

DEVELOPING HIGHER ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY  
FOR VIETNAMESE PRIMARY EFL TEACHERS:  
A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Vu Thi Thu Trinh

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In loving memory of my very dearest departed mother,

Mary TRUONG THI XA (1939-2007)

who is always with me in spirit with her ongoing prayers  
during my PhD study program at AUT University, New Zealand.  
Her lovely words of encouragement have been engraved in my heart,

*“Study to glorify God on earth and contribute your studies  
to serve the human community towards a safe and just world”*



## **Abstract**

The English language proficiency of primary teachers is of considerable interest in many non-Anglo countries including Vietnam. In the Vietnamese context of primary EFL teacher training, the level of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency has been mandated in government policy since 2008 when graduating TEYL teachers are required to meet the B2 level of English as described on the Council of Europe Framework of Reference (see Government of Vietnam, 2008). However, there has been insufficient research into the English language proficiency level of primary EFL teachers in Asian countries (Nguyen, 2011). This study, therefore, aims to contribute to the construction of knowledge about the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in the Vietnamese context of English language education at the primary school level. In particular, I focus on mid-primary young English language learners from 8-11 years of age (3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> graders) and EFL teacher training for this age group in public primary schools in Vietnam. This is because the Vietnamese government has called for the development of EFL teacher training for this age group recently.

As a 'research insider', I conducted an investigation into TEYL in a small and poor province in Vietnam where the issues were examined through critical ethnography, a qualitative research approach focusing on the cultural interpretation of people's behaviours in a "natural" setting (Kawamura, 2011). Twenty-nine participants in this study were those who are directly involved in English language education at the primary school level. These participants came from three target groups including (i) nine primary EFL teacher trainers at a local teacher training college in group one; (ii) ten primary EFL teacher trainees in group two and (iii) ten primary EFL teachers in group three. Data was collected from three major sources including (i) twenty-nine

semi-structured interviews conducted in the Vietnamese language, (ii) sixteen classroom observations (i.e. eight TEYL teacher training classes and eight TEYL classes at five public primary schools) and (iii) relevant materials. The data was audio-recorded, transcribed and translated for thick descriptive analysis (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Neuman, 2011).

A thematic analysis of different sources of data has indicated that Vietnam is facing challenges for developing high quality, relevant, primary level EFL training. The challenges include (i) the limited proficiency (especially oral proficiency) of graduating students compared to what is required by the government policy; (ii) the low motivation of student teachers to improve their ELP; (iii) the seeming lack of prioritisation for the improvement of ELP in TEYL teacher preparation programs; (iv) a possible shortage of TEYL teacher trainers with high enough ELP themselves; (v) difficulty in designing and developing relevant TEYL teacher training materials to improve TEYL student teachers' ELP; (vi) difficulty in designing ELP tests equivalent to the internationally-recognized Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2-level standard (Government of Vietnam, 2008) and (vii) the lack of opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through current TPD programs, particularly in the area of oral English for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. In addition, Communist Party leader power corruption, a national problem (Vietnam Times, 2015), has been identified as a significant hindrance to increasing teacher trainee motivation.

The argument advanced in this thesis is that specific steps need to be taken to build high-quality primary English language teacher capacity so that teachers can provide more effective opportunities for children to learn to be increasingly proficient in English. To help young learners acquire a desired level of English proficiency, TEYL policy needs to be critically

reviewed to ensure that current English language teacher proficiency is enhanced and the professional skills of local language teachers particularly in TEYL are improved.

Based on the findings, this study has pointed out suggested areas of improvements that potentially help develop higher levels of English language competence particularly in the area of oral English for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam and other countries. Also, the study has provided a number of implications (i) for TEYL teacher education policy-makers and (ii) for TEYL teacher trainers. Given the importance of helping primary school children attain a desired level of ELP in effective TEYL and TEYL teacher development for higher English language proficiency, the study has also contributed to the construction of a collaborative model of developing higher English language proficiency in Vietnam. It has proposed a blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam and other countries can perhaps benefit from.

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## **Abbreviations**

ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations

AUTEC: Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

BA: Bachelor of Arts

CAE: Cambridge English: Advanced

CD: Compact Disc

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CERI: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation

DVD: Digital Video Disc

EAL: English as an Additional Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EFLT: English as a Foreign Language Teaching

EIL: English as an International Language

EL: English Language

ELP: English Language Proficiency

ELLiE: Early Language Learning in Europe

ELT: English Language Teaching

EU: European Union

FCE: Cambridge First Certificate in English

FL: Foreign Language

GMT: Grammar Translation Method

HCMC: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

INSTEP: In-service Teacher Education Programs

IPs: Immersion Programs

IT: Information Technology

KET: Key English Test

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LCIE: Language & Culture Immersion Experiences

LLL: Life Long Learning

LTPD: Language Teacher Professional Development

MA: Master of Arts

MOET: (Vietnamese) Ministry of Education and Training

NZDS: New Zealand Development Scholarship program

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PD: Professional Development

PET: Preliminary English Test

RQ1: Sub-Research Question One

RQ2: Sub-Research Question Two

RQ3: Sub-Research Question Three

SC: Social Constructionism

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TALK: Trainings programm zum Aufbau von LehrerInnen-Kompetenzen zur Forderung von Lebenslangem Lernen (German translation)

TEE: Teach English in English

TEPS: Teaching English to Primary Students

TESOL: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

TEYL: Teaching English to Young Learners

TIE: Teacher In-service Education Programs

TL: Target Language

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication

TPD: Teacher Professional Development

TPDL: Teacher Professional Development in Languages

TPR: Total Physical Response

VAT: Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project

VOA: Voice of America

WTO: World Trade Organization




## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no materials previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor materials which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institutions of higher learning.



Signature



Name

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development in their local teaching practices. For ethical reasons, I am not permitted to reveal their names in this thesis. However, I would like to express my very deep gratitude to them all for providing me with a rich source of data. I was very impressed with the generosity of their time as well as their willingness to have me observe their classes. Also, I am very grateful to the would-be thirtieth teacher trainer participant of this study for his research support.

According to my data collection schedule, he would be the last interviewee in this study (i.e. some particular day in November 2012). That was because I would have liked to have listened to his individual opinions for my study. However, my plan for interviewing him failed because God called him on 6 November 2012. He was taken to hospital at the beginning of November 2012 and died of lung cancer later. The bad news of his sudden death came as a shock to me. For this reason, there were only twenty-nine participants in this study instead of thirty participants.

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*\*An “accompanied” NZDS-Public student means that my son, Huu Le, as an immediate family dependent who lives with me in New Zealand, working towards NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) at St. Paul’s College (years 11-13) is also sponsored by NZAID during my scholarship period.*

# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

As in all non-Anglo countries English has become very important in Vietnam. Since the early 1990s Vietnam has witnessed a considerable increase in the number of English learners at all ages including primary school children. This is because English is employed in Vietnam (i) for global information exchange, (ii) for both international and regional trade, (iii) for worldwide travel, (iv) for the wide application of modern knowledge from developed countries to daily life, (v) for access to well-paid employment in many different fields in big cities in Vietnam and (vi) for the opportunity of winning scholarships to study in industrially developed countries sponsored (vi.1.) by the Vietnamese government (Government of Vietnam, 2010) and (vi.2.) by other developed countries' governments (Australian Development Scholarships, 2012; New Zealand ASEAN Scholars Awards, 2012).

