with new cultural values and norms as they move from one place to another, and are positioned in various contexts, identity fastening and unfastening always take place side-by-side. In other words, they walk hand-in-hand and correlate. But one is also obtained at the cost of the other. As Reed asserts, they "usually occur simultaneously and in multidimensional ways" (p.329). For example, the participants fastened their identities to assert their belonging to the circle of teachers who were trained in Australia, but at the same time still asserted their belonging to the world of teachers in Vietnam who could not tolerate their colleagues' inappropriate self-presentation, such as wearing shorts to classes. They at the same time unfastened their identities to both welcome changes and defend their values, and to both acknowledge their contacts with the West and assert their Vietnamese roles. Additionally, if in the individual interviews, the shift between 'I' and 'we' occurred more often, then in the group-interviews, the 'I' tended to dominate. Challenged and supported by their peers, the participants became both more cautious and critical. To strengthen their points, approve or disapprove, they used 'I' statements (Gee 1999). They shifted from one group to others and found themselves belonging to different but overlapping identities. Thus, their movement between spaces allowed their identity fastening and unfastening to happen, and as they happened, they were subject to constant reshaping and reforming.

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They are part of the ongoing process of identity formation and identity negotiation. However, the arguments about identity fastening and unfastening do not suggest that these processes are fixed. Rather, they are progressive processes.

6.6.2 Identity and difference

I would like to use the discussion of identity and difference to interpret the data obtained from the interviews. Self is constructed through other; or identity is constituted "through the eye of the needle of the other" (Hall 1991:21, cited in Dolby 2000: 901). Thus, for example, when the participants drew a line between Western-trained and non-Western-trained teachers of English, they constructed their identities as they pictured the other. Their identities were shaped through their perceptions of others. By making others, they made selves.

Others here referred to native teachers of English, non-Western-trained teachers of English in Vietnam, and teachers of Russian. All of these will be discussed in close relation to one another, since instances to mark them are overlapping and interwoven. Examples will be taken from all the sections to demonstrate the discussion. In the participants' eyes, native teachers of English were not better than them, but they were different. They had different advantages as well as disadvantages. Their advantages were the participants' disadvantages and vice versa. Thus, both were equal. But the story was not that simple. That the literature of ELT and the politics of Self and Other (Pennycook 1998) were manifested and exemplified in four participants' Masters program caused the participants to question and assert their identities. By doing so, they transformed the dichotomy into difference and diversity. They claimed that difference did not mean deficit or inferiority. But they sometimes were trapped into the dichotomy by seeing themselves as non-native teachers of English instead of teachers of English. That was when the politics of Self and Other took the chance to operate. Moreover, some participants had had pre-assumptions that the native ones were better and they somehow felt inferior. They actively used 'Us' and 'Them' to mark the difference and lowered themselves by seeing their practices as 'traditional' as compared with 'new' Western ones. 'Traditional' did not merely mean conventional but it suggested an unchanged and still status, whereas 'Western' and 'new' implied refreshing, changing and modern. However, their exposure to the West as well as their interaction with their peers in the group-interviews helped disconfirm such pre-assumptions.

When Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang depicted non-Western-trained teachers of English with certain values, they simultaneously drew their own picture. By describing the others as those who were nosy and often took things personally, they implied that they were not so and did not do so. By stating that the others were not open for changes, they implied that they were more open and willing to change things. They were different from when they used to be, and because of their contacts with new practices and values, they were enlightened, whereas their colleagues at home were not. But interestingly, they all denied their similarity to the Vietnamese teacher who were trained overseas and later wore shorts to class in Vietnam. They were different from him because they knew to select appropriate things. By accusing him of being improper and adopting Western practices arbitrarily, they claimed their properness and awareness, and thus asserted a certain identity for themselves. They, at least, did not give away their Vietnamese part and did take cultural differences into consideration.

When the participants indirectly and directly mentioned the declining role of Russian and teachers of Russian in Vietnam, they implicitly suggested the victory of English and a comfortable status of its teachers. They realised that English and the politics of languages had created the difference and differentiated teachers of English and Russian. But they did not realise that they had become part of the politics game, when some of them described teachers of other Faculties as less open, less democratic and more conservative than them – teachers of English, who had been influenced by English and its values. Here they were, teachers of the global language, and here were the 'them', the teachers of the unwanted Russian. This status made the difference, and thus created two different identities under the same umbrella: Vietnamese teachers.

6.6.3 Identity as relational

As Dolby and Combleth (2001:293) observe, "identity itself is a relation - or set of relations and interrelations." Thus, "we see or define ourselves in relation to various individuals and groups, specific life situations and particular contexts." In this view, the participants see and define themselves in relation to teachers in Vietnam, teachers trained overseas, native teachers of English, teacher learner, and teacher of other languages and so on; in specific life situations, such as when they were doing their Masters in Australia; and in particular contexts, for instance, during the interviews or while they were writing their journal entries.

The interviews and journal entries allowed the participants and me to identify and understand their different roles and selves. By talking to me and with each other, they explored themselves and shaped their identities. As Vy admitted, the interviews were the very first time she had the opportunity to express her teacher self. She had never seen herself that clearly. The interviews were instances of identity formation. They thus shaped their identities as they went on in the interviews. They defined themselves by relating to others. They confirmed, disconfirmed, shaped and reshaped certain identities by negotiating with their own selves, with me and with one another. With different relations, they presented different selves and roles. When they had to write journal entries, they presented themselves differently from when they were discussing with me in the interviews. For example, when Kien, Linh and Vy were asked to write about the dark and bright sides of being a non-native and native teacher of English, they seemed to construct their identities based on the assumed dichotomy embedded in the question. But when they discussed this matter in the group-interviews, they did not define themselves in relation to the dichotomy. In specific life situations, such as while they were in Australia, their tensions between the Western-trained and Vietnamese parts became obvious and tended to dominate their identity formation. All of these relations, situations and contexts were intertwined and together influenced their identities.

In relation to Australian lecturers, they were both peers and students. As the former, they also enjoyed the difference of being Vietnamese. As the latter, they were different from Australian students and those coming from other countries. In relation to Vietnamese teachers, they were Vietnamese but Western-trained. Unlike Russian teachers, they were teachers of English, a global language. With different relations, their different identities became visible and stronger.

With me, Vy appeared quite confident, but with Linh and Kien, she seemed reserved and far less assertive. Her identity became 'dim' and hidden, whereas Linh's identity was strong and visible. While Thu did not enthusiastically participate in the group discussion, Trang appeared very active and often took up a critical stance. She was often the one who teased out issues first, and then others started to extend them. Her identity formation seemed smooth and clear, while it was not easy to comment on Thu's identity formation. If Chi and Lien were more enthusiastic in the individual interviews, they became quieter in the group-interview. They presented a different image from what I

had observed the first time I met with them. So, different situations obviously influenced identity formation.

6.6.4 Identity as hybrid

As discussed above, identity unfastening allowed the participants to add something new to their existing values. Seeing themselves no longer the same as they used to be and different from Western teachers, the participants defined themselves as Western-trained, a group incorporating both but not merely reflecting what was included there. Instead, they had their own code for their identity formation, the code that could not be shared by outsiders. But the code itself varied from one participant to another. This process of identity formation applied differently to each participant and adjusted itself according to his or her own circumstances.

The participants' existing values were subject to transformation, examination, confirmation and disconfirmation. Thus, something hybrid was created, but it did not make the participants totally new individuals. Instead, I suggest this process of identity formation works similarly to reconstitution, in which hybrid identities are constantly created and recreated, both consciously and unconsciously, in close association with a sense of continuity and connectedness. For example, when I interviewed Vy for the first time, I found her very eager to implement new teaching methods in her teaching in Vietnam. She tended to adopt what had been presented to her in her course. She seemed to stay away from 'traditional' teachers. But when she was in the group-interviews with Linh and Kien, she became cautious and less eager, seeing herself questioned by her peers. The Vietnamese part seemed to support her and gave her a way to belong. Thus, although the formation of hybrid identities operates as an on-going process, here, at least, it goes along the lines of existing values, which helps maintain continuity in identity formation. As can be seen, hybrid identity is never static, always dynamic, changing, despite the possibility of a thread of continuity.

6.6.5 How the sense of belonging and continuity operates within the notion of identity as multiple, constructed, hybrid and dynamic

Although I agree with the arguments that identity is understood "as a phenomenon that is actively produced and reproduced, instead of as a stable entity that exists before the social world" (Dolby 2000:900), and that identity is constructed, multiple, hybrid and dynamic (Hall 1997a,b, Farrell 2000), I would like to examine how the sense of

belonging and continuity, discussed by Vietnamese and Western authors, operates within these arguments.

Since identity fastening and unfastening take place simultaneously and in multidimensional ways, the sense of belonging and continuity is maintained. Also, that the formation of hybrid identities operates as an on-going process helps sustain existing values as well as causing them to transform and renew. Thus, continuity is guaranteed. Identity is not a stable entity, but rather it is constructed, produced and reproduced. For example, since the interviews acted as a vehicle of identity formation, the participants' identities were constructed on the spot. When I asked them to write about the dark and bright sides of being a non-native teacher of English compared to a native one, I placed them in a certain position to define themselves. This act was a conscious act, whereas their act of constructing teachers of English in Vietnam appeared subconscious but active.

The participants had multiple identities, which were subject to reconstructing and reshaping, since the identity formation was continuously active and could cause any identities to hybridize. Their multiple identities did not appear together, but they took turns to come to the fore when necessary. Some of them might be hidden, and there were always some to be created during the hybridic process. Thus, their multiple identities held on together to maintain the sense of belonging and continuity.

6.6.6 The relationship between language, culture and identity

I would like to specifically employ Hall's (1997a) presentation of the relationship between language and culture to explore how English and ELT contributed to the participants' identity formation. *Firstly*, culture is about "shared meanings" (p.1) and meanings are produced and circulated through language. The "shared meanings" the participants had was their perception of to what extent ELT allowed them to act certain ways and what performance they, teachers of English, could fulfil. These meanings were represented in a shared language called the language of English teachers, including the way they dressed, how they taught and how they saw themselves. Thus, they had their own culture, a small culture surrounded and overlapped by multiple layers of bigger cultures. Within their cultural surroundings, the participants constructed their own identity, which was different from teachers of other subjects. The difference rested in their ability to make their lessons interesting, their sense of humour and their own

discipline and order. Their culture constituted its own set of practices, while their language visualised, conveyed, sensed, illustrated and constantly constructed these practices. More explicitly, their perceptions of themselves as teachers of English were reflected through their presentation, appearance and performance with each other and with teachers belonging to other cultures. However, like other Vietnamese teachers in the society who are influenced by social and cultural contexts, the participants shared values of respect and the concept of acceptable versus unacceptable behaviours so as to set limit for their performance. Although they built their own identity, it was mediated in order not to be rejected. It was their awareness and consciousness to form a hybridity, which was negotiated and renegotiated through their profession, their professional values and local contexts.

Secondly, meanings are constructed through language and socially constructed. The participants' shared meanings were both constructed through their own perceptions and what the society thought of them. As they released, the society and teachers of other subjects often assumed teachers of English were liberated and foreignised. Thus, they tended to take on this assumption and appeared the way others assumed them to be. The language they used then signified their culture and affected it as well. The more positively they saw themselves, the more often they acted their ways, and thus this strengthened and extended their shared meanings. At the same time, since the society is changing and moving, the more they negotiated with local contexts and their professional values, the more they adjusted and negotiated with their culture, keeping it under constant construction. At this point, again it was their consciousness that maintained their attachment to the Vietnamese teacher circle.

Finally, Hall argues that "meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity" (p.3), since we construct meaning as we go on. I could see multiple identities within the participants' overall identity as teachers of English. Their appropriation of being liberated, open and casual and having their own disciplines and order associated more with English, but their resistance to Western behaviour made them closer to a Vietnamese teacher. Moreover, although the participants shared certain meanings and belonged to a certain culture, it does not mean that they were the same. Within their cultural loop, they were different selves. They had different degrees of appropriation and resistance to being influenced by English and ELT. For example, if Thu was very

concerned about changes, suggesting that those changes might become bad habits if one was not aware, then Lien saw her changes as something positive.