Because of the importance of English in Vietnam, in this study, I have examined some possible ways to help improve the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in the particular context of Vietnamese TEYL teacher education. I adopted critical ethnography as my selected methodology, theoretically underpinned by social constructionism. My thesis is about issues concerning TEYL teacher education in Vietnam and its related governmental policies. I have examined the inconsistencies in practices and policies that contribute to hindering the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese TEYL teachers. It should be noted that my research does not involve the objective testing of levels of teacher English proficiency.

I undertook research with 29 participants who were directly involved in English language education at the primary school level in Vietnam. These informants came from three different groups. There were: (i) nine primary EFL teacher trainers in group one, (ii) ten primary EFL student teachers in group two and (iii) ten practicing primary EFL teachers in group three. Data were gathered through (i) 29 semi-structured interviews, (ii) 16 classroom observations and (iii) relevant policy and curriculum documents thus providing a rich field of data for thematic analysis (Matthew & Ross, 2010) that I hope is “suited to informing policy development” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.91). Field work was conducted in the Vietnamese language and audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English. The findings indicated that Vietnamese graduating primary EFL teachers probably have lower ELP compared to what is required by government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg. The research results also showed that Vietnam is facing major challenges in raising English language teacher proficiency. The challenges include (i) the limited proficiency (especially oral proficiency) of graduating students compared to what is required by the government policy; (ii) the low motivation of student teachers to improve their ELP; (iii) the seeming lack of prioritisation for the improvement of ELP in TEYL teacher preparation programs; (iv) a possible shortage of TEYL teacher trainers with high enough ELP themselves; (v) difficulty in designing and developing relevant TEYL teacher training materials to improve TEYL student teachers’ ELP; (vi) difficulty in designing ELP tests equivalent to the internationally-recognized Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2-level standard (Government of Vietnam, 2008) and (vii) a lack of opportunities for improving teachers’ ELP through current TPD programs, particularly in the area of oral English for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. In addition, Communist Party leader power corruption, a national problem

(Vietnam Times, 2015), has been identified as a significant hindrance to increasing teacher trainee motivation (sections 2.6).

The argument advanced in this thesis is that specific steps need to be taken to improve TEYL teacher English language education at both pre- and in-service levels to ensure that Vietnamese primary student teachers can reach higher ELP particularly in the area of spoken English. This in turn, will enable them to facilitate children's English language learning in public primary schools. To help young English language learners acquire a desired CEFR A2-level standard of ELP as required by the Vietnamese government (see Government of Vietnam, 2008), TEYL teacher education practices in Vietnam need to be consistent with government policies to ensure that primary EFL teachers are appropriately trained and their English language proficiency reaches a high enough level to teach English effectively to primary school children.

Given the importance of integrating ELP more centrally and effectively into pre-service and in-service TEYL teacher training programmes, the study has suggested a collaborative model for developing primary EFL teachers' ELP in Vietnam. This is a model that other countries wishing to embed high-quality English language education at earlier levels of primary schooling can perhaps also benefit from. Also, this study has recommended a blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam.

It should be noted that this research at first started out examining the full range of professional skills and knowledge required by primary teachers for teaching English to young learners in Vietnam. Previously, I intended to consider a number of issues such as (i) child development; (ii) Vygotsky's child language development theory and its implications for language teachers;



(iii) English language teacher proficiency; (iv) teaching strategies appropriate for young English language learners; (iv) supplementary professional skills namely (iv.1.) artistic abilities and (iv.2.) hands-on computer skills and (v) learning skills to be lifelong learners for easier up take of professional development opportunities. The broad range of engagement is reflected in the design and nature of the research tools (chapter five). As I continued with the research, however, the amount of data and scope proved to be too wide. With my supervisors I took the decision to focus on one key issue that had become very important in my province when I returned for data collection in 2012 (i.e. the period from 27/8/2012 to 30/12/2012). At this time, the Vietnamese government required all EFL teachers in my targeted province to sit an IELTS/TOEFL/CAE/FCE-adapted exam equivalent to international standards of the CEFR framework to measure EFL teachers' ELP. Consequently, the area of primary EFL teacher education for promoting higher ELP, particularly oral proficiency in English seemed to be the most fruitful area for in-depth engagement. Because my participants were all passionately interested in the CEFR-related issues, including the Vietnamese government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg, most of the data of my thesis are full of discussions and reflections concerning the CEFR B2-level international standard required for TEYL teachers' ELP.

This thesis has therefore been narrowed to ensure depth of engagement with one area of inquiry. The emphasis is on developing the oral ELP of TEYL teachers in Vietnam because it is believed that young children particularly need good quality oral input to learn English as an additional language. The ideal is that in the early stages of learning English, children “encounter English through talk and practice English through talk” (Cameron, 2003, pp.108-109). An emphasis on oral English language skills in TEYL requires TEYL teachers to have a

high level of ELP (see Butler, 2004; Cameron, 2003; Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015; Garton, Copland & Burns, 2011; Harmer, 2007; Manh, Nguyen & Burns, 2017; Pinter, 2009 & 2011). Models of pronunciation, type and level of classroom language input, the design of language learning activities and many other matters depend on the ELP of teachers.

In fact, TEYL teachers' ELP is a matter of concern for many non-Anglo countries besides Vietnam (Baker, 2008; Butler, 2004; Enever & Moon, 2009; Garton et al. 2011; Ghatage, 2009; Littlewood, 2007; Moon, 2009, 2005; Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Vu & Pham, 2014). To meet the demand from a variety of sectors of society for the early introduction of English as a global language to young learners in national primary education, governments of many countries have therefore launched campaigns to raise ELP for TEYL teachers through pre-service and in-service TEYL teacher education and training programmes.

In the next section, I explain the rationale and significance of this study (section 1.2) and then describe the focus of my research (section 1.3). The overarching research question of this study and three sub-research questions are also presented. Reflections on my own background, qualifications and experience as an EFL learner, an EFL teacher, an EFL teacher trainer and a "research insider" in relation to the topic of this thesis are provided in section 1.4. The chapter ends by explaining the structure of the thesis and the aim of each thesis chapter in section 1.5.

## **1.2 Rationale and significance of the study**

### **1.2.1 Rationale for the study.**

My impetus for conducting this research is to help improve primary English as a foreign language teaching (EFLT) and teacher training in Vietnam. I have chosen to do this by

locating my study within a Teacher Training College in Vietnam where I have worked as an English language teacher and an English language teacher trainer. I particularly focus on EFL teacher training for mid-primary children from eight to eleven years of age (i.e. from the third graders to the fifth ones) in public primary schools in Vietnam. This is because the Vietnamese government has called for the development of EFL teacher training for these young learners recently. Previously, compulsory English as a foreign language for Vietnamese children was taught from the age of 11 (grade six, Junior high school level). However, the age has now been lowered to eight years (grade three, primary school level) due to the 2008 Decree issued by the government:

Implement a 10-year English language education program, starting in grade three compulsory English in public schools at all levels. From the year 2010-2011 deploy this program for approximately 20% of students in grades three and gradually expand the scale to reach about 70% by the school year 2015-2016 and 100% by 2018-2019...

(Translated version- Government of Vietnam, 2008, p.1)

This Decree has seen parts of Vietnam progressively implementing pilot programs for teaching English to eight-year-old learners in grade three, starting from the academic year 2010-2011. In Vietnam, the school academic year in public primary schools often starts at the beginning of September and finishes at the end of May. Compulsory English in the grade-three curriculum will be required by law by the school year 2018-2019. On the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)'s suggestion, our English department and other colleges and universities around Vietnam have taken additional responsibility for training and supplying mid-primary English language teachers for local public primary schools. Hence, we need well-qualified, well-trained primary English language teacher trainers in this new field.

Under the high pressure of TEYL teacher education, primary EFL teacher trainers are challenged to train and develop Vietnamese primary EFL teachers to have ELP to the B2-level of the CEFR (see Government of Vietnam, 2008). Oral English is particularly important because of its centrality in the teaching of young learners. The Vietnamese policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008) stipulates that Vietnamese primary EFL teachers need to become effective communicators in the current global environment, not only in written English but also in oral English. The level required is roughly equivalent to a minimum IELTS (International English Language Testing System) (Academic stream) score of 6.0 or TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 550. As a TEYL teacher trainer myself, I was previously directly responsible to the Rector of a teacher training college (i.e. B College) and Dean of the English department for the training and development of ELP for local primary EFL teachers. Consequently, I am particularly well placed as a “research insider” to conduct this investigation. By examining the problems through critical ethnography (Kawamura, 2011; Liamputtong, 2009; Starfield, 2010), I believe I have achieved a close understanding of the issues at stake for Vietnamese primary EFL teacher training and the development of higher ELP with an emphasis on oral English.

There is increasing concern internationally about how teaching language proficiency for subject languages (including English) can be integrated into current pre-service and in-service language teacher training programmes. The issue is examined in a number of studies such as the American Council for the teaching of FL (2002); Cooper (2004); Fraga-Canadas (2010); Harvey, Conway, Richards & Roskvist (2010); Nunan (2003); Richards, Conway, Roskvist & Harvey (2013); Samadi & Al-Ghazo (2013); Schulz (2002). However, none of these deal with the matter of English for TEYL in Vietnam. Consequently, this study has attempted to

construct an improved model of raising ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations for related parties involved in TEYL teacher education have been provided.

### **1.2.2 Significance of the study.**

This research project holds significance in five areas:

Firstly, this study should benefit young English language learners who will learn English much more easily and efficiently if their teachers are able to provide a supportive EFL learning environment, rich in English language input. Such an environment will mean more opportunities for young English language learners to (i) hear and practise authentic English in meaningful situations; and (ii) participate in creative language use supported by their English language teachers (Pomerantz & Bell, 2007).

Secondly, this investigation seeks to assist primary EFL student teachers and practicing primary EFL teachers who need to become proficient users of the English language, particularly spoken English language through high-quality TEYL teacher education. Then, these TEYL student teachers and practicing TEYL teachers will be able to support primary school children in the development of their ELP.

Thirdly, this study hopes to support primary EFL teacher trainers in finding solutions to the challenges in raising ELP for primary EFL student teachers, particularly in the area of spoken ELP. Primary EFL teacher trainers play a significant role in TEYL teacher education policy-making by contributing opinions and sharing primary English language teacher training experiences in local situations to ensure that TEYL teacher education policies are appropriate

for particular contexts. The process for this contribution to national policy is clarified in section 8.6.

Fourthly, this research should benefit TEYL teacher education policy-makers because it attempts to describe and critically analyse TEYL teacher education policies and practices in Vietnam. In other words, the research is an attempt to give a needed boost to making significant changes in the integration of higher ELP into teacher education programs at both pre- and in-service levels in the context of Vietnam. Furthermore, the study suggests that the low quality of ELP training TEYL teachers receive is the outcome of less-than-ideal collaboration between several different parties, including policy makers, rather than the poor work of individual EFL teacher trainers at the local college under study.

Finally, this study may help bridge the gap in understanding some possible ways that TEYL teachers' ELP in public primary schools can be developed. In Taiwan when compulsory English in public primary schools was lowered from grade five to grade one, the Taiwanese education system faced a shortage of primary EFL teachers with a high enough level of ELP (Chang, 2007). Despite many language policies being reviewed and implemented in Taiwan such as (i) "the three-tier teacher support system", a new teacher in-service training program, and (ii) the recruitment of native speakers of English to improve the current English learning environment, the problem of primary EFL teachers with a relatively low level of English language competence remained unsolved (Chern, 2010). My study, therefore, is an attempt to provide empirical research suggesting the implementation of new initiatives and programs in Vietnam that other countries can perhaps benefit from.

### **1.3 Focus of the study**

This study focuses on answering the overarching research question (RQ),

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

This overarching research question generated three sub-questions as follows:

RQ1: What contextual challenges hinder Vietnamese TEYL student teachers from meeting the international standard of English language proficiency (ELP) required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

RQ2: How could the development of higher English language proficiency (ELP), particularly oral English, be better integrated into current pre-service TEYL teacher training programmes?

RQ3: How could higher levels of English language proficiency be developed through in-service teacher education programs (INSTEPs)?

These questions are addressed in the literature review and through the findings which are presented in two chapters: six and seven.

### **1.4 From an EFL learner to a “research insider”**

In this section, I describe my journey from being an EFL learner to a “research insider” in relation to the topic of this thesis. Such EFL experience has helped to provide me with an understanding of the problems of teachers’ English language proficiency in Vietnam, particularly the Vietnamese primary EFL teachers’ ELP in the area of oral English. Also, I would like to share my story to give an insight into English language education in Vietnam

and the challenges primary EFL teacher trainers face in raising higher ELP for TEYL student teachers, particularly in the area of oral English. There are elements of my story that are likely to be typical in Vietnamese schools even today.

#### **1.4.1 My story as an EFL learner.**

Over forty years ago I started learning English in grade six at a local junior secondary school at the age of eleven. At that time, the teaching methods of English were purely the grammar-translation approach. No visual aids, no games and no songs were employed during English lessons. The textbook mandated by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was used as the only English language teaching material together with some white chalk and a very large blackboard. The teacher closely followed the textbook by reading, explaining grammatical points and translating paragraphs word by word. Over forty EFL learners were neatly arranged to sit in rows facing the blackboard. As EFL learners, we were required to learn by heart all the vocabulary in the lesson, at least from 30 to 40 words but did not know how to use any of these words appropriately or how to pronounce them accurately in meaningful sentences. We never had an opportunity to communicate in English with foreigners or even listen to English speakers' voices from cassette players. Although we passed all the required ELP tests with full marks in the English writing tests which emphasised grammar and vocabulary, we had difficulty in freely expressing in English what we actually wanted to say. Instead we just answered mechanically what we were asked. The English lessons were boring and tedious and because of this most of my classmates loathed English. By contrast, I was attracted to the subject. Quite frankly, I liked hearing the sounds of the English language in class because they carried me back to my younger childhood memories. When I was a child of five, I often followed my parents to do business with



American soldiers as sunglasses sellers. I heard the strange and funny sounds but did not understand what they were talking about. I was exceedingly curious to find out what the American soldiers had said to my parents. From a very young age, I was keen on the idea of travelling so that I would have an opportunity to freely communicate with people from other nations. From my point of view, attaining a good command of English particularly achieving a high level of oral proficiency in English has been an important fulfilment of my childhood dream.

#### **1.4.2 Motivation for working as a “research insider”.**

In 1990, I was required to work at a local teacher training college due to the shortage of provincial EFL teacher trainers. Like other EFL teacher trainers at local colleges in Vietnam, we did not do any formal course in EFL teacher training when taking on this very important role. However, in 1998, I was able to participate in the Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) in Hanoi, a form of local EFL teachers’ professional development prepared by the Vietnamese government with the assistance of the Australian government. The three-month immersion in English during our EFL teacher training work gave me aspirations to study an MA in an English-speaking country. This dream was fulfilled when I won a Vietnamese government scholarship to study a Master of Education in Australia in 2005. In this study, I gradually explored many major differences between the two cultures, particularly in respect of learning and teaching. It seemed that what was assumed as appropriate in the culture of teaching and learning in Vietnam might be inappropriate in Australia and vice versa. Moreover, a low level of proficiency in English, particularly in the area of oral English was one of the major challenges that many international Asian students including international Vietnamese students

faced when studying in English-speaking countries (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991) and I was no exception.