From the discussion with the participants, it was clear to me that they subconsciously aligned themselves with Western teachers in many ways. *To begin with*, by contrasting Vietnamese people as often picking to pieces others' shortcomings to indifferent attitudes of Westerners, the participants indirectly suggested that their exposure to the West made them better. Accordingly, by aligning themselves with the West, they became better. They clearly showed that their learning English and coming to Australia gave them the chance to change positively at least in terms of evaluating other people. *Next*, they positioned themselves as opposite to Vietnamese teachers who held traditional viewpoints in teaching. They implicitly assumed that many Vietnamese teachers followed traditional teaching methods, which were seen by them as inflexible, strict and stiff as opposed to their liberated, open, interesting and humorous teaching and performing manner. However, these participants differed themselves from those teachers who adopted unselectively Western values and practised them in their teaching in Vietnam. Also seeing themselves as being somewhat Westernised, the participants drew a line not to cross and created a screen to filter Western values. They really stood in between Westernised teachers like the teacher who wore shorts to teaching and teachers in Vietnam. This is a conscious act of constructing identity containing constant negotiation and renegotiation.

To conclude, the participants' identity formation processes were shaped by tensions, contradiction, fragmentation, fluidity, consistence, accommodation, negotiation and mediation. The Self and the Other were intertwined and correlated. They did not deny each other. The participants often crossed the border to become the Other and got back to be the Self. Their movement between time and space created hybridity, but it maintained the sense of belonging and continuity. Also, their mediation and negotiation of tensions played an essential part in the process. Importantly, not all participants experienced the same tensions. They did not accommodate the tensions similarly, either. This made them different from each other but still belonging to one group, the Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English.

CHAPTER 7 - KIEN

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have explored processes of identity formation in relation to apparently contradictory roles and selves in light of the politics of ELT. Various themes have been taken into account. This chapter, with similar aims but taking a rather different approach, will explore how identity formation takes place at the individual level.

Although all the participants' identity formation processes underwent tensions, contradiction, fragmentation, consistency, fluidity, accommodation, negotiation and mediation, it is not guaranteed that they all experienced the processes in the same way. Hence, it is important to look thoroughly at one participant's experience to get an insight into the processes.

I decided to explore Kien's case for this purpose for the following reasons. *Firstly*, he appeared to take part in the data collection process enthusiastically, both with interviews and written forms. Thus, I had rich data about him. *Secondly*, I observed that in his negotiation of identity he seemed to have more contradictions and fragmentation than the other participants, though he did not show any obvious tensions. *Thirdly*, he often seemed to make spontaneous judgements in the beginning, and then reasoned his judgements as he went on, either after being challenged by his peers or after realising some pragmatic reasons. Put differently, he had his own way to negotiate his identity, which presented more fragmentation than appeared to be the case for the others. *Finally*, despite obvious fragmentation and contradiction, the way Kien's identity was negotiated and shaped demonstrated connectedness and a sense of belonging, which followed a flow of continuity. This is not to say that others did not experience this. However, in Kien's case, the process to express this was complex and thus seemed to deserve close attention.

In Chapter 5 and 6 I explored the participants' processes of identity formation based on themes arising from the data, but I will not apply the same framework to Kien. Instead, I have developed a different framework for him, which has enabled me to grasp and represent more details about the processes of his identity formation. How these

processes took place is told like a story, and I have three stories to tell. Each story places an emphasis on different contexts. Story One looks at Kien's processes of identity formation in a particular one-to-one social context, which is the individual interview with me as the researcher, and in which I focus on the interview as a vehicle for identity formation. Story Two explores these processes in a cultural context with culturally based content. Story Two has two parts. In Part One, the cultural context is Kien's classroom in Vietnam, and the cultural content is a culturally value-laden topic used in Kien's teaching. In Part Two, the cultural context is pubs and bars in Australia, and the cultural content is Vietnamese teacher morality. Story Three investigates these processes in a second kind of social context, in which I focus on the role of multichannel interactions in the process of identity formation, in this case when Kien discussed teachers' roles with his peers in a group interview. These contexts are strong elements in producing identity. This way of story-telling then suggests that identities are shaped by the social and cultural contexts that we experience, and these identities are equally shaped by the contexts within which we express them. At the same time these accounts indicate how identity is shaped dynamically.

As indicated earlier, I will use a different approach to explore Kien's processes of identity formation. To avoid repetition, I will first assume that the theories of identity used in the previous chapters, such as identity fastening and unfastening, and identity and difference all apply to Kien's identity formation processes. Then I will particularly employ the notions of 'appropriation' and 'resistance' discussed in Pennycook (2001) and Gee's (1999) notions of 'cultural models' and 'situated meanings' to better understand Kien's expressed perceptions.

7.2 Story One: How did Kien's processes of identity formation take place in the individual interview with me?

This section exemplifies how Kien's processes of identity formation took place in a social context, and in this case in the individual interview with me as the researcher. I acknowledge that I had known Kien as a friend before he participated in this study. Thus, this interview was somewhat like a conversation between two friends who came from very similar intellectual and professional backgrounds. His trust in me as a friend

enabled him to talk openly and informally, without me having to ask frequently. This contributed to the construction of his identity, in which the interview in effect acted as a site of identity formation, and the researcher became a catalyst in this process. How his identities were shaped as the interview was going on and how I as researcher was actually instrumental in some of this shaping are presented in the form of a story.

The story tells about Kien's experience of studying teaching in Australia after several years of being a teacher in Vietnam. It focuses on his comparisons of teaching and learning styles and the relationship between students and teachers in Australian universities with those in his Vietnamese context. Kien highly appreciated what he had learned from his course in Australia. He saw almost everything in his Masters course as better than what he had undergone in Vietnam. He seemed attracted to the Australian style. However, as the story was being told, his appropriation of, resistance to and reconstitution of new values and practices were also manifested in accordance with his own desires and reasoning. These processes were taking place within a mixture of realities, such as pragmatic factors, Kien's movement in space and time between Vietnam and Australia, and his apparently contradictory roles and selves.

7.2.1 Learning and teaching styles

Kien started his comparison with learning and teaching styles. While comparing these things, Kien was actually defining his position. His experiences in Vietnam were expressed from both a teacher and a student's point of view, whereas his observation in Australia resulted from his being a student there. As a teacher, he saw his students' way of learning as negative and dependent. His point was strengthened when he juxtaposed Vietnamese students with Australian students. He also defined himself as a student in Australia, and he thus saw the value of self-study. He criticised Vietnamese educational practices while appreciating values of Australian independent learning. He appropriated this value and saw it as a good thing he had learnt from his studying experience in Australia. This was a site of hybridity, where Kien found himself equipped with a new and better value as he saw it.

Although Kien seemed to appropriate the Australian way of learning and teaching, his appropriation tended to take place within resistance.

> It is common sense that students in Australia have more self-study; meanwhile our students (both when I was a student and when I am a teacher) find it difficult to

take notes in lectures if a lecturer doesn't read his/her lecture slowly for them to write it down. Our students often wait for lecturers to ask them to take notes. If a lecturer doesn't let students take notes, they don't like him/her because our students often think that having something written down means learning something. And they often fail to take any notes or just have some poorly expressed notes. So when exams come, students normally feel nervous because they have nothing to read, and if a lecturer asks them to read the textbook, they complain that the book is difficult and long to read. Generally speaking, students in Australia have less lecture time but they read more by themselves.

Although Kien was obviously not in favour of the learning habit possessed by students at his university back home, he at the same time gave reasons to excuse the habit, *"because our students often think that having something written down means learning something."* This explanation actually links to his description of how he taught Phonetics:

Whenever I teach a theory subject, I always give examples and analyse these examples to make sure students understand the nature of any question. With 'Phonetics' for example, the important thing is that students have to know pronunciation and be able to do it. According to the way we teach in Vietnam, I often read some important lecture notes, so that my students can take notes. (Writing 1)

Kien's concern about the aims of education, what counts as knowledge, and how one shows one has got it presented more contrasts than consistency. This also demonstrated his resistance while reasoning his appropriation. Regarding pedagogical practices in Vietnam, he criticised the 'passive' and 'dependent' learning habit of students, implying that they possessed little sense of independent learning. But when he moved to describe how he taught, he defended his way of teaching, seeing it as important and necessary. He legitimised his method while still acknowledging the positiveness of training students to be more independent. He apparently wanted to adopt the positiveness of the 'new' way but simultaneously viewed his 'old' way as good and effective. As a student in Australia, Kien had learnt how to be independent with his study, but as a teacher in Vietnam, he also knew how to teach appropriately. His negotiation was 'travelling' between himself as a student and himself as a teacher. Also, it was travelling between his 'here' reality in Australia and his 'there' reality in Vietnam. The space and time made his negotiation more complicated and full of contradictions.

Kien continued to compare teaching styles:

And the teaching style is also different. If in Vietnam, teachers often impose you with their ideas and if you don't follow them you lose your marks, here everything is more open. I can develop my argument in my own way provided

that I can support it well.

Although Kien emphasised the 'difference' between the two teaching and learning styles, what echoed here seemed to reflect his attitudes of appropriation. He showed that he had mastered the 'right' way to pursue knowledge, the way that allowed his individuality to flower.

When talking about teaching styles, he actually provided a cultural model of Vietnamese teachers who were socially and politically expected to transfer ideas to students. Teachers are 'knowledge experts' and 'role models'. For the sake of students and the society, students should be guided to a particular set of moral behaviour or normative attitudes. This has been seen as positive, since teachers – also as gardeners – ideally wanted to 'grow healthy trees' both inwardly and outwardly. This also reveals the importance of the experienced and the old in the society, but at the same time implicitly addresses a concern and belief that the young can only become socially good citizens if they are properly educated and fully guided. This also discourages the development of individualism and personal identities. Therefore, when Kien was a student in Vietnam, he did not have enough freedom to voice his own ideas. He did not realise it until he came and studied in Australia. When he had experienced both, he could compare them. He could clearly see disadvantages of having ideas imposed on him. Thus, when placing the Vietnamese approach next to the Australian one, it is always very tempting to fall in love with the latter because of its openness, freedom and the applause of individualism. Kien was not an exception. As his identity was unchained, his voice and personal creativity could brilliantly blossom.

7.2.2 The relationships between teacher and student

When Kien talked about the relationship between student and teacher in two societies, Vietnam and Australia, his dilemma became clearer. His identities were unfastened, fastened and refastened simultaneously and in a multidimensional way.

He contrasted the 'distant' relationship in Vietnam with the equal and free relationship in Australia. On the one hand, he implicitly showed a preference for the latter. But on the other hand, as a Vietnamese teacher, he found himself caught in social norms that determined how teachers should behave with students. Additionally, Kien revealed the fact that because teachers in Vietnam had to work under financial pressure, it was understandable why they could not spend extra time for students. It was not because

they did not want to help. It was a matter of maintaining their lives. This implied that teachers in Australia worked in far better conditions than those in Vietnam. Kien actually did not criticise Vietnamese teachers for not offering students more time, what he wanted to say was the hardship of being a teacher and the dispute between dedication to teaching and life management. It was obviously difficult to both devote oneself to teaching and work overtime elsewhere to earn one's living. As an insider, Kien understood the situation deeply. However, he still saw the Australian way as desirable, and he implicitly wished teachers in Vietnam could be offered excellent working conditions and sufficient salaries as are their Australian counterparts.

> The relationship between teachers and students in Vietnam is different from that in Australia. Due to Confucianism influences, there is always a distance between students and teachers, except in special cases. Teachers always want to have a distance with students. And so students find it hard to ask teachers about their study. Moreover, in Vietnam our teachers don't spend a lot of time with students because they have to work overtime to earn their livings since their salaries are very low. And if they have to be at uni 4-5 days a week without being paid higher, they can't manage their lives with such low salaries. Meanwhile, Australian teachers normally stay at uni during weekdays and therefore they can spend more time with students. ... So in Vietnam, normally teachers only spend their lecture time with students and I think this is very limited. And if students want to ask a teacher any extra questions, they often ask during breaks. In contrast, in Australia if students want to ask anything, they just need to make an appointment with a teacher in advance, and then they can talk freely with the teacher.

Kien seemed to realise he might have been too critical at first when comparing the two sets of relationships, as he gradually rationalised his criticisms. His views were shaped and reshaped as he was negotiating and reasoning with his own arguments. As he talked more, unprompted, his views were constantly reconstructed.

Kien first referred to Confucianism, a commonly held ideology, to explain the difference between the two. It sounded common sense, since anyone would feel tempted to associate a particular set of practices with a certain ideology. But then when Kien actually gave reasons why Vietnamese teachers could not spend more time with students, he directed his arguments to pragmatic reality. No matter how Confucianism influenced teachers' practices, what they were facing was the reality. Teachers everywhere would act the same way if they had the same reality. As an insider, Kien understood that and he clearly defined himself as a teacher who wanted to devote more to students but at the same time needed to survive. Given this context, even the most

fascinating things generated from the Australian ways would do no good to his situations in Vietnam.