Like other international students whose English was not their first language, I was required to pass the IELTS test to the required level for the Master course (i.e. an IELTS overall score of 6.5 at least). Thus, I was expected to rapidly improve my ELP including oral English and to promptly adapt my individual strategies of learning so as to attain my desired academic achievements.

In 2007, I returned to Vietnam and continued working as a local teacher trainer. At that time, I was informed of my new responsibility to train primary EFL teachers for local public primary schools. I was selected to teach the subject, Teaching English to Primary Students (TEPS), to the third-year students of the English department. However, I was not satisfied with my primary EFL teacher training work. We ran into so many difficulties with the new project of TEYL teacher education particularly the challenge of raising the Vietnamese TEYL student teachers' ELP, particular oral English, as required by the government policy (see Government of Vietnam, 2008; Nguyen, 2011). Thus, I applied for a New Zealand Development Scholarship (NZDS) in 2009 in the hope that my thesis might contribute to the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools.

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

Chapter one has presented the rationale and significance of the study, followed by (i) the focus of the study, (ii) background and qualifications of the researcher and (iii) thesis structure. Chapter two explains the context of the research and contextual challenges to develop higher ELP, particularly oral English, for primary EFL teachers as required by the

government policy in Decree No.1400/QĐ-TTg. Chapters three and four constitute the literature review and therefore provide a framework for the development of the argumentation of this thesis. Chapter five describes the research methodology and design of the study. It also explains social constructionism (SC) as the theoretical basis underpinning this study. The findings of the study are presented and discussed in two chapters: six and seven. These two chapters tackle the critical issues of the thesis in terms of integrating higher ELP into teacher preparation and in-service programs. Suggested areas for developing higher ELP at both pre- and in-service levels (sections 6.4; 6.5 & 7.4) are the most significant parts of these two chapters and of the whole thesis. Chapter eight draws the conclusions of the study and presents its contributions. It also provides a number of implications from the study for TEYL teacher education policy-makers and for TEYL teacher trainers as well. The chapter brings these together in a suggested collaborative model of developing higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools as well as a blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. Chapter eight also suggests a number of areas for future research.

## **Chapter 2. Context and challenges**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Mai (2014) says that Vietnam has an urgent need for “a massive EFL teacher re-training program” (p.341) at all levels including re-training primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. He points out,

The media (Huong & Giang, 2012; Minh, 2012) reported the shocking results of a nation-wide teachers’ language proficiency assessment test in which, in big cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, only a fifth of those tested achieved the CEFR’s B2 level of language proficiency... Criticisms were made, and plans were carried out to ‘standardize’ teachers’ language proficiency.

(Mai, 2014, p.342)

It should be noted that the CEFR’s B2 level of EFL teachers’ language proficiency mentioned in Mai (2014) is roughly measured by locally constructed, cut-and-paste tests, not actual IELTS/TOEFL. In order to investigate this teacher English language proficiency “problem”, my study has examined how the Vietnamese primary EFL teachers’ ELP can be improved with a particular focus on TEYL teachers’ oral English. According to Borg (2006), “the social, institutional and physical settings in which teachers work have a major impact on their cognition and practices” (p. 275). Thus, the aim of this chapter is to explain the social, institutional and historical context of this study to provide an insight into the development of English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. It also examines a number of challenges arising from the particular context of Vietnam.

The chapter begins by describing the age group covered in the terms “young learners”, “young English language learners” and “primary school children”. Then it presents a description of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and how it became incorporated into Vietnamese government education policy. This is followed by an overview

of English language education in Vietnam, including a description of the role of English as an international language, the beginnings of TEYL, and the current character of TEYL teacher training in Vietnam. Teacher professional development (TPD) and contextual challenges are also discussed.

## **2.2 Clarification of the terms “young learners”, “young English language learners” and “primary school children” in this study**

Children’s ages in primary education in each country may be different. Thus, I would like to clarify the age group covered in the terms “young learners”, “young English language learners” or “primary school children” in this research. In Vietnam, children often attend primary school from six to eleven years of age, but English is introduced as a foreign language for all children from the second semester of grade three. That is, the terms “young learners”, “young English language learners” or “primary school children” in this research refer to mid-primary school children from eight to eleven years of age (i.e. from grade three to grade five in the context of Vietnam).

## **2.3 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and primary EFL teacher education policy in Vietnam**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an internationally accepted framework developed by the 2001 Council of Europe (Broek & van den Ende, 2013; Byram & Parmenter, 2012; Uni & Nishiyama, 2013) with six levels of English language proficiency (ELP) described from level A1 for the lowest level or novice learners to level C2 for the most advanced learners. This framework has been adopted by many governments worldwide as an internationally reliable standard for describing language ability. It provides a

common foundation for the development (i) of language policies, (ii) of language teaching materials, (iii) of language curriculum planning, (iv) of effective language teaching and learning strategies, (v) of language learners' proficiency assessment (Byram & Parmenter, 2012) and (vi) language teacher training (Broek & van den Ende, 2013). In the Vietnamese context, the name "the international standard" or "the European standard" is used interchangeably to refer to the CEFR framework (Huong, 2013; Huong & Giang, 2012). Thus, in this study I use all three terms interchangeably.

It should be noted that although the CEFR framework has received widespread support from many governments worldwide, there exist some concerns (Enever, 2011; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; Little, 2007). Enever (2011) has warned of the inappropriateness of the adoption of the CEFR as a benchmark for young foreign language learners. That is because such references might lead to partial and limited appreciation of the particularities of the development of early language learners. Similarly, Little (2007) has argued that the challenge is "to do with the extent to which the CEFR's proficiency levels can be adapted to the needs of young English language learners" (p. 651). Leung & Lewkowicz (2013) have suggested that the construction of curriculum and assessments based on the CEFR need to be empirically investigated on a regular and systematic basis. According to these two authors, communicative competence in actual social interaction is much more complicated than the CEFR model suggests.

Although there may be growing concerns in relation to the use and application of the CEFR in Europe and elsewhere, the 2008 Vietnamese government campaign which launched English language education reforms including in TEYL teacher education continues to be relevant and the focus of national discussions in Vietnam (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Under this

Decree, graduating TEYL student teachers for teaching in public primary schools are required to reach an ELP level of B2 according to the CEFR descriptors. This is roughly equivalent to IELTS scores of 6.0 or TOEFL scores of 550. In addition, TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges are required to attain an ELP level of C1 and graduating primary school children, A2. This is roughly equivalent to IELTS scores of 7.0 and 3.5 or TOEFL scores of 577 and 340 respectively. It should be noted that before the announcement of Decree No. 1400 QD/Ttg in 2008, the domestic standard or the local standard of ELP was set and ratified by the government. This domestic standard was not related to IELTS or TOEFL. The domestic standard of ELP was often constructed by a local college or a local university and the standard of ELP between local colleges or local universities were not necessarily equivalent.

It is important for the context of this research to state that many in Vietnam (including me) agree with the Vietnamese government about the use of CEFR as the international standard for describing and measuring the proficiency level of Vietnamese learners of English. That is because the previous situation was a local standard of assessment with an emphasis on testing merely English grammar and vocabulary. It is evident that a national policy reform of teaching and learning English in current Vietnam is necessary due to the increasingly urgent need for international and regional communication in English. However, the MOET does need to consider the words of warning of the adoption of the CEFR (Enever, 2011; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; Little, 2007) and perhaps implement additional policies for the assessment of young English language learners.

Despite the international proficiency standards in place, when I returned to Vietnam in 2012, few TEYL teachers in the locality had the professional expertise to design ELP tests equivalent to the CEFR A2-level as required by the MOET for primary school children.

Participants in my study reported that the key techniques for designing the A2-adapted tests that local TEYL teachers use were mainly to “cut and paste” from the various tests of Cambridge Young Learners English (YLE) Tests to make a new test of English by adopting a “mix and mingle” test of English language competence. Currently TEYL teachers in the locality adapt YLE Tests which are provided by Cambridge English Language Assessment (known as University of Cambridge ESOL examinations). The suite includes three qualifications namely (i) Cambridge English: Starters (YLE Starters). This is targeted at pre-A1 level of the CEFR; (ii) Cambridge English: Movers (YLE Movers). This is at the CEFR level A1 and (iii) Cambridge English: Flyers (YLE Flyers) at the A2 level of the CEFR. The positive aspect of YEL tests is that the suite is designed to test four main language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking compared to previously when locally designed tests only tested grammar and writing.

Although Vietnam has adopted the CEFR in FL policies at the national level since 2008 (i.e. Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg signed by Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan on 30/9/2008), there is little evidence that the CEFR and information about the framework has been translated (i) into current TEYL teacher preparation programs, (ii) into the development of TEYL teacher training materials and (iii) into TEYL student teachers’ proficiency assessment in English.

## **2.4 A short history of language education in Vietnam**

The first step to understanding the history of language education in Vietnam is to have an understanding of the country’s history (Table 1).



Table 1: Summary of language education in Vietnam

Timeline	History of language education in Vietnam	Key foreign language(s) adopted for instruction
<b>111BC-938AD</b>	Vietnam was dominated by China	Vietnam had no national language (Do, 2006). The Chinese language (Han & Nom scripts) was adopted at that time (Pham, 1994)
<b>939 AD</b>	Vietnam gained independence from Chinese domination	Vietnamese education was greatly influenced by the Chinese language & the model of Chinese education (Wright, 2002)
<b>Mid-16<sup>th</sup> century-1945</b>	<p>Vietnam was colonized by the French. Roman Catholicism was propagated by French missionaries</p> <p>→ development of ‘QuốcNgữ’ (the Vietnamese language) writing system in Roman characters</p> <p>Alexander de Rhodes, Gaspar do Amaral, Antonio Barbosa &amp; Francisco de Pina were known as contributors to this early QuốcNgữ writing system</p>	<p>QuốcNgữ (the Vietnamese language today) was adopted as the official language</p> <p>The French language was used as the dominant foreign language besides the Chinese language (Han &amp; Nom scripts)</p> <p>English instruction in just a few schools (Wright, 2002)</p>
<b>1946-1954</b>	First Indochina War , known as French Indochina War	French was officially used in national documents besides QuốcNgữ (Wright, 2002)

Timeline	History of language education in Vietnam	Key foreign language(s) adopted for instruction
<b>Early 1990s- 9/2008</b>	<p>The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991</p> <p>On 28 July, 1995 Vietnam became an official member of the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN)</p> <p>On 18 September, 1996 Decree No. 6627/TH was issued → guide the introduction of English as an optional subject from second semester of grade 3</p> <p>In November, 1998 Vietnam participated in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)</p> <p>On 30 October, 2003 Decree No.50/2003 QD-BGD&amp;DT was issued→ guide the optional English language education program at the primary school level →replace for Decree No. 6627/TH in 1996</p> <p>On 11 January 2007 Vietnam became the 150<sup>th</sup> member of the World Trade Organization (WTO)</p>	<p>A significant decrease in the number of Russian language learners as a by-product of the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union</p> <p>The need for international and regional communication (e.g. ASEAN summits, APEC or WTO Ministerial Conferences) → English has become the leading foreign language as a means of global communication → a considerable increase in the number of English language learners including young learner</p> <p>TEYL teachers were required to attain the domestic standard (i.e. holding a local college certificate majoring in English or a B.A degree issued by local universities)</p>

The history of Vietnam is that of a nation torn apart by political strife. As Denham (1992) states, “Vietnam’s linguistic history reflects its political history” (p.61). Moreover, the history of TEYL in Vietnam has been significantly influenced by historical events both domestically and internationally.

The position of English particularly in the system of national foreign language education in Vietnam has dramatically changed over different periods of history (Do, 2006; Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Wright, 2002).

As seen in Table 1, Vietnam was dominated by the Chinese for more than 1,000 years. According to Pham (1994), the Chinese language with Nom and Han scripts (i.e. the adaptations of the Chinese characters) were adopted as Vietnam’s national written language during that period of history.

Wright (2002) has corroborated that Vietnamese education was significantly impacted by Chinese teaching and learning. For many centuries under the rule of the Chinese (i.e. from 111BC to 938 AD), Vietnam had no national language of its own (Do, 2006). Although Vietnam gained independence in 939 AD, its education continued to be heavily influenced by the Chinese language and the model of Chinese education (Wright, 2002). “Quốc Ngữ”, known as the Vietnamese language today was given a name in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century “Quốc Ngữ” was refined when Vietnam was colonised by the French. At that time, Roman Catholicism was propagated by French missionaries who named the indigenous language Quốc Ngữ and developed a Vietnamese language writing system in Latin characters. Alexander de Rhodes, Gaspar do Amaral, Antonio Barbosa and Francisco de Pina were known as contributors to this early Quốc Ngữ writing system (see Pham, 2010; Phong, 2014).

During the time of French colonisation, Vietnam witnessed a significant increase in the number of French learners. According to Wright (2002), the English language was unpopular and French was the most important foreign language after Chinese (Han and Nom scripts). French was used more in oral language contexts and Chinese when writing was involved. However, gradually the French language was officially used in national documents alongside Quốc Ngữ, particularly by the time of the first Indochina war, known as the French Indochina war (i.e. in the period from 1946 to 1954). The war ended in May, 1954 marking the closing stage of French involvement in Vietnam. In the wake of French colonisation, the French language concomitantly lost its dominance in Vietnam.

During the period of the Second Indochina war, known as the Vietnam war or American war (1954-1975), four foreign languages were adopted in Vietnam namely (i) Russian and Chinese in Communist North Vietnam and (ii) American-English and French (to a lesser extent) in non-Communist South Vietnam. This was because Communist North Vietnam was heavily supported by the Soviet Union and China with “military and civilian aid” (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007, p. 163) whereas American-English was mainly employed in non-Communist South Vietnam as a consequence of the American occupation (Do, 2006). French was also used in non-Communist South Vietnam but this decreased after France’s withdrawal in 1954. According to Wright (2002), South Vietnam witnessed a dramatic shift from the French language to American-English from the period of 1958 to 1968 with a significant increase in the number of English learners.

On 30 April, 1975, the second Indochina war ended resulting in the withdrawal of American troops from non-Communist South Vietnam. Communist North Vietnam and non-Communist South Vietnam were reunified. After 1975, four major foreign languages were adopted in

schools in Communist Vietnam namely Russian, Chinese, English and French but the Russian language was the most important as a result of Russian involvement until 1991. In the decade 1975-1985 Vietnam underwent a period of economic stagnation with accelerated inflation. To give a needed boost to the national economy, Vietnam launched an all-round campaign of transformation, known as the open-door policy in 1986 (see Do, 2006). Under this policy, Vietnam promoted its economic reforms by expanding diplomatic relationships with other non-Communist countries in the world (e.g. Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and Australia) despite the political differences. The language for exchanging information in these relationships was and continues to be mainly the English language.