In a sense, Kien liked the idea that students could talk freely with teachers. But at the same time he saw the 'distance' as necessary. However, the degree of 'distance' had been reduced and remeasured from its starting point. As a student in Vietnam, Kien felt the distance and when he became a teacher, he still felt it, but he rather took it for granted without actually thinking of how it might affect his relationships with students. Not until he experienced a new set of teacher-student contact, did he automatically sense the comfort of a student enjoying an informal and equal status with teachers in Australia. He apparently wanted to offer his students a similar comfort and enjoyment while he was talking to me. But he could never separate himself from the reality as a teacher in Vietnam, so he again negotiated with his own desire, whether he would actually bring back something good or he would just do something unwanted; and if it was good, how he would eventually practise it. Would he do it individually with his classes or would he introduce it to other teachers? He finally came to a conclusion "*when you are in Rome, do what the Romans do*." That means he had not yet found a way to do what he wanted without alienating himself from the norm.

When asked whether he still showed respect to his Australian teachers the way he did with his Vietnamese ones, Kien again said, "*do what the Romans do.*"

> I think 'go to Rome and do what the Romans do'. Of course it depends on individuals, but I think here (in Australia) we don't have to show too much respect. And 'respect 'is not just the way you greet your teachers, it is also the way you talk to them, your attitude, etc. It means that you're a student and they're your teachers. I always want other people to respect me and behave properly to me. Of course I don't like my students to call me with my first name as students do here, and therefore I find it impossible to call my teachers in Vietnam with their first names.

Despite Kien's preference for the open and informal teacher-student relationship in Australia, he clearly rejected its appropriacy for Vietnam. He gave the very specific example of calling a teacher by first name. This represents informality and friendliness in Australia but signifies disrespect and impoliteness in Vietnam. As a student, he preferred the Australian way but as a teacher, he felt more comfortable and respected with the Vietnamese way. He did not need to relate this sense of respect to any ideology, but he related it to his own principle, "I don't like my students to call me with my first name as students do [in Australia]."

Kien's preference for the Australian way and his simultaneous rejection of it suggested his awareness of the negotiation process. He tended to visualise the two worlds of 'here' and 'there' at one time and positioned himself as well as his desire. He simultaneously fastened and unfastened his identities. He observed that in Australia students could be equal and rather overfriendly with teachers, but in Vietnam this needed to occur in moderation. He definitely could be friendly with his students and he expected his students to be friendly with him, but moderately and acceptably friendly. He clearly stated "you're a student and they're your teachers", which means students were students, teachers were teachers and they should not be treated as if they were from the same flock. He implied two 'cultural models' here: a student and a teacher in the Vietnamese society. As a teacher, one has certain rights and responsibilities. As a student, one has to follow certain rules of respect. Kien also implied the distance and status between teachers and students, or in other words, between the two hierarchies. So as a teacher although Kien wanted to 'borrow' the Australian relationships between teachers and students (he clearly felt part of such practices as a student), he could not deny his status as a teacher in Vietnam. He was also very explicit about how students should behave to him. He could not be the same as them. He was their teacher and thus he should be treated the way a teacher deserved.

His comparisons and explanations about differences in the teacher-student relationships in the two settings presented his ability to control and adjust. He tended to choose a safe and effective way to perform. So the process of negotiation took place in rather complicated ways here. Kien showed his activeness to select the suitable, reject the unsuitable, and transform them to best serve his context in Vietnam. Put differently, his appropriation and fastening, unfastening and refastening of identities were under his control, taking place in both 'here' and 'there' with him as both a student studying in Australia and a Vietnamese teacher in most cases.

While talking and comparing about learning and teaching styles and the relationship between teacher and student in Vietnam and Australia, Kien was also speculating about how to apply the Australian way to his teaching in Vietnam. He then faced the barriers that caused him to be more realistic.

> If teachers want to implement this style, they must be knowledgeable, not everyone can do that, even here [Australia]... If we want to introduce this style to Vietnam, I think all teachers must follow the Australian teaching methodology. But I think this methodology can't be applied to our universities. I mean ...

> (thinking) ... because it is impossible that all teachers would do it simultaneously, and if only a small number of teachers (Western trained ones) do it, students would feel bored and assume that those teachers don't know how to teach. Let's say while other teachers read their lectures for students to passively write down, we (Western trained ones) on contrast, ask them to read a lot, of course students would complain us. They prefer the other way.

As Kien explained why it was impossible to apply the Australian way to his university in Vietnam, he also showed his resistance. Even though he tried to appropriate this way of teaching, his resistance appeared stronger. He did consider the local circumstances and acknowledged the mismatch of expectations as well as the impracticality and inappropriacy of the Australian way. His explanations revealed his preference for the Australian way but also presented his unwillingness to pursue it.

The most important point is that Kien often tended to criticise ideologies and values embodied in pedagogies before he pointed out that the practices he critiqued were due to the lack of facilities and resources in Vietnam. That meant after negotiating with his reasoning, he always found pragmatic reality the main problem for his teachers and students.

I found Kien always in the process of negotiation with either his own desire or reasoning. His negotiation showed contradictions within his own reasoning. For example, if he began by criticising students for their lack of independent learning, he ended by focussing his criticisms on curriculum and the reality in Vietnam:

> I think one of the reasons why our students can't follow the Australian style is that in Vietnam students have to take so many subjects at one time. They are actually overloaded. In Australia, students have to go to class 3 or 4 times a week but our students go to uni all week from 9am to 5pm. Reading references are available here (Australia) so students can find a lot of books themselves, whereas our students still complain even when they have to read only one textbook. The problem is that our students don't have time for reading because they have to learn too much at school. For example, besides specialized subjects, they have to take irrelevant subjects like maths, geography, etc. When I was a student I didn't have to study those 'crazy' subjects.

It was not because Vietnamese students did not want to read more. It was because they had to study many more subjects than their Australian counterparts. They could not afford time and effort to read more. So instead of blaming students for their dependence, Kien was actually empathetic with them. As a teacher in Vietnam, he understood his students and appreciated their effort. This conflicted with his initial criticisms. It could be explained why this happened. At first, he compared everything in Vietnam with what

he had experienced in Australia and viewed the latter as the standard, so he tended to appropriate the Australian things while criticising the Vietnamese ones. But then, as he went on to compare and criticise, he realised his students were not to blame. They even had to study harder under more pressure of examinations and curriculum. He also realised teachers in Vietnam had the same story. So his views became softened and part of his criticisms turned into empathy. He obviously became less overwhelmed and less overexcited by the Australian way.

It is clear that although Kien applauded the Australian pedagogies, he was also aware of how pleasant yet how unwanted they were to ELT in Vietnam. His conscious awareness was a result of his negotiations with his values, desires and reasoning.

7.2.3 The social context: the effect of the researcher on identity formation

The interview in which Kien displayed his fastening and unfastening of aspects of his identities as teacher and learner was dominated by Kien's enthusiastic and emotive accounts of his experiences. My initial question had been "you've already studied and taught in Vietnam and studied teaching in Australia. Can you tell me about your feelings and experiences on coming back to a students' life?"

The social context of the interview thus invited, implicitly, comparisons between teaching and learning experiences and in different locations. Moreover, because Kien knew I shared his culture and status as a student in Australia, he freely and without further prompting or hesitation, expressed his range of experiences. Little turn-taking was expected in this social situation and few inhibitions or sense of a need for formal explanations seemed to operate in the interview. In this way I feel that the social context of the interview on the one hand elicited the contradictions, unfastening, fastening, appropriation, resistance and negotiation of identity formation and on the other hand gave Kien the freedom to explore his ideas and emotions through reasoning and to express his own uninterrupted accounts of these different moments in his life as teacher and learner.

7.3 Story Two: How did Kien's processes of identity formation relate to a specific cultural context and content?

This story tells about how Kien's processes of identity formation related to a specific cultural context and content. In other words, it explores how cultural contexts and contents shape identity formation while taking into account processes of identity fastening, unfastening and refastening.

This story has two parts. Part One presents one example of how Kien's identities were negotiated in the cultural context of Vietnam where he taught English to his students. Part Two demonstrates how his identities were shaped in the cultural context of Australia where he, as a Vietnamese teacher, was exposed to Western values. Specifically, how he negotiated his teacher morality in relation to the act of going to pubs and bars in Australia is discussed.

7.3.1 Part One

In Story One, it is clear that Kien was very much attracted to the Australian way of teaching, although he always negotiated this attraction with his own reasoning, values, pragmatic factors, and multiple roles and selves. When he described how he taught English to his students in the cultural context of Vietnam, Kien showed a strong commitment to his Vietnamese teacher role, which overshadowed other identities seen in him in other contexts.

He stated in the individual interview that certain topics should not be open for enthusiastic discussion in the classroom. I thus asked him how he dealt with topics relating to 'romance/love', for example. He expressed his opinions:

> Yeah, it's rather sensitive and quite personal when talking about love because our students often don't feel open to talk about it. It's because in Vietnam people often takes things personally and cares about others' life, so if one says something, others will assume that one's lifestyle is like this or that. I'm myself like that too. If a student in my class talks enthusiastically about love, of course other students will think 'she/he is too open, too easy or too hot, so adventurous, etc'. And I may also think the same way about the student. If in Australia, people easily say what they think about love and others don't judge their personalities, in Vietnam it's different. They care what you say and then relate it to your personality. I think because love is something normal, something open in Australia, so people don't care. But in Vietnam, it's still not that open.

Kien's identity fastening, unfastening and refastening was evident in the conflict between himself as a teacher of English and himself as a Vietnamese teacher. The conflict was manifested in his awareness of incorporating culture with language in both content and appearance. In other words, he took account of contexts and mediated the global with the local. Interestingly, he located himself quite clearly in the negotiation between the local and the target language's cultural appropriateness. On the one hand, he knew for sure that participating in a discussion about 'love' in an English lesson had nothing to do with one's own personality or life styles. On the other, he still fell into the trap of judging others if they did discuss 'love' with enthusiasm or approached the topic from a different point of view, the view that was not approved by the majority. Still, he felt the majority was the winner and the right, although the minority was not necessarily wrong nor did it lack moral input. The problem often lay in the way the society thinks and expects its citizens to behave, and Kien was caught up in this. In the group-interview with Linh and Vy, Kien reinforced this notion that he was heavily affected by what he believed society expects of teachers. When discussing with Linh and Vy the pressures society placed on teachers, Kien was adamant that teachers should not fall in love with students, at least openly. It should be noted here that there is no law or regulation in Vietnam that forbids teachers to fall in love with students at tertiary level. It was Kien who claimed that teachers should not fall in love with students to avoid social judgements or rumours that placed pressure on teachers' personal lives.

Kien's expression about the way he dealt with the topic 'love' in his class called into question the "life styles" which have a great influence on the Vietnamese classroom. Truly, what happens in the classroom reflects what happens in the society, or the former is a zoomed-out picture of the latter. So the Vietnamese teacher in Kien was more attached with the society than the English part. English was just the language in which he and his students talked about the notion of 'love' accepted in the Vietnamese society. Even though English was considered the language of "more open" societies, discussion in English in the Vietnamese classroom could not neglect Vietnamese social norms. Thus, the language could not be used as a mask to get away with personal judgements and social prejudices. This was the conflict of identity that Kien faced. He had to bargain between English – the language he taught – and Vietnamese – the society he lived in. So he performed two duties, those of a teacher of English and a Vietnamese teacher. As the former, he enabled his students to have open discussion so they could

practise English. But as the latter, he was both expected and chose to set the limit of 'openness' because he himself could not separate his way of thinking from judging students in an English class. His identity was negotiated and then defined as developing along the line of a 'core' Vietnameseness, to which he belonged.

It appears that Kien's focus on a single cultural context and value-laden content affected the balance in the contradictory identities he expressed. His emphasis on his Vietnamese teacher identity seems a result of his focus on a particularly culturally value-laden topic – that of 'love' – as a theme for teaching in a Vietnamese classroom. Thus once again, the content of discussion within the interview context and the broader contexts of the two educational cultures affected the ways he talked about his identity.

7.3.2 Part Two

Studying in Australia, Kien was exposed to Western values and practices, many of which were totally different from what he had experienced in Vietnam. Was he fascinated by these new things? Was he trying to stop himself from being westernised? Was he negotiating with himself on what to follow and what to stay away? In one conversation with me when I wanted to clarify some of his points relating to the issue of teacher morality, Kien talked about nightclubs and pubs in Australia and what those places had to do with teacher morality.

Kien showed his curiosity about pubs and bars, since he had only vague ideas what they were like. Yet, at the same time he made up his mind not to have those experiences.

> Sometimes I also wanted to go to a nightclub to see what it is like, but then I decided not to do so. We are teachers. If students in Vietnam know that I go to such places, they would treat me differently. If other Vietnamese teachers who study in Australia go to a nightclub, I wouldn't judge them as bad, but I myself can't do it.

Why? Because he was a teacher and a Vietnamese, and a Vietnamese teacher should not go to those places, which were rumoured in Vietnam to be places of unhealthy and ill-cultured behaviours and activities. Although he realised that nightclubs and pubs in Australia may be different, he still did not find the courage and daring to explore that experience. He explained to me that as a teacher, he felt uneasy to be in such places. He was afraid of being caught and judged by others as a bad teacher. In his thinking, it seemed that everybody knew he was a teacher, particularly he thought his students were watching over his shoulder. Kien did care what other people thought, particularly when

what they thought might have bad effects on his teaching profession and values. His own desire or curiosity was controlled by his professional values. In other words, his profession set rules and limits for his personal acts. He took on what others thought about him. His identity was partly formed by the society's expectation, and this even won over his personal desire. So, even though he was in Australia, away from home and social norms, he still chose to perform his Vietnamese 'teacher' self.

Moreover, the 'here' and 'there' reality and the Vietnamese teacher part in him held him back. He could not escape from the real world. He obviously restricted his freedom, reasoning himself in not doing certain things, as a Vietnamese teacher. Thus, although he was in Australia, he still felt he was watched and judged by unseen faraway but powerful norms. The Vietnamese part in him made him stay with reality instead of flying with fantasy, which possibly led to unwanted results, as he admitted.

Kien also used 'We' when he reminded me that 'we are teachers'. He seemed to include me in his circle and seek my solidarity with his decision. He also implied that I would act in the same way if I were him. Although he tried to appropriate some Western individual freedom, he still found it very foreign to him. On the one hand, he wanted to have more freedom, but on the other, when it came to his turn to 'enjoy' the freedom, he resisted it and chose to stick to his own values. He felt safer to do so.

The above example demonstrates that Kien's strong sense of being a Vietnamese teacher affected the way he negotiated his multiple identities. The fact that he was in Australia made his Vietnamese identity more important and solid to him. He seemed to feel more Vietnamese, as he was in Australia. The content 'teacher morality' too added more weight to his negotiation of identities. As a teacher he talked about teacher morality, and this clearly strengthened his awareness of being a teacher. Once again, contexts and content affected the ways Kien talked about his identity.

7.4 Story Three: How did Kien's processes of identity formation take place in group interview?

This story tells about how Kien's identities were shaped by interacting with his peers in a group interview. Kien participated in the group interview with two other participants, Linh and Vy. Three of them had known each other quite well, and Linh was a quite

close friend of Kien, while Kien and Vy were acquaintances. Thus, in a sense the interview was like a discussion or a conversation among friends.

It should be noted that although I had also known Kien as a friend before he participated in this study, the relationship between him and me was different from that between him and Linh. While I knew him more as an acquaintance, Linh and Kien were friends in both the professional and social environments. Hence, the way Kien presented himself to me in the individual interview was very different from the way he did it in the group interview with his friends, although both occasions involved interactions. This very difference plays an essential role in how Kien's identities were presented and negotiated.

This story focuses on how Kien perceived his role as a moral guide. In order to reveal how his identities were shaped in this context, I will first talk about how he perceived his enactment of this role when he talked to me in the individual interview. Then how he negotiated this role with his peers will be discussed.

In the individual interview with me, Kien both implicitly and explicitly acknowledged that he played a role of a 'moral guide' with his students. As discussed in Chapter Five and Six, when a teacher is a 'moral guide', he/she needs to be proper in every way, including the way he/she plays the role. When Kien was talking with me, what I noticed was his consciousness of playing the role. For example, Kien reported that he often shared with students his thinking and what was important to him. In discussing teachers' responsibilities with students in Vietnam, he said

> as a language teacher, it is necessary to share with students our conceptions of a particular issue, let them know what is right and what is wrong, or share with them how responsible we need to be with each group of people.

He also described how he reacted when he was not happy with his students' behaviour. For example, to show his anger or dissatisfaction with his students when they did not listen to his lectures properly, he either kept silent and stopped his lessons or reminded them of the importance of the subject. His students then would know how to perform more properly. He said that students were all grown-up, it was not necessary to be mad at them or to teach them how to behave explicitly. He normally reminded them of what they should do to benefit themselves and to respect his lectures in order to obtain something out of each lesson.

I interpreted his behaviour as proper acts as socially and professionally expected from an ideal teacher in Vietnam. However, in the group interview, when Kien, Linh and Vy discussed teacher values in Vietnam, I saw a different Kien.

After having listened to Linh's and Vy's perceptions of teacher values, Kien reported that he tended to absorb teacher values embedded in social norms and made them his own values. He admitted that he tried to perform teacher in light of these norms, as he saw their necessity and positiveness:

> I think values attached to teaching come from many sides, but mostly from social norms. For example in Vietnam, a teacher needs to set good examples for students in many ways. Thus we have to follow the norms because if we don't or misbehave, we will become eccentric and people will say we're not teachers. Teachers are expected to be good at both knowledge and morality, then we have to follow these norms. Of course there are other things influencing teachers' values, but I think social norms play the main role.

> In my opinion, these social norms are generally good and reasonable, because they are not made up by one person but drawn from generation to generation.

At this point, Kien still talked ideologically, which was no different from the way he talked to me in the first interview. Kien still appeared to act on these norms and at the same time tried to make these norms part of his teacher values. He showed his willingness to be tied to the social norms, and thus to develop himself in accordance with these norms.

Linh and Vy continued to extend their points as well as Kien's points, and Kien concluded that

> It's good to follow these socially constructed norms. But the problem is that to what extent we can follow them. It doesn't mean that we can perfectly follow all the norms. If so we were gods, not human. For example, although it is expected that teachers mustn't scold students harshly but I still do it [laughing]. But I do it just for students' sake. I want to make them study. If I am irresponsible, then I won't care, but I'm not.

Linh and Vy did not agree with Kien's example. Linh challenged Kien, saying "what kind of teacher are you, you always scold students." Kien replied to Linh the way he did to someone who knew him so well "so what? I scold them because I want them to be better." Linh and Vy said there were other and proper ways to do it, and scolding was not at all acceptable. The way Linh challenged Kien and replied to him suggested that Kien was notorious for being harsh with students.

Only at that moment did I realise that Kien himself 'offered' to reveal his 'hidden' identities. He could not just talk ideologically any more. He was being watched and judged by Linh, so he could not afford to present himself the way he did to me. He did not wait for Linh to unveil this aspect of his teacher identities. It appeared that she had known his scolding of students so well that he had to say it first, and he admitted it both boldly and humourously. It looked as if he shifted his identities suddenly but this shift appeared to be very smooth and natural by his taking a proactive role in doing it. Also, it was clear that he tended to take on the identity others constructed for him, that of 'scolding students'. He thus saw it as part of his teacher identity.

Again, the social context of the group interview, the topic discussed, the interactions among Kien, Linh and Vy, and their relationships affected the ways Kien negotiated his identities. Although he talked about teacher values ideologically, the way he performed teacher was not at all ideal, as he and his peers saw it. I was not able to know this aspect of his identities in our one-to-one interview, but this multichannel interaction enabled me to see it. This indicates that identities are equally shaped by the contexts within which we express them.

7.5   Discussion and Conclusions

The above three stories present Kien's processes of identity formation in various social and cultural contexts. The ways he expressed and negotiated his identities were vastly influenced by those contexts, and in each context, Kien's identities were expressed and negotiated differently. For example, when he was in the individual interview with me, he appeared more as a confident professional who enthusiastically talked about his range of experiences of teaching in Vietnam and studying in Australia. When he revealed how he handled topics related to 'love' in a Vietnamese classroom, his identity as a Vietnamese teacher became dominant and came to the fore, while other identities stayed silent. However, when he was discussing teacher values with his peers, he seemed to show his awareness of being challenged and judged by them. He thus tended to identify himself in accordance with what others usually thought of him, how they represented him (Said 1978, Pennycook 1998), in this case, as 'scolding students harshly'. All of these examples indicate how identity is shaped dynamically through work practices in a particular social context (Farrell 2000). They also suggest that

identities are shaped by the social and cultural contexts that we experience, and these identities are equally shaped by the contexts within which we express them (Hall 1997a, b, Phan Ngoc 1998, Gee 1999).

Despite the differences in the ways Kien dealt with the contradictions, fastening, unfastening and refastening of his identities, his sense of himself as an appropriately moral teacher in Vietnamese terms is a consistent feature of his accounts of himself and forms an important part of what he presented as his core identity. His awareness of his felt identities and identities constructed for him by others and his control of his relation to the various contexts contributed to the fluidity in his negotiation.

His identities were shaped, negotiated and reconstructed by identification of himself in relation to others and their representations of him (Woodward 1997), by his fastening and unfastening (Reed 2001), and by his claiming a Vietnamese national identity which guaranteed his belonging despite his exposure to Western modes of thinking and pedagogical practices (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c). His choice to retain his Vietnamese teacher values contributed to constructing this national identity and strengthening it (Phan Ngoc 1998). That Kien's statements were often full of conflicts with his own reasoning suggested fragmentation in his identity. This is the main difference between Kien's and the other participants' ways of self identification. While the other participants appeared to be quite consistent and coherent in their expressions of their identities, Kien seemed to experience obvious fragmentation and contradictions in presenting himself.

However, the way he reasoned his statements and how he performed teacher (as he reported) indicated consistency and fluidity. Some of his performances were against the social norms of teachers in Vietnam, such as scolding students harshly, but the responsible teacher in him appeared to function consistently. Additionally, this very identity among his multiple identities manifested in his accounts demonstrated connectedness and continuity, which made Kien's identities attach together. He scolded students because he wanted them to learn for their own sake. This act seemed to contrast with his claim to be a morally good teacher, since it was not considered 'proper' by the society and the teaching profession. However, all of these seemingly fragmented and contradictory identities were well connected by a thread, which was called responsibility and teacher's conscience noticed in Kien. Despite fragmentation and

contradiction, Kien's identity developed along the lines of a coherent growth (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c).

To conclude, Kien's identity formation processes were fluid, fragmented, appropriating, resisting, contradictory and conflictive, but nevertheless involved a sense of belonging, connectedness, continuity and a strong sense of a Vietnamese national identity.

CHAPTER 8 - Discussion and conclusion

8.1 Introduction

At the moment, sitting in front of the computer, thinking of what to write to close this chapter, I feel really confused. I am writing in English, not Vietnamese. Yes, I have been writing in English for so long because it is the very means of communication that makes me understood by the outside world. But at the same time, it is not my mother tongue, so it makes it harder for me to naturally think in it. And I think around.

Thinking about the film "Chicken run", I burst out laughing when I remember the cock from America, who suddenly found himself surrounded by strange hens, asking those hens "Is that English what you're speaking?" Definitely, English is deliberately advertised as a world language. Thinking about the inappropriacy and problems of ethics of English and ELT, I realise that I am now fully aware of the way I should write English exam papers for my students in Vietnam upon my completion of this doctoral thesis. Thinking about the story told by a friend that the English textbook she used to teach her students was full of racial discrimination, in which people found pictures of a slave being an African, a housekeeper being an Asian, and a happy retired person being an Anglo, I feel somewhat uncomfortable.

Thinking of my flight home with Malaysia airlines and a two-day stopover in Kuala Lumpur, I feel eager. There, I will see some of my dear friends again after more than two years. How can we communicate with each other? English, thanks to it we can be friends. How wonderful it is to know English! We, people from different parts of the world, totally strangers, have now become closer because we all have a shared language, English. Yes, English has its own bad images, but it also has many good images that make every one of us feel good at least one time when we can talk to a person coming from a different country.

Thinking of the scholarships I have been granted, I know that at least I have made myself well presented in English. At this moment, I do not think of English as an imperial language or the language of power, instead, I think of it as a friendly language that makes the huge world a small village. I think of English as the language of common understanding among scholars.

Acting as the language of international communication (McKay 2002, Rajagopalan 2004), English has enabled me to extend the multiplicity of my positioning in the world and the multiplicity of conceptual tools to research into this complicated issue of identity formation. Importantly, English has enabled me to bring two completely different bodies of knowledge, the Vietnamese and the Western, together in this study, where one complements and harmonises with the other to best understand the processes of identity formation of the participants of this study.

This study has so far looked at the identity formation processes of a group of Vietnamese teachers of English, who were doing their Masters in TESOL in different Australian universities. How do these teachers see themselves as teachers and as individuals in relation to their society and professional contexts in Vietnam and in the future? In what ways can postcolonial notions of Self and Other help us understand the processes of identity formation?

The next section presents an overall discussion of the findings from the data in relation to the research aims and questions. Implications for the ELT field and directions for further research then follow.