In December, 1991 the dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in a significant decrease in the number of Russian learners in Communist Vietnam. Early in the 1990s, big cities in Vietnam such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), witnessed a shift from the Russian language to the English language (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). Due to the need for international and regional communication (e.g. the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) summits, like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) or the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conferences), the English language has become the leading foreign language in the national system of education in Vietnam since 1990s and it is now the official language of ASEAN.

## **2.5 English and the beginnings of TEYL in Vietnam**

This section examines the role of English as an international language and the beginnings of TEYL in Vietnam. It also offers a reflective and critical commentary on these issues. In the Vietnamese context, the terminology “English as a foreign language” (EFL) or “English as an international language” (EIL) or “English as an additional language” (EAL) is used

interchangeably to refer to English as the most common foreign language. Thus, in this study I use all three terms interchangeably.

The English language, English Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT) in general and TEYL in particular, and teacher development for English language learners including young English language learners in countries where English is not their mother tongue has been a greatly debated issue and Vietnam is no exception. English's tortured/ing history (literally) in Vietnam is something that has been discussed in the context of the so-called "Centre" and "Periphery" debates (Canagarajah, 1999). These two terms have been used in the literature to describe "native English communities" and "non-native English communities" respectively.

English has been a linguistically beneficial weapon of colonisation (Pennycook, 1998). Pennycook (1998) explains that the domination of English has impacted on the way of thinking, life styles and cultural values of the "Periphery". In addition some contend that the spread of English as a global language has led to local traditions being replaced by Western culture (McKay, 2002). Commentators argue that the use of English as the mother tongue of the "Centre" contributes to the unequal relationship between the "Centre" and the "Periphery" (Phan, 2008) in that the latter feels forced to use communication norms of the former because "the Centre" does not speak the languages of "the Periphery". Furthermore, the English language and EFLT have helped "the Centre" achieve their goals in terms of (i) "the Centre" establishing a close rapport with "the Periphery" through English and EFLT so that the latter believes that English is just a means of global communication (rather than a tool for subordination). Additionally, (ii) "the Centre" has been accused of imposing their cultural values and economic authority on "the Periphery" through the English language, EFLT and so-called "aid". One example of this is scholar awards. Phillipson (1992) has suggested that

the intention or at least the effect of “the Centre” scholar awards is that scholar awardees will transfer cultural values and communication norms of “the Centre” home communities of “the Periphery” with potentially deleterious effects.

However, some people including me, believe that these arguments no longer have currency. This is because there is increasing agreement that the English language has achieved the status of an international language or a lingua franca in the vast majority of fields (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Chern, 2010; McKay, 2002; Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003; Llurda, 2004; Phan, 2008; Graddol, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2011; Tonkin & Reagen, 2003). The fact that the Vietnamese government has lowered the age at which English is taught as a compulsory subject at the primary school level helps clarify the significant role of English as an international language in contemporary Vietnam.

As stated in section 2.4, in the early part of the 1990s Vietnam witnessed a significant increase in the number of English language learners including young learners, particularly in big cities. To meet the need for young English language learners, Decree No. 6627/TH was issued on 18 September 1996 (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007) targeted at guiding the introduction of English as an optional subject from the second semester of grade three. There was strong public support for the early introduction of non-compulsory English in the primary education program. Thus, on 30 October 2003 Decree No.50/2003 QD-BGD&DT was issued to replace 1996 Decree No. 6627/TH. The aim of this Decree was to carefully introduce the optional English language education program at the primary school level. The words “carefully introduce” here mean that Decree No.50/2003 provided more guidance to teachers or educators than Decree No. 6627/TH.

On 30 September 2008 Decree No.1400/QĐ-TTg was issued to guide comprehensive reforms in English language education in the period from 2008 to 2020. This included the adoption of the CEFR in teaching, learning and assessment (Government of Vietnam, 2008). It applied to trainers, teachers, student students as well as young English language learners at public primary schools in Vietnam. Previously, TEYL teachers in public primary schools were required to attain a local standard of ELP. That is, they were expected to hold a local college certificate or a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree majoring in English issued by local colleges or universities. However, under Decree No.1400 QĐ/Ttg, Vietnamese primary EFL teachers are required to attain an English language competence level according to the international standard of CEFR (Government of Vietnam, 2008) (i.e. B2 (Vantage) level on the CEFR-equivalent to IELTS score of 6.0 or TOEFL score of 550). Under this Decree, Vietnam is facing challenges in developing Vietnamese EFL teachers' proficiency in English to the levels the government has set (Thu & Le, 2014; Thuy, 2012; 2014a; 2014b). In their research Thu & Le (2014) suggest evidence of a link between the low status of TEYL teachers' ELP and the inappropriateness of current TEYL teacher training programs at local teacher training colleges and universities in Vietnam. They describe the case of Hoang Hong Ha, an English teacher trainer at Hanoi University who states that the amount of time allocated to increasing English proficiency in teacher training programs is unsatisfactory. Additionally, Hoang Hong Ha notes that Vietnamese EFL teachers' oral English is limited due to the influence of "traditional" teaching methods (i.e. the Grammar Translation Method, GTM) and the particular context of English language teaching in Vietnam. Thu and Le (2014) argue that developing TEYL teachers' English language proficiency, particularly oral English for Vietnamese teachers of



English is challenging and time-consuming and this process requires close collaboration between the many parties involved in TEYL teacher education.

Many Vietnamese teachers of English including TEYL teachers in public primary schools even today adopt various versions of GTM because of its convenience. First, GTM requires few teaching resources (i.e. normally a blackboard, some chalk and a textbook assigned by the government with a specific procedure for delivery) whereas other language teaching methods need more teaching resources (e.g. computers, cassette-players, pictures and word-cards). GTM therefore requires less time for lesson preparation. Second, GTM is much easier for English language teachers because material from textbooks can be taught in language learners' L1 (Vietnamese) rather than in the target language (English). Third, communication between English language teachers and English language learners in class is *unproblematic* if conducted through the medium of L1. Thus, paradoxically the target language (English) presents no communication barriers when teaching through the GTM. English language learners tend not to have difficulty in answering the questions of texts which are translated from English into their L1. Fourth, English language teachers have no difficulty in preparation for their language lessons because they conscientiously follow government textbooks and the *right* answers are provided by guidebooks for TEYL teachers. Fifth, English language learners' *competence* is easily evaluated through textbook-oriented examinations rather than through more communicative evaluations. Thus, there is a strong possibility that busy teachers or EFL teachers with a limited level of ELP will adopt the "traditional" method rather than other language teaching methods if given the choice. Thornbury (2006) argues that the survival of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM or "traditional" method) may be due to its simple, low effort and relatively trouble-free implementation, particularly in overcrowded

classes. It seems that for these reasons, the “traditional” teaching method remains popular and is adopted by many Vietnamese teachers of English including TEYL teachers in public primary schools.