8.2   Discussion

When the participants in this study were exposed to the Australian environment of teaching and learning, they experienced tensions among their apparently contradictory roles and selves. They also presented tensions among their multiple identities as teachers and individuals in the society and in future. How were their identities shaped, reshaped and reconstituted in these various contexts? How did they negotiate their identities?

Given that the study was located in the field of ELT, taking into account both postcolonial theorists' and Vietnamese scholars' viewpoints of identity, the politics of English and ELT with a specific focus on the postcolonial notions of Self and Other, how did the participants construct their identities in relation to English, ELT and the notions of Self and Other? Were their ways of identifying themselves affected by these factors?

8.2.1 The construction of the Vietnamese identity - the core identity – alongside multiple identities

The participants experienced changes in their identities due to their exposure to a new context with different cultural and pedagogical practices, but they seemed to negotiate their identities on the basis of 'dominant' identities. These consisted of Vietnamese national/cultural identity, Vietnamese teacher, and Vietnamese student. These are the very identities that provided the participants with strong foundations and commitments, on which they asserted all their identities.

The participants negotiated their Vietnamese identities alongside of their multiple identities. They identified themselves with different groups, such as Australian students, Vietnamese students, Vietnamese teachers of English, Vietnamese teachers, and Western-trained teachers, and acknowledged changes in their identities, however, they insisted on holding on to their 'existing' and persisting Vietnamese values. The participants suggested the notion of 'existing' values, which I interpret as a sense of connectedness in their fluid negotiation of values, instead of as a single stable entity.

Although their identities were constructed in different sets of relations and interrelations, what appeared dominant was their strong sense of belonging. For example, Kien's identities were shaped, negotiated and reconstructed by identification of himself in relation to others and their representations of him (Woodward 1997), by his fastening and unfastening (Reed 2001), and by his claiming a Vietnamese national identity which guaranteed his belonging despite his exposure to Western modes of thinking and pedagogical practices (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c). His choice to retain his Vietnamese teacher values contributed to constructing this national identity and strengthening it (Phan Ngoc 1998). Another example is Linh's argument of the 'out there' Vietnamese cultural values. Vietnamese cultural values were something 'out there', available and inside her, something immutable that she would never lose, no matter how she grew or developed. By using the word "lose" and the expression "there's no way we can lose our cultural values", Linh assumed that her peers and myself possessed the same values, the Vietnamese ones. A Vietnamese identity became visible and it was actualised under a name "cultural values". Also, Linh's descriptions and expressions of herself and her teaching values showed that she was open to some practices but conservative on others, and what influenced her decision

was her Vietnamese identity, which she strongly stated she would never lose. This gave her a sense of belonging and continuity in her teacher self formation.

Through their identity formation, the Vietnamese teachers constructed a national/cultural identity, which strongly supports Phan Ngoc's (1998), Tran Ngoc Them's (1999, 2001a, c), and Tran Quoc Vuong's (2000) arguments of national/cultural identity as one united element and a core sense of 'wholeness', which each Vietnamese should maintain and develop. Also, this helps challenge the argument that identity does not involve a sense of a core value and a sense of belonging (Hall & du Gay 1996).

Although the teachers' fluid negotiations of their multiple identities also suggest the notion of hybridity in their identity formation, hybridity was obtained on the basis of some core Vietnamese identities and the sense of 'Vietnamseness'. Thus, hybrid identities are understood as reconstituted identities which enjoy dynamic change and fluid movements rather than fragmentation. Hybrid identities are not necessarily different identities. They are, rather, new identities constructed within negotiation and awareness of change and the sense of resistance which incorporates both appropriation and reconstitution as discussed in Chapter 3. The teacher participants held on the sense of 'Vietnameseness' to negotiate change in their hybrid identities and maintain the sense of belonging.

Identity is multiple, constructed and dynamic, as Farrell (2000) argues. Thus, the participants constantly constructed their identities as they went through different stages of the data collection. Their identities continued to be shaped and reshaped, as they negotiated their existing values with other new values. They tended to present themselves through their multiple identities, which seemed to hold on together on the basis of a shared professional and national identity. This suggested a sense of continuity in their identity formation processes, despite the obvious tensions, contradictions and fragmentation they experienced in the movement in space and time between Vietnam and Australia. Above all, their sense of Vietnameseness seemed to influence all their processes of identity formation, and in each process, they constructed and reconstructed the Vietnamese identity.

The way the teacher participants constructed their multiple identities with constant references to their Vietnamese identity confirms and supports the role of place-based identities in identity formation (Lin 2002). This also consolidates the complex and

multi-faceted interrelationship and interdependence between mobility and identity. Truly, despite the participants' mobility, locality or place of origins, in this case Vietnam, plays a significant role in their transnational identity formation. This affirms that place-based identity is one of the many fundamental forces operating behind the scene of mobility, and it is mobility that offers the ground for place-based identity to assert itself.

8.2.2 Morality in teacher identity formation

The notion of morality played an important part in the participants' teacher identity formation. Morality became an identity filter, through which they grouped themselves and others. Their negotiations often came down to their perceptions of morality and how to demonstrate morality, so as to measure one identity up against the other. Although they showed certain resistance to new values as teachers of English, a foreign language, they demonstrated an awareness of such values, which in collaboration with their existing values gave them an identity – Vietnamese teachers of English. They negotiated their identities along the lines of morality and moral values embedded in their cultural and professional practices. The participants presented a strong sense of self as teacher in relation to morality and the cultural model of the moral guide role. This integral part of their identities was consciously maintained and fostered. This part also played the role of a core identity, based on which the participants' multiple identities held together.

As discussed in the part **8.2.1**, their teacher identities were clearly subjected to pressures and tensions for change in the new context, and these pressures and tensions were negotiated on the basis of their 'dominant' identities, and along the lines of their persisting identities, which all made their Vietnameseness held firm. The notion of morality appeared to play a significant role in these teachers' identity formation. Morality-related identities were the very identities that the teachers relied on to negotiate the pressures and tensions caused by their exposure to the new context. They were also elements that maintained the fluidity, continuity and the sense of connectedness in the processes of identity formation. In the same way, they guaranteed the sense of simultaneity of space and time – Vietnam and Australia, here and there, now and then, past, present, and future. They made the processes of transnationality, hybridity and mobility, which were discussed in Chapter 2, fluid and continual, taking

into account the specificity of both locality and time (Werbner 2001, Lin 2002, Crang et al., 2004).

The teachers in this study saw themselves as moral guides and morality demonstrators. Even if much else around them was more dynamically shaped, their perceptions of this role remained more or less non-negotiable. Despite their being teachers of English and their studying in Australia, these morality-related identities remained quite stable and were not open for negotiation as compared to many other identities perceived by the teachers. Morality and ethics were seen by the teachers as criteria to differentiate Western and Vietnamese values, for example students asking questions in Australian lectures in many cases were interpreted by the Vietnamese teachers as lack of respect for both lecturers and other students.

Why these teachers' morality-related identities were consciously maintained and fostered is partly supported by how absolute this moral sentiment in Vietnamese society has always been, and how it has been developed since early socialization of the Vietnamese people. The following discussions elaborate these points.

According to Duong Thieu Tong (2002), the philosophies of the ancient Vietnamese (Lac Viet) education, (around 2000 B.C to 1 A.D), highlighted and advocated the sense of caring for and supporting each other and the sense of living in harmony with others as well as the nature. These philosophies aimed at nurturing individuals who are moral, ethical and live for others. Duong Thieu Tong argues that the ancient Vietnamese education was developed on the basis of "realistic humanism" (p.66), which focused on the representation of and appreciation for values of individuals, families and the society. These philosophies also offered teachers a very high and noble status in the society. Since the Lac Viet education was the education of the people, by the people and for the people, which placed emphasis on morality education and took responsibilities for educating morally good individuals, the teacher in the society were expected to demonstrate morality in all aspects of their lives. These educational values and practices continued to develop among Vietnamese villages and communal societies during the 1000 years under the Chinese colonization. Duong Thieu Tong demonstrates that the Lac Viet educational philosophies had been developed and practiced in Vietnam at least more than a thousand years before Vietnam had contacts with China. Thus, influences of Confucianism education (which came into being in China hundreds of years later than the Lac Viet education) on Vietnamese education should not be seen as the only

source of underlying philosophical ideas. Rather, Confucianism has been Vietnamised and served Vietnamese people's educational purposes. This point is supported by other scholars, such as Phan Ngoc (1998). The Lac Viet philosophies together with Buddhism and Confucianism were all meld together to reflect the values and morality of Vietnamese education. These continue to be advocated during the feudal times in Vietnam.

Duong Thieu Tong indicates that for the teacher in feudal Vietnamese society, there did not seem to have any differentiations between their responsibilities for the education of their students, the education of their families, and the education of the society. All of these responsibilities were for educating individuals with knowledge and morality. The teachers in those days also presented themselves as morally good examples for students and for the society in every way. Duong Thieu Tong points out that since the 15th century, the role of morality of the intellectuals in the Vietnamese society was formalized in Vietnamese feudal Law, known as the Hong Duc Law. The Law also identified clearly their rights and responsibilities regarding their personal life, family life and social life. This put pressures on teachers to behave as well as encouraged them to live morally if they chose to be teachers.

Le Xuan Hy et al., (2005) discuss "the care orientation" in Vietnamese culture, and they claim that human relationships are at the core of the care orientation (p.4). They highlight the three significant aspects of the strong human relationships in Vietnamese culture, namely "1) human relationships as the foundation of ethics; 2) a strong emphasis on respect for the other; and 3) responsibility for the other to the point of self sacrifice" (p.4). The focus on human relationships as Vietnamese philosophy has been woven into educational ideals in Vietnam, and manifested in traditional teachings as well as modern teachings. This philosophy supports morality and ethics education. One of the many reasons why teachers in Vietnam see the need and will to demonstrate morality is that "respect toward the other is one of the most crucial ethical teachings in the Vietnamese society" (p.5). In Vietnamese philosophy, "the teaching "kinh tren, nhuong duoi" or "respect the older, and yield to the younger" has become one of the most important ethical codes for mutual relationships among the Vietnamese" (p.5). This philosophy has been practiced in education as well. Both teachers and students need to respect each other and mutual respect is expected between the two. Teachers'

respect for students is manifested in their responsibilities and willingness to care for students and educate them in terms of both knowledge and morality.

In the modern times, being a teacher in Vietnam always involves demonstrating morality by both behaving morally, ethically as individuals and giving students morality education. Teacher morality and their roles regarding morality education has been encoded in rules and regulations (can be seen in many schools or educational institutions in Vietnam and in the educational law). So in addition to social and cultural expectations of the teachers, rules and regulations strengthen and formalize these expectations.

This moral sentiment in Vietnamese educational philosophies has been partly illustrated in Vietnamese proverbs, sayings, expressions and quotations (Mai Xuan Huy 1999, Duong Ky Duc 2000, Breach 2004). I find Breach's (2004) study on the Vietnamese notion of 'a good teacher' very interesting and profound. It captures and reflects quite thoughtfully the culturally situated notions of the teacher embedded in Vietnamese society. Her study shows clearly the moral sentiment perceived and practised by Vietnamese teachers and others in the society. Also, this moral sentiment is strongly backed by the society's respect and love for the teaching profession. Through her students and Vietnamese colleagues in Vietnam, Breach collects many sayings, expressions and proverbs about the teacher. Below are the 10 most commonly listed proverbs she selects (p.32). I give the original Vietnamese versions next to the English versions. What these proverbs mean are expressed and explained by her Vietnamese students, too.

1. Without teachers, one can't do anything. (Khong thay do may lam nen)

2. He who teaches you one word is a teacher, he who teaches you half a word is also a teacher. (Nhat tu vi su, ban tu vi su).

3. If one wants to cross the water, build a bridge. If one wants his child to be educated, respect the teacher. (Muon sang thi bac cau kieu, muon con hay chu thi yeu lay thay).

4. The first day of the Tet holiday celebrates the father, the second day the mother, the third day the teacher. (Mong mot Tet cha, mong hai Tet me, mong ba Tet thay).

5. A teacher is like a fond mother. (Co giao nhu me hien).

6. Like teacher, like student. (Thay nao, tro nay).

7. Respect teachers, respect morality. (Ton su trong dao).

8. Rice father, clothes mother, knowledge teacher. (Com cha, ao me, chu thay).

9. Teaching is the most noble profession among other noble professions. (Day hoc la nghe cao quy nhat trong nhung nghe cao quy).