Writing in an online article entitled, “Giáo viên sốt vó lo... luyện thi tiếng Anh” (EFL teachers are scared stiff of sitting an internationally-standardized exam of English language proficiency), Thuy (2014a) describes Vietnamese teachers’ low ELP levels. According to Thuy (2014a), only one out of nine hundred Vietnamese teachers of English in Ben Tre province were competent enough to pass an internationally recognized ELP exam at the B2 level required by the government policy (i.e. that is at the rough equivalent to IELTS scores of 6.0 or TOEFL scores of 550. This was a locally constructed test, not actual IELTS). Thuy (2014a) states that one Vietnamese teacher of English in Mo Cay Bac district sat an internationally-recognized exam of English five times but she still was not able to achieve the required score. The author of the article notes that Vietnam is facing major challenges in raising Vietnamese teachers’ ELP, particularly listening and speaking skills in English.

## **2.6 Primary EFL teacher education and contextual challenges**

This section aims to provide an overview of primary EFL teacher education and major challenges arising from the particular context of TEYL teacher education. Generally speaking, the model of education including primary EFL teacher education remains information-orientated in Vietnam. Under this traditional model, which can also be described as the empty vessel model (Mahbubul, 2013, p. 27), the Vietnamese teacher of English is assumed as the expert and transmitter of knowledge about English to students who receive and reproduce the transmitted knowledge passively rather than constructing new knowledge through classroom interaction. This traditional model preference is also evident in TEYL teacher education as

observed in this study and is a contributing factor to the low quality of teaching and learning English in Vietnam.

It should be noted that many social factors are closely associated and lead to the ineffectiveness of TEYL teacher education. However, in Vietnam the low quality of teacher teaching including primary EFL teacher education is frequently blamed on the poor work of TEYL teacher trainers rather than a weak collaboration between relevant parties including governmental policy-makers (Pham, 2011).

Regarding the issue of primary EFL teacher preparation in Vietnam, TEYL student teachers are trained either at local teacher training universities, known as “Đại học Sư phạm” (with four or five years of full-time training or at teacher training colleges, known as “Cao đẳng Sư phạm” (with a full-time, three-year teacher training program). These different institutions in each province in Vietnam may have different entry requirements. Consequently, studying at one kind of institution, rather than another may affect TEYL teachers’ job prospects. Moreover, each local teacher training college or university has its own teacher training program based on the particular situation of the locality. However, all local teacher training colleges or universities throughout the nation are required to adopt an overarching framework mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (Le, 2011).

With reference to student teachers’ assessment, TEYL teacher trainees at local colleges usually take seven Vietnamese-standardized ELP exams throughout the three-year teacher training course. Under the 2008 government policy, graduating TEYL teacher trainees are required to achieve the level-B2 norm of the CEFR. In order to help teacher trainees achieve the expected English language proficiency (ELP), teacher trainers at local colleges are required to design ELP tests equivalent to the international standard to help trainees gradually

get familiar with the forms and levels of testing. However, teacher trainers do not have experience in designing the tests and there is no inter-institutional moderation of the tests.

Under the new system of training TEYL teachers in public primary schools, Vietnamese teachers of young English language learners are required to reach the international B2-level standard by the time of the final graduating ELP exam or the seventh ELP exam (i.e. after three years of studying at local teacher training institutions). However, very few graduating Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainees and TEYL teachers are able to attain this B2 level of ELP (Huong, 2013; Mai, 2014; Thu & Le, 2014; Thuy, 2012, 2014a, 2014b). Thus, some large universities in Vietnam mandated by the government (i.e. Hanoi, Thai Nguyen, Hue, Danang and HCMC) are organizing additional courses in summer for primary EFL teachers to help them reach level-B2 norm of the CEFR. It should be noted that few EFL teacher trainers at national universities in Vietnam have the professional expertise to design ELP tests equivalent to the B2-level international standard. The key techniques of designing the B2-adapted tests are mainly to “cut and paste” from the various tests of IELTS/ TOEFL/ FCE/ TOEIC/ CAE/ PET/ KET to make a new test of English by adopting a “mix and mingle” test of English language competence for Vietnamese graduating TEYL student teachers. The quality of successful graduating TEYL student teachers who have passed the B2-adapted tests designed by the local universities in Vietnam is still a matter of concern to the government. The question is whether these “successful” students can sit and successfully pass an actual B2-equivalent level test such as IELTS or TOEFL (Hoang, 2016).

Currently, EFL teacher trainees at “Đại học Sư phạm” and “Cao đẳng Sư phạm” (teacher training universities and teacher training colleges) do not have to pay for their EFL teacher training course because teacher education in Vietnam including EFL teacher education is

prioritised over other educational fields and funded by the government (Ngan, 2014). Formal qualifications for graduates from the “Đại học Sư phạm” (Teacher Training University) and “Cao đẳng Sư phạm” (Teacher Training College) are a BA and a college certificate in EFL education respectively. Traditionally, University/College graduate students from “Đại Học Sư Phạm” and “Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm” majoring in English were required to pass a Vietnamese-recognized exam rather than an internationally-recognized exam, certifying that they have a satisfactory level of ELP to work as EFL teachers. These University/College graduate students were eligible to teach senior secondary school children (i.e. Years 10-12, ages 16-18) and junior secondary school children (i.e. Years 6-9, ages 10/11-15). Moreover, University/College graduate students from “Đại Học Sư Phạm” or “Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm” majoring in English were eligible to teach English to public primary school children though these graduates were not specifically trained to teach English to children in public primary schools (these graduates receive language pedagogy training for training older students only). That is the case in every institution because there is a public perception in Vietnam that TEYL is simple and easy (Mai, 2014). Thus, University/College graduate students from “Đại Học Sư Phạm” or “Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm” majoring in English are considered to be able to effectively teach younger English language learners.

Although TEYL teachers in public primary schools are required to participate in short-term professional development workshops which are held annually, there is a view that TEYL teachers’ professional skills are not improved through these courses (Mai, 2014; Nguyen, 2011). In such workshops, the Vietnamese language (L1) is usually adopted as the medium of instruction for providing TEYL teachers with a number of teaching techniques for EYL in theory. However, TEYL teachers are not given many opportunities to put their ideas into

practice during and following the workshops. Moreover, they are not supported to develop and practice new teaching techniques for teaching English to young primary school children.

It should be noted that during the period of pre-service EFL teacher training, primary EFL teacher trainees are required to learn four different strands of knowledge. These are: (i) general knowledge involving Communist Party politics or “môn chung” in Vietnamese (e.g. Marxism and Leninism, HoChiMinhism and the information about Vietnamese Communist Party); (ii) basic knowledge about Vietnamese language and culture; (iii) basic psychology and pedagogy and (iv) professional knowledge (e.g. English linguistics, the four macro skills of (iv.1) listening, (iv.2) speaking, (iv.3) reading and (iv.4) writing, (iv.5) English teaching methods for both primary school children and junior secondary students and (iv.6) and an eight-week teaching practicum). It should be noted that all strands of knowledge are taught in L1 (i.e. Vietnamese) except the area of professional knowledge (iv). This area of knowledge and professional skills is taught in a combination of both Vietnamese and English.

Below is an example of a TEYL teacher development program in Vietnam (Table 2). Under Decree No.1400/ QD-Ttg, a few modules such as Information Technology (IT), music, drawing and teaching English to primary students (TEPS) have been added to the TEYL teacher training program since the academic year 2008-2009.