10. A teacher is an engineer of the soul. (Giao vien la ky su tam hon).

These proverbs show that the teachers in Vietnamese society are regarded as "a source of productive activity", "providers of knowledge", "moral role models", "moral or spiritual guides (shapers of character)" (p.32). In addition, these proverbs emphasize "the respect [one] should have towards someone who has taught [one] even a small thing" (p.32). Also, these proverbs emphasize "the respect that must be shown to the teacher by the entire family" (p.32). They show the society's respect for and honour due to teachers and the teaching profession. Honouring the teacher comes only after the honouring of one's own parents, and the teacher's role is compared to the role of a loving parent (p.32).

Nguyen Quoc Hung (2000) looks particularly at the role of teachers of English with a specific focus on Vietnam. He revises different methods of teaching languages, and his discussion suggests that teachers in Vietnam always play the role of moral educator. Whether using teacher-centred or learner-centred methods, grammar-translation methods or communicative approaches, teachers are expected to guide students in terms of behaviour and behaving manners, either explicitly or implicitly. In this sense, Vietnamese teachers of English are not at all different from teachers of other subjects in the society. They do demonstrate morality education because they are, first of all, teachers.

Braun (2004: 35) draws on a Vietnamese saying "first learn the behaviour, then learn the lesson" (tien hoc le, hau hoc van) to argue for the essential role of morality and values in teaching, particularly in the field of ELT. He regards "teaching as a moral enterprise" (p.35) and thus suggests Bill Johnston's (2003) "Values in English Language Teaching" being "a classic in the field" (p.2). Johnston's (2003) discussion of the role of teachers as moral agents is in part similar to the role of teachers perceived in Vietnam. I find his arguments on the role of morality in what to be a teacher intriguing and significant, particularly when he teases out the complex and often contradictory

moral landscapes of the language classroom when teachers must make moral decision as they interact with students and how teachers' beliefs influence their moral choices. Miller (2003), in reviewing Johnston's work, also highlights these points. Furthermore, as teachers' moral choices are very much affected by the politics of ELT, it is essential for teachers' moral values to be advocated and put forward, so as to teach English morally.

My study with the Vietnamese teachers of English has indicated that these teachers always saw themselves as moral guides, no matter where they were. This has been supported by the literature on the role of morality and morality education in Vietnamese society discussed by many scholars, such as Phan Ngoc (1998), Tran Ngoc Them (1999), Duong Thieu Tong (2002), Braun (2004), and Breach (2004). This moral sentiment has been consolidated and encouraged by the society's respect and love for teachers and the teaching profession. The rules and regulations of the demonstration of morality by teachers also support teachers' awareness of the responsibility to give moral education to students. The Vietnamese (educational) philosophies, which has been present for about four thousand years, much older than Western and Chinese philosophies (cf Oppenheimer 1999, Duong Thieu Tong 2002), has been the cradle that nurtures and flourishes moral values in teaching in Vietnam.

My study has suggested that the teachers' perceptions of teacher morality and ethics showed the human side of the concepts. Morality and ethics may be thought of as strict rules, regulations and inflexible sets of behaviour, and teachers may be forced to follow them. But in their expressions, these concepts appeared to be attached to the heart, to come from the heart and be different from 'dry' norms. They included a good sense of responsibility, love and kindness to students, enthusiasm to the profession, and awareness of moral responsibility to young generations. This is the meaning and value of the Vietnamese educational practices, which the West often misread as 'authoritarian' and 'imposing' (Breach 2004, Phan Le Ha 2004). It is the close association of morality and ethics with teachers' images that gives them an identity. That was why the teachers emphasized these icons in their discussion about teacher identity. The society 'pictures' them as teachers by expecting them to practise teachers' values, and they themselves make them teachers by conforming to these values and making them their own properties – teachers' properties. Both the society and the participants fastened their identities and thus gave them an insider status. Also, these

values and their negotiation of identities make them Vietnamese teachers, who both teach knowledge and demonstrate morality.

My study has also indicated that these Vietnamese teachers of English had always been well aware of the necessity and responsibility to address morality in their teaching. This supports Johnston's arguments for the role of morality and values in ELT, which as the author shows, has been neglected and left out in the field. Particularly, for English to become an international language which serves its users effectively and morally, that teachers as moral agents is vital to the negotiations, mediations, appropriation, resistance and reconstitutions of values and identities. Moreover, this study has strongly shown that in the context of mobility, transnationality and the dominance of Western academy, the role of teachers as moral guides becomes the most powerful element in the processes of teacher identity formation that holds firm the Vietnamseness and gives these Vietnamese teachers a sense of belonging, continuity and connectedness. This role operates as the moral foundations on which new elements are interpreted, negotiated, resisted, and reconstituted.

8.2.3 Identity fastening, unfastening and refastening

Identity fastening, unfastening and refastening (Reed 2001) occurred quite consistently in the teachers' identity formation processes. Importantly, their identity refastening was more like the reconstitution of identity, which suggested the construction of hybrid identities in postcolonial theorists' terms (for example, Bhabha 1994, Hallward 2001, Pennycook 2001, Werbner 2001, Hiddleston 2004). Their identity fastening, unfastening and refastening suggest a notion of hybridity that is critical and useful for recognition and appreciation of difference, and cultural creativity, not a notion that denies the right to be different (Werbner 2001). This notion of critical hybridity involves a new awareness of and new take on the dynamics of group formation and social inequality (Nederveen Pieterse 2001). It also embraces the sense of agency, ambivalence and third spaces (Bhabha 1994), in which third spaces should not be understood as bounded fixed spaces. Rather, these third spaces are subjected to constant dynamic formation and re-formation, and fluid movements within these spaces are closely linked to 'first spaces' with an awareness of 'second spaces' to form third spaces of dynamic change, continuity, and connectedness (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c, Duong Thieu Tong 2002). As discussed earlier, the notion of morality is

the essential element in determining these fluid and continual identity formation processes. That was why despite apparently contradictory roles and selves and tensions in negotiating these roles and selves, the teachers in this study fastened, unfastened and refastened their identities in relation to morality-related images of the teacher perceived by the Vietnamese culture. The examples below support this argument.

Images of teachers and/or what being a teacher meant were positive in the teachers' minds. These images directed and set limits as well as standards for their behaviours. What constitutes such images? Traditions, social norms, good examples from other teachers, self-awareness of developing oneself to be morally acceptable and many others, all construct images of teachers and thus make teachers a respectable force in the society. Being seen and treated as a respectable force, the teachers in this study tended to both behave as expected and act to consolidate their images. 'A teacher should be like this or that' seemed to be a motto for them and they fastened, unfastened and refastened their identities accordingly to be included in the teacher circle as well as to be seen as teachers by others.

On the surface, there seemed to be few tensions between the personal and the professional, since the teachers appeared to make voluntary compromises in their personal practices to harmonise with socially constructed images of teachers. The personal seemed to meld with the professional and let it come to the foreground. Likewise, the professional seemed to represent the personal and make it the former's internal and integral part. The participants' behaviour was guided by their professional norms and their personal was thus closely attached to and tended to develop in harmony with such norms. In other words, the professional acted as a colonising force, contributing to the formation of teacher identity. The personal, in the same manner, was shaped and reshaped by the professional's values.

A closer look at the relationship between the professional and the personal, however, suggests subtle tensions. For example, Linh simply did not want to behave as a teacher everywhere, she was somehow forced to do it, since people looked at her and expected her that way. Also, because she saw herself as a teacher, she needed to behave as a teacher. Both external and internal factors caused her to behave a certain way. Although it was her choice and will to do so, the fact that she was watched everywhere implied certain tensions in her negotiation. It also suggested that she felt compelled to follow the norms, since both herself and the society constructed her image as a teacher. So,

although Linh and the other participants spelt out the personal, they all seemed to let the professional control the personal and spared a very small space for the personal to speak for itself. Identity fastening, unfastening and refastening seemed to take place along the lines of certain 'core' identities assumed to be possessed by teachers.

To a large extent, the teacher participants showed their obvious compromise to become good teachers, as pictured and expected by the society and their own wish. Nevertheless, their compromises embodied tensions. Even though they had to or offered to give priorities to the professional in most cases, it did not guarantee that they were happy with their decisions. Whether the personal or the professional should dominate made them negotiate constantly. Such negotiations both enabled and suppressed tensions. So, together with compromises, tensions became an inevitable factor in the negotiation process between the personal and the professional. This was confirmed when Linh, Vy and Kien expressed in one group-interview that teachers' personal life in Vietnam was heavily interfered with by norms, ethics and social prejudices. For example, Linh suggested that teachers' personal life should not be too closely watched. In other words, it should be more released and liberated. The society and others should not just look at teachers' life to judge them and put pressure on them. However, the participants still insisted on preserving and promoting teacher morality, conscience and social conventions, but argued that teachers' life should not be confined to these criteria only. Thus, the participants fastened, unfastened and refastened their identities to reshape their teacher identities and make this an ongoing process.

When the teacher participants (Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang) discussed the unethical sides of 'English as a global language', I can see their multiple identities. Their Vietnamese identity came to the fore while their identity as teacher of English stayed in the background when they together fought against stereotypes about Vietnam. But the latter became stronger when they faced negative examples about ELT in Vietnam. Their identity as non-native teachers of English became predominant when their classmates shared their feelings. Their identity as teachers of English who enjoyed an equal status to teachers from any other country appeared strong when they denied the fixity of representation. When they talked together, it seemed that they found themselves stronger and more unified as one group who belonged to a unitary identity. This identity could be a hybrid one, a mixture of their multiple identities, but most importantly it gave them power to assert themselves and criticise their course. The participants

constantly fastened and unfastened their identities to create this power, which ran throughout the fluidity of their hybrid identities. This supports Bhabha's (1994) arguments of hybridity, ambivalence and liminal space, which equip the teacher participants with the agency and power to resist the unethical practices of English as a global language and to recreate and strengthen their cultural/national identities.

The teacher participants' hybrid identities did not merely mean 'new' identities. Instead, these identities were negotiated and reconstructed in such a way that took into account both the 'being' and the 'becoming' of identity, in which the 'being' seemed to dominate. This, again, supports the Vietnamese authors' arguments of identity, wherein they believe in the dominant 'being' of identity as compared with the 'becoming' of it. The teachers' identity fastening, unfastening and refastening processes reflected this notion of hybridity, 'being' and 'becoming'. These processes take place "simultaneously and in multidimensional ways" (Reed 2001:329), and they are always progressive processes.

Another important argument in relation to processes of identity fastening, unfastening and refastening is that the teacher participants in this study showed a high degree of control, adjustment and negotiations in these processes. For example, Kien's comparisons and explanations about differences in the teacher-student relationships between Vietnamese and Australian universities presented his ability to control and adjust. Kien showed his activeness to select the suitable, reject the unsuitable, and transform them to best serve his context in Vietnam. His appropriation and fastening, unfastening and refastening of identities were under his control, taking place in both 'here' and 'there' and 'now' and 'then' with him as both a student studying in Australia and a Vietnamese teacher in most cases. One more example was the shifts of identities manifested in four participants' (Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang) identity formation. Simultaneously, they aligned themselves with Western lecturers in terms of broad-mindedness, defined themselves as Vietnamese teachers who demonstrated morality, and strongly opposed those Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English who brought home unacceptable Western values and practices, such as the one who wore shorts to class.

That the teacher participants in this study presented a high degree of control, adjustment and negotiations in their fastening, unfastening and refastening of identities supports the tendency in postcolonial theories that seeks to investigate the question of agency, active

resistance, and reconstitution from the so-called Other, such as the work of Canagarajah (1999), Chakrabarty (2000) and Djebar (presented by Hiddleston 2004).

8.2.4 Identity and difference

The participants constructed their identities in relation to difference from others (Woodward 1997, Wodak et al., 1999). The notions of 'us' and 'them' were often brought into their negotiation, for example 'we Vietnamese students' and 'they Australians'. The notions of 'us' and 'them' are not necessarily created by the way I asked questions, nor are they a product of deliberate positioning. Rather, they are in part functions of the tasks the participants were undertaking in Vietnam and Australia. Within fluid processes of fastening, unfastening, and refastening, and within constant moments of contradictions, fragmentation and negotiation, there was a strong tendency to construct their identities in relation to similarities and differences perceived through cultural lenses. Very importantly, although they constructed their identities in binary terms in relation to Western lecturers and other Western-trained teachers, they always negotiated and reconstructed these identities on the basis of the very 'core' Vietnamese morality-related identities. This guaranteed their sense of belonging, their difference as being Vietnamese teachers, and their attachment to the commitment of demonstrating morality.

For example, when the teacher participants implied the dichotomy of Western-trained and non-Western-trained teachers of English, they constructed their identities as they pictured the other. Their identities were shaped through their perceptions of others. By making others, they made selves. When Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang depicted non-Western-trained teachers of English with certain values, they simultaneously drew their own picture. Specifically, by referring to the others as those who were inquisitive and often took things personally, they implied that they were not so and did not do so. By stating that the others were not open for changes, they tended to assumed that they were more open and willing to change. They suggested that they were not the same as they used to be, and because of their contacts with new practices and values, they were enlightened, whereas their colleagues at home were not. But interestingly, they all denied their similarity to the Vietnamese teacher who were trained overseas and later wore shorts to class in Vietnam. They were different from him because they knew to select appropriate things. By accusing him of being improper and adopting Western

practices arbitrarily, they claimed their properness and awareness, and thus asserted a certain identity for themselves. They, at least, did not give away their Vietnamese part and did take cultural differences into consideration.

Although the construction of identity in relation to difference has been criticized as another form of essentialism (Windschuttle 1999), the ways the teacher participants constructed and reconstructed their identities both utilized the necessity of essentializing and used the means of essentialization as a means of affirming their agency and power to resist, reserve and reconstitute. This is further supported by the discussion presented in the section on challenging postcolonial notions of Self and Other presented below. It should be noted that for the teacher participants to essentialize and avoid being essentialized, teacher morality and morality-related identities appeared to be the decisive elements.

8.2.5 Challenging postcolonial notions of Self and Other

Interestingly, although the teacher participants essentialized their identities and others' identities to a certain extent, they actively resisted being essentialized. On the one hand, they both consciously and subconsciously identified themselves in relation to others, such as Australian students, Australian lecturers, the West, non-Western-trained teachers of English, and teachers of Russian. But on the other hand, they constructed their identities by moving fluidly and dynamically alongside those others' identities. They insisted the rights to be different and actively constructed the differences, but at the same time appeared to be open for negotiations. In other words, their boundaries were not fixed, and both 'organic' and 'intentional' hybrid identities (Bakhtin 1981, cited in Werbner 2001) were present in their identity formation. This suggests that postcolonial notions of Self and Other (such as those discussed by Said 1978, 1995, Phillipson 1992, Pennycook 1998) do not work efficiently enough to understand the participants' identity formation. Clear-cut dichotomies of Self and Other in fact simplify the question of identity and thus fail to acknowledge the fluid processes of identity formation.

Postcolonial notions of Self and Other, as this study suggests, need to treat identity formation in light of other critical notions, such as the West, transnationality, mobility and hybridity. These notions, as discussed in many recent postcolonial writings (Chakrabarty 2000, Hallward 2001, Lal 2002, Lin 2002, Crang et al., 2003, Ingham &

Warren 2003, Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004, Hiddleston 2004 and many others), have filled the gaps in identity formation caused by the dichotomy of Self and Other. They have also encouraged new ways of looking at identity formation, the ways that are not necessarily come from the West and Western assumptions of the divided world of East and West, North and South, and colonizing Self and colonized Other.

Because postcolonial scholarship pays tremendous attention to the West and Western academy without committing itself to engaging the universals and non-Western theories as well as taking into account cultural and historical difference (Chakrabarty 2000, Ingham & Warren 2003), the colonized Other is consequently a product of the imagination of the colonizing Seif. The Self' imagination backed by the assumed superiority of the West (the Self) is so powerful that images of the Other have been seen as 'truths'. This study, together with the support of recent critical postcolonial theories, (such as Charkrabarty 2000, Ingham & Warren 2003, and Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004), has indicated that postcolonial notions of Self and Other in many ways have in fact served the dominance of the West and masked the Other's power to resist and represent themselves in their own voices. Also, these notions often fail to acknowledge the Other's active resistance and reconstitution of their hybrid identities which incorporate agency, creativity, fluidity, negotiations, accommodations, continuity, dynamic change, and connectedness.

Postcolonial theories have been criticized for their focus on modernity, which sees colonial modernity as a fact of history rather than an ideology of colonialism (Ingham & Warren 2003). As a result, everything related to the Other is seen as 'static', 'traditional', 'fixed', 'backward', 'underdeveloped' and 'irrational' (Pennycook 1998), as compared to the 'changing', 'modern', 'developed', 'progressive' and 'rational' of the West. This has been reflected in this study, particularly when the teacher participants at times saw the teaching methodologies used by other teachers in Vietnam as 'out-of-date', 'traditional' and 'worse' than those of the West. They thus showed their eagerness to change and appropriate some Western teaching practices. However, their appropriation did not simply take place as easily and without negotiations, as a number of scholars suggest. Likewise, the politics of English as a global language and ELT as a dominant profession in language teaching partly affected the participants' identities, but not necessarily in the same way as the postcolonial literature suggested. For example, Phillipson (1992) remarks that teachers trained in English-speaking

countries tend to adopt everything from the West and thus can be harmful to their home countries upon returning to their teaching. The participants in this study, however, on the one hand appeared to be tempted to appropriate certain Western values and practices, but on the other, resisted them. Moreover, they strongly resisted values and practices which were considered 'disrespectful' or 'harmful' to the tradition of teaching in Vietnam, such as calling teachers by their first names, and wearing shorts to classes. Their appropriation took place alongside resistance. They negotiated one identity over others and took into account pragmatic factors so as to find a place where they belonged. This act of identity formation needs to receive more attention from postcolonial scholarship.

This study has offered more, perhaps new, ways of treating postcolonial notions of Self and Other. The teacher participants appeared to view various dichotomies, such as native and/or non-native teachers of English, and Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained teachers of English, in a different way from postcolonial theorists. Rather than treating the dichotomies as 'colonial' and 'negative', they viewed them as 'different' and 'complementary' factors contributing to the construction of multiple and dynamic identities. They did not feel that they had been pushed away and that Self and Other had been seen as totally mutually exclusive. Both were reflected in their identity formation. They used these dichotomies as resources for their fluid movements among multiple identities, with and without an awareness of contradictions.

The notions of Self and Other in this study were extended to represent different roles and selves, not just those specifically connected to Englishness, for example Western-trained and/or non-Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English, and teachers of English and/or teachers of Russian. The participants both constructed their identities and took on identities others created for them in relation to these extended notions of Self and Other. More than that, they seemed to be aware of their enactment of different identities and what identities were constructed for them by others. For example, they constructed their images as Western-trained teachers and simultaneously tended to act on the society's stereotypes about those teachers who were trained in the West.

The way Self and Other are constructed in postcolonial theory is an unbalanced process rather than a mutually negotiated two-way interaction (Chakrabarty 2000, Ingham & Warren 2003). The Other are created by the Self and made to view themselves in the Self's way. Postcolonial notions of Self and Other have actually silenced the Other's

voices, and this results in the Self treating the Other as 'empty vessels' in their own construction of identity, at least, as teachers of English. However, in this study, some of the participants' awareness of their own identity and how it is affected by the centre's images of the 'other' is the key to whether there is some control over their identity formation. For example, in their TESOL courses, each participant has gained awareness of their positioning in different ways (e.g, one set of ways for those who were introduced to thinking about postcolonial issues, and another for those who were not or were only asked to look at it from the Centre's perspectives).

8.2.6 The role of contexts in identity formation

What has been presented about processes of teacher identity formation in this study has supported the argument that identity is situated and contextualised (Hall 1997a, Gee 1999) and that identity is dynamically shaped (Farrell 2000). Identities are shaped by the social and cultural contexts that we experience, and these identities are equally shaped by the contexts within which we express them.

Social and cultural contexts play a significant role in how the participants identified themselves and negotiated their identities. For example, in the individual interviews, Thu, Chi, Lien and Trang did not reveal their feelings and thoughts regarding the problems of ethics embedded in their TESOL course, but in the group interview, with support and assurance from each other, they talked about how unethically the issue of 'English as a global language' was presented in one subject in their course. Another example was found in the ways Kien presented himself in different social contexts. When he talked about the topics which he used for discussion in his class in Vietnam, his focus on value-laden topics and the Vietnamese context tended to affect his negotiation of identities. However, when he talked about his experiences as a student in Australia with me in the individual interview, he appeared to negotiate his identities on the basis of his comparisons, reasoning and desires.

The role of contexts in identity formation as demonstrated in this study raises methodological questions for the contexts in which we collect data.

8.2.7 "Daughter-in-law of a hundred families"

The identity formation of these Vietnamese teachers of English studying TESOL in Australia was affected by multi-layer relations and different contexts, and with every

relation and in each context, these teachers had to negotiate, sometimes compromise, and then assert themselves in such a way that would protect them best from social judgements, stereotypes and fixed representations in the teaching of global English. They played the role of 'the daughter-in-law of a hundred families', the daughter that had to try hard to 'please' all parties, yet relate to her sense of her own identities.

I here repeat what I have written in the Methodology Chapter about the image of a daughter-in-law in Vietnamese society. It is socially assumed in our Vietnamese society that being a daughter-in-law is tough, since a girl has to try hard to please her in-law family, which often involves her husband's extended family members and relatives. She will have to distribute her attention everywhere so as not to be judged as being bad. She has to 'please' many parties. Also, her ethics and morality are seen as crucial as to whether she will be in favour of or not. Walking into her husband's family, her ethics and morality are observed through her behaviours toward her in-law family members and to what extent she can suppress her dissatisfaction and expectations to please them. She is expected to love, respect and satisfy her in-law family and at the same time sacrifice her personal life to such an extent that can secure her favoured position in her husband's family. So when being a teacher is compared with being a daughter-in-law, it suggests that being a teacher is already hard, but being a daughter-in-law of a hundred families is a hundred times more difficult. How can a teacher satisfy all expectations from multiple parties? This expression thus indicates how difficult it is to play the teacher role in the society, where whatever a teacher does is being judged by the whole society.

Being a teacher of English in Vietnam teaching English in the increased mobile, transnational and global world, the teacher participants had to consider all these factors so as to perform best, particularly in terms of ethics and morality. Taking into account the global English and the literature of critical notions of English as an international language discussed in Chapter 3, the teachers of English in this study had to perform morality in an even more conscious and aware manner, which responds to both social, cultural, professional expectations of teachers and the potentially negative impacts of the global on the local/national pedagogical values and practices. Western-trained teachers of English in Vietnam take all of these responsibilities and play all of these roles, yet, struggle to construct their identities, which are their own and embrace the sense of connectedness and continual development of dynamic change.

In light of the above discussions, the following section presents a number of implications for the ELT field.

8.3 Implications for the ELT field

Based on the ways in which the participants of this study identified themselves in relation to their movement in space and time between their home country, Vietnam, and Australia, and to the politics of English and ELT, specifically postcolonial notions of Self and Othe. this study suggests a number of implications for the ELT field. It is hoped that the~ .mplications might help serve those who are involved in this field.

8.3.1 Postcolonial theories could be used as a vehicle for critical literacy

This study recommends that postcolonial theories be used as vehicle for critical literacy, in particular for TESOL teachers. One way of doing this is having explicit discussions about the teacher's role in TESOL classes, where students come from many different cultural backgrounds. They need to be given the chance to express their perceptions of themselves as teachers through class activities, such as group discussions and teacher-student discussions. Students should not be left to reflect on the application of theory to their roles in their own contexts by themselves. Rather, explicit debate about these roles needs to be encouraged, and this needs to be included in teaching units.

In order for this suggestion to better serve TESOL students, it is important that TESOL curriculum should be pervaded with critical literacy. Theories that have given the Self a comfortable position need to be presented to students for challenging and questioning. Likewise, students also need to be introduced to theories that have defined them as a particular group of people, for example 'Asian students' or 'non-native teachers of English'. They need to have opportunities to discuss these matters critically in class and in written tasks. Local and international students then would understand and appreciate each other better.

8.3.2 TESOL discourse needs to draw on multiple theoretical bodies of knowledge

To better serve English users, it is important that TESOL discourse both acknowledges the multiplicity of ways of viewing the world and incorporates these ways in its whole

repertoire. TESOL curriculum thus needs to look at different practices and values through the lenses of more than one perspective. This benefits both TESOL providers and its users. While TESOL providers can enrich and broaden their understanding of multiple theoretical bodies of knowledge, TESOL users can better represent themselves and thus can participate more actively in TESOL activities at all levels.

8.3.3 Explicit on-going orientations about changing senses of self need to be introduced

Since TESOL students normally experience tensions between their apparently contradictory roles and selves when they go to an English-speaking country for training in TESOL, it is necessary to introduce explicit on-going orientations about changing senses of self before, during and after a course of study. These orientations should act as an arena for TESOL students to express and exchange their perceptions of their identities.

For example, before commencing their course, TESOL students can be divided into groups, and each group maintains on-going contacts among its members, through means such as focus group discussions. In such discussions, they will talk about how they identify themselves as teachers and learners of English, and how their views change as they go on with their course. Those focus groups will have a channel, by which they can give feedback to teaching staff. They may also choose to have a mentor or liaison person who can act as a bridge to staff on their requests to deal with issues that affect their identities negatively.

8.3.4 Encouraging TESOL students to write about identity

This study suggests that by encouraging TESOL students to write about identity, we can help raise their awareness of their own identities and this thus would help them negotiate their identities in such a way that serves their development. Moreover, it would further inform lectures in their growing understanding of the users of English whom they teach.

8.3.5 Making the TESOL classroom a site of mutual understanding

Since the TESOL classroom is a site of identity formation, and we can control its context to some extent, this study suggests that we make it a site of respectful and open interchange of ideas. Together with explicitly introducing postcolonial theories to

students, this could be achieved by encouraging students to form multi-national groups. These groups would then reflect on identity-related issues in the class in a respectful and open manner.

8.4 Directions for further research

Since this study only focuses on the processes of identity formation of Vietnamese teachers of English who were studying TESOL in Australian universities, it would be useful to conduct more research to explore how their processes of identity formation perhaps change or not when they return home.

I carried out this study as an insider researcher. It would be useful to have more research conducted by insider researchers to see commonalities and differences between groups in relation to disciplines and cultures.

8.5 The work is complete, but the identity 'journey' is on-going

On completion of this study, my understandings have changed and grown, so has my identity. I have learnt how to appreciate others' ways of doing, their values and practices. I have learnt to live in harmony with diversity and multiplicity. If I used to think that there was only one way to interpret the world, the Vietnamese way, then I have now enriched my ways of communicating with the world. By bringing two seemingly completely different bodies of knowledge together in this study, the Vietnamese and Western, I can see the East and West complementing and harmonising with each other. Without one the other does not fulfil the job. By making them work together, this study does not deny the multiplicity of identities. Likewise, through my use of multiple tools, not just Western and Vietnamese perspectives on language, culture and identity, without forcing them into a coherent model, this study reflects the multiplicity of experiences of identities.

I have realized that identity is multiple and dynamic, and that people interpret values and practices differently based on their ways of knowing and their positioning in the world (Hall 1997a, b, Gee 1999, Dolby 2000, Farrell 2000). I have come to understand that identity is not one stable entity (Hall & du Gay 1996), but it is not just about

changing and fragmentation, either. Still, identity gives people a sense of belonging (Phan Ngoc 1998, Tran Ngoc Them 1999, 2001a, c, Tran Quoc Vuong 2000). It incorporates continuity, fluidity and connectedness, which all create dynamic change within a wholeness. Identity is about both the 'being' and the 'becoming'.

This study has affirmed the seemingly non-negotiable role of morality in teacher identity formation. This has made me more confident in pursuing my self development as a transnational mobile Vietnamese teacher of English. This has also consolidated my perceptions of teachers in Vietnamese society. Morality has, indeed, been proved in this study to be the very element that holds firm the Vietnamese teachers' multiple, even contradicting identities.

Doing this study has given me strength and confidence in voicing my positions in the scholarly world. The literature on the West, mobility, transnationality and hybridity has strongly supported my will and intention to introduce to the academic world my understandings of the Vietnamese scholars' work, which has, not in any sense less equally to the work by Western scholars, shaped my views and influenced my interpretations of the teacher identity formation in the context of transnationality and mobility.

If I used to look at English from one angle, I have now looked at it from multiple angles. With each angle, I see different 'mes'. This study has also offered me more ways of identifying myself in relation to my identity as a Vietnamese teacher of English. My multiple identities have been dynamically shaped, changed and reconstituted, but developed along the lines of my existing and persisting identities. I have changed, but I am not a different Ha. I, instead, have multiple 'has' inside Ha. And this identity 'journey' is always on-going.

Finally I would like to leave you with the borrowed voices of my participants as they identify themselves as teachers, teachers of English, Vietnamese teachers and Vietnamese teachers of English trained in Australia. Their voices from the jungle of multiple identities close this thesis and simultaneously present an open-ended story about teacher identity formation.

Teachers of the English word,

we are tossed about.

defined by others,

insecure

yet whole.

We are special,

knowledge experts, moral guides

and yet the public's tails.

We have access to the world,

we belong,

yet seem foreignised,

unselectively

Westernised.

We are not allowed to be human,

to fall in love

(with students),

yet we need to live, to change.

We are nobody in this world of Others

yet not the shadow of native English teachers

we light the way for our own.

We are the daughter-in-law of a hundred families

And proudly ourselves,

growing.

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Appendix A

(Excerpts from an individual interview with Kien)

Q: What did you teach for the first time?

A: At first, I taught English not for students in the Department of English, but for students in Russian Department for one year. Then I taught first-year students in English Department for another year, then second-year students for one year, and after that I specialized in Language Theories for third and fourth-year students, and in-service students.

Q: How often do you teach at uni?

A: About 10-15 lectures (each lecture lasts 45 minutes).

Q: Is this a lot?

A: Average.

Q: Do you teach third and fourth year students?

A: Mainly third-year. I teach them pronunciation and phonetics. Fourth-year students learn high level subjects, such as pragmatics and discourse analysis. But I think what students really need is basic knowledge of such as grammar and pronunciation, whereas fourth-year subjects are too abstract for them. If you ask 100 students, probably all of them have no ideas of these subjects because they are even difficult for teachers. Moreover, these subjects are not so practical. So when students are overloaded with such different and difficult definitions, they are able to remember them but I'm not sure they understand or not ... (smiling). I also think that these subjects don't really help students develop their linguistic ability. For communication other basic knowledge is more necessary.

Q: I agree with you because I think not all students write a thesis in their fourth year.

A: That's right. Let's take 'discourse analysis' for example. In Australian universities, it is taught to postgraduates, not undergraduates. It's only introduced to those who specialized in languages. But at my university in Vietnam, students are 'forced' to learn it without understanding it. Moreover, it is taught in English. I know that students of the

Vietnamese language at X University also study the subject but they study in Vietnamese.

Q: You've already studied and taught in Vietnam and studied teaching in Australia. Can you tell me about your feelings and experiences on coming back to a students' life?

A: Everybody says that students in Australia have more self-study; meanwhile our students (both when I was a student and when I am a teacher) find it difficult to take notes in lectures if a lecturer doesn't read his lecture slowly for them to write it down. Our students often wait for lecturers to ask them to take notes. If a lecturer doesn't let students take notes, they don't like him/her because our students often think that 'having something written down means learning something'. And they often fail to take any notes or just have some poorly expressed notes. So when exams come, students normally feel nervous because they have nothing to read, and if a lecturer asks them to read the textbook, they complain that the book is difficult and long to read. Generally speaking, students in Australia read more without being told to read.

The relationship between teachers and students in Vietnam is different from that in Australia. Due to Confucianism influences, there is always a distance between students and teachers except in special cases. Teachers always want to have a distance with students. And so students find it hard to ask teachers about their study. Moreover, in Vietnam our teachers don't spend a lot of time with students because they have to work overtime to earn their livings since their salaries are very low. And if they have to be at uni 4-5 days a week without being paid higher, they can't manage their lives with such low salaries. Meanwhile, Australian teachers normally stay at uni during weekdays and therefore they can spend more time with students. ... So in Vietnam, normally teachers only spend their lecture time with students and I think this is very limited. And if students want to ask a teacher any extra questions, they often ask during breaks. On contrast, in Australia if students want to ask anything, they just need to make an appointment with a teacher in advance, and then they can talk freely with the teacher.

Another difference, I think is assessment and evaluation. In Vietnam, assessment and evaluation are still mainly based on midterm exams, end-of-term exams and memorization with exact answers, and there is normally one correct answer from keys. So if students give the same answer as the key, they get good mark, if not, bad marks. In other words, this way of assessment is not flexible at all. Meanwhile in Australia, they

are very flexible. They have different solutions for one question and you can get good marks if you support your argument well.

The way teachers assess students' papers is also very different. In Vietnam, teachers may choose to return or not to return students' papers and generally they don't mark the papers carefully and clearly. They don't have a separate sheet of paper for their own comments. As a result, students don't feel satisfied and if they want to ask or complain why they get good or bad marks, they find it very hard to ask. On contrast, in Australia, teachers often mark students' papers very carefully with clear comments explaining why a point is good or bad, etc. And when they return papers to students, they give each of them a paper sheet of comments and the marks for each question.

Q: So you like or dislike the way students study here?

A: Honestly speaking, I felt a bit lazy at first when I had to be a student again, but I'm then eager to learn because I think I can learn a lot in a different environment.

Q: Example?

A: For example, research skill. In Vietnam, no one teaches you how to do research. Of course in Australia they don't always teach but I learn these skills from the requirements of assignments which ask me to interview people or conduct a survey. I also learn about essay writing, which part is important, which part comes first. And the teaching style is also different. If in Vietnam, teachers often impose you with their ideas and if you don't follow them you lose your marks, here everything is more open. I can develop my argument in my own way provided that I can support it well.

Q: What's your impression when you first contacted with this new teaching and learning style?

A: Of course, at first I have to force myself to adjust, but then I find it more relaxing. But of course, if teachers want to implement this style, they must be knowledgeable, not everyone can do that, even here.

Q: Besides knowledgeability, what else do you think of?

A: If we want to introduce this style to Vietnam, I think all teachers must follow the Australian teaching methodology. But I think this methodology can't be applied to our universities. I mean ... (thinking) ... because it is impossible that all teachers would do it simultaneously, and if only a small number of teachers (Western trained ones) do it,

students would feel bored and assume that those teachers don't know how to teach. Let's say while other teachers read their lectures for students to passively write down, we (Western trained ones) on contrast, ask them to read a lot, of course students would complain us. They prefer the other way.

I think one of the reasons why our students can't follow the Australian style is that in Vietnam students have to take so many subjects at one time. They are actually overloaded. In Australia, students have to go to class 3 or 4 times a week but our students go to uni all week from 9am to 5pm. Reading references are available here (Australia) so students can find a lot of books themselves, whereas our students still complain even when they have to read only one textbook. The problem is that our students don't have time for reading because they have to learn too much at school. For example, besides specialized subjects, they have to take irrelevant subjects like maths, geography, etc. When I was a student I didn't have to study those 'crazy' subjects.

Appendix B

Example of reflective writing from Chi (The original was in Vietnamese. I translated it into English)

If we want to talk about the suitability of the subjects in our courses here, then we have to talk about teachers' flexibility when they want to apply those subjects in their teaching at home. I've found many subjects interesting, not only the knowledge, but also the way such knowledge is presented, and I've learnt a lot from such ways. But suddenly I think it over, and I feel unsure whether I could apply the teaching methodologies I've learnt here in my teaching back home, given "my students' background knowledge and language proficiency". Here lecturers only 'introduce' you to knowledge, then you have to read a lot to gain knowledge, and thanks to the fact that I've got to read and look for materials, I've become more 'mature' in understanding both the knowledge I've gained and the way I conceptualise things. So is it right to say that lecturers here have good teaching methodologies? However, how can I ask my students at home to look for books to read and give a presentation on a topic while we have a limited number of resources? And it's not easy for many to access the Internet to look for information. And technology, if I ask my students to apply technology to their teaching, then where can they get a PowerPoint?, etc. Therefore, flexibility is very important. I think I will adapt those methods I've learnt here in a way that suitable to the reality at home. And there is possibility to succeed if I really understand what my students have and need.

As far as subjects for knowledge are concerned, we don't have many subject choices in our university here. We have to choose some particular subjects because there are not 'better' subjects available in the course. For example, at first when I chose the subject 'Literacy', I couldn't think of its applicability in my teaching or in doing any research. But now I think being a practitioner alone is not enough, especially as a university lecturer like me. I need to do a lot of research in order to assert myself and give myself attempts to go further. And because of that, I've now had some interest in 'Literacy' and I think I might explore it further in the future.

In short, it's very difficult to "modify" the suitability or unsuitability [of the subjects in the course] because for example, if we find some things appropriate for our context, Chinese students may find these inappropriate, or vice versa if we don't find one thing suitable, Taiwanese students may be very keen on it. Thus, speaking about Vietnam alone, we should choose subjects that are appropriate for our context at home, then we should try to adapt them in an appropriate and useful way. I myself have a very high respect for our teaching tradition, but sometimes, honestly speaking I must say that there are knowledgeable lecturers here. And I myself admire them a lot, both their knowledge and pedagogical methodologies. However, there are many as 'boring' lecturers here as compared to lecturers Vietnam.

Moreover, as I already talked to you last time about my project, our students at home are EFL learners, so it's impractical if we require them to obtain native-like communication skills and proficiency. Our students don't have enough motives to obtain such things. If any students want to specialise in English at universities, then they tend to study English harder at a high school level. And if any students want to work in foreign companies or joint ventures, or study overseas later, then they tend to have more motives to learn English. It's the truth.