Table 2. Distribution of core modules in the current EFL teacher training program at a local teacher training college

<b>Core modules in teacher training programs</b>	
<i>(i) Basic knowledge involving party politics</i>	(i.1.) Marxism and Leninism (i.2.) HoChiMinhism (i.3.) The Vietnamese Communist Party (i.4.) State administration and educational management (i.5.) Foreign language (French) is taught with an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary rather than communicative skills (i.6.) Physical education (i.7.) State defence education
<i>(ii) Basic knowledge involving the use of Vietnamese</i>	(ii.1.) The Vietnamese language in general (ii.2.) The Vietnamese language in practice (ii.3.) Information Technology (IT) (ii.4.) Cultural base of Vietnam (ii.5.) Drawing (ii.6.) Music
<i>(iii) Basic knowledge involving psychology &amp; pedagogy</i>	(iii.1.) General psychology (iii.2.) Developmental psychology & educational psychology (iii.3.) General pedagogy (iii.4.) Pedagogical activities at junior secondary schools (iii.5.) Learning activities at junior secondary schools (iii.6.) Practicing professional development (iii.7.) Ho Chi Minh Young Pioneer Organization (HYPO) task

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### Core modules in teacher training programs

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*(iv) Particular professional knowledge → A lot of instruction in English but not getting sufficient opportunities to use English to gain confidence*

*Modules to raise English language proficiency (50% of the total modules in the program). Medium of instruction: A combination of Vietnamese and English*

- (iv.1.) Integrated skills
- (iv.2.) Listening comprehension
- (iv.3.) Reading comprehension
- (iv.4.) Speaking English
- (iv.5.) Writing English
- (iv.6.) Phonetics
- (iv.7.) Translation English-Vietnamese
- (iv.8.) Translation Vietnamese-English
- (iv.9.) English grammar
- (iv.10.) Phonology
- (iv.11.) Lexicology
- (iv.12.) British literature
- (iv.13.) American literature

*Modules to enhance pedagogical techniques in class. Medium of instruction: A combination of Vietnamese and English*

- (iv.14.) English teaching methods
- (iv.15.) Teaching English for primary school children
- (iv.16.) Eight-week practicum

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*Source:* “Chương trình đào tạo Cử nhân Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm ngành tiếng Anh, 2010”. Curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and training adopted for the TEYL teacher training course (2010-2013) in translation.

It should be noted that the current pre-service TEYL teacher training program in Vietnam does not prioritise the development of ELP for TEYL teachers. Although there is about 50% of the program devoted to raising teacher ELP and English language pedagogical skills in theory, the reality of training is very different with only about 25% of the curriculum dedicated to the enhancement of TEYL teachers’ ELP and English language pedagogical skills in practice. While that could be considered quite a lot, the problem is what is being



taught and how it is taught rather than the amount of time given to it. As can be seen from Table 2, most of the modules in the teacher training programs are taught in L1 (i.e. Vietnamese) and primary EFL student teachers have very few opportunities to listen and speak English in order to enhance their English language proficiency.

The reality in the locality where my study is based indicates that Vietnamese is used as the key medium of instruction to develop higher ELP for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. Here I am not equating medium of instruction with English language acquisition. I cannot do this although there is a correlation between them. The perspective presented here is that contextual challenges hinder the development of TEYL teachers' ELP, particularly in the area of oral English. The lack of interaction opportunities to build confidence between teacher trainers and teacher trainees is one of the important factors contributing to the low quality of TEYL teachers' ELP.

Adopting Vietnamese as the key means of communication in class can be due to several contextual factors including (i) the low confidence of some TEYL teacher trainers in using English as a key medium of instruction; and (ii) TEYL teacher trainees' low ELP. Thus, student teachers have difficulty in understanding what is written in English in the teaching materials and the spoken English used in class by the TEYL teacher trainers. And (iii) the lack of teaching resources such as teaching materials, cassette players, projectors and labs can affect how much English can be used in the classroom.

The design of the current teacher training curriculum is not developed based on the actual learning needs of teacher trainees, particularly in building their confidence to use English effectively in their teaching and learning. Critiquing the current curriculum policy at the tertiary level of Vietnam, Associate Professor Nguyen Van Nha, Head of Training Board of

National University in Hanoi acknowledges that nationally-trained Vietnamese students at the tertiary level have lagged far behind overseas-trained students in developed countries (Ngoc, 2016). Ngoc (2016) attributes the low quality of training to the presence of too many irrelevant modules or “môn chung” concerning Party politics in the current tertiary curriculum such as (i) the Marxism-Leninism doctrine, (ii) the lines and policies of the Vietnam Communist Party and (iii) great thoughts of HoChiMinh, a supreme Communist Leader of the Vietnam Communist Party. The Communist Party politics-related modules are reported to be very boring and tiresome but College/University students are forced to learn so as to have a recognized BA degree or a College diploma in Teaching English to Children. This is recognized by many student teacher participants of this study who complain that they do not have enough time to improve their English skills because there are too many “môn chung” modules in relation to Party politics.

Associate Professor Nguyen Van Nha, suggests that “môn chung” modules in relation to Party politics in tertiary education should be cut from the existing training program to avoid tertiary students being brainwashed (Ngoc, 2016, p.1). He also suggests that the top priority should be given to the profession-related modules with an emphasis on practice rather than theory. Many participants of this study are in agreement with the view of Associate Professor Nguyen Van Nha.

## **2.7 Teacher professional development and contextual challenges**

The notion of professional development for EFL teachers, despite being much discussed in the English language teaching (ELT) literature, has received little attention in developing countries including Vietnam (Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Peng

and Zhang, 2009; Pham, 2001; Zhu, 2003). In language-in-education policy, Vietnam is publicly committed to the enhancement of the effectiveness of teaching and learning by frequently building and developing professional skills of staff members (Government of Vietnam, 2008). However, there seems to be a big gap between what is desired by the policy-makers and what is put into teaching practice in local settings. Ideally, primary EFL teachers should be equipped with appropriate on-the-job learning strategies to become life-long learners for their on-going professional development (Harmer, 2007; Pinter, 2009). This is because the role of pre-service teacher training should at least partly be to evoke in teachers enthusiasm for their own lifelong learning.

When given appropriate resources primary EFL teachers can improve their professional knowledge in a number of ways, for example through peer classroom observations (Farrell, 2007; Nunan & Bailey, 2009), seminars, meetings, in-service workshops, presentations in national and international conferences, symposiums (Harmer, 2007), group projects as well as group discussions or support groups (Vo & Nguyen, 2010). However, according to a number of writers (i.e. Le, 2002; Nguyen 2013; Nguyen 2011; Pham, 2007, 2001), EFL teachers including TEYL teachers are provided with few available and easily-accessible opportunities for their on-going teacher learning and TPD after graduation in Vietnam. In particular, there are few in-service programs to help Vietnamese EFL teachers raise their ELP and improve their English language teaching skills:

The concept of teacher development is quite new in Vietnam... The notion of organizing in-service development in the form of class observations, seminars, workshops or even in formal talks that give colleagues from the same working context the opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences and innovations, seems uncommon in Vietnam. One teacher commented, 'The staff of our English department meets a couple of times a semester. We just meet for administrative work but rarely for professional development purposes' (Pham, 2000)

Although there has been an increase in opportunities for teacher learning and TPD programs over the past few decades, these are mainly in the form of short-term workshops (i.e. one or two days) which tend not to have a positive influence on EFL teachers' actual teaching practices. Also, EFL teachers' lives and careers in developing countries differ radically from developed countries and contribute to stymieing their professional development.

## **2.8 Summary**

To provide an insight into TEYL and TEYL teacher training in Vietnam, this chapter has explained the social and historical context of this study. Vietnamese primary EFL teachers have the responsibility to teach English as an additional language to Vietnamese mid-primary school children who are approximately eight to eleven years old, the age group of young English language learners that this thesis refers to. It should be noted that the position of English particularly in the system of national foreign language education in Vietnam has dramatically changed over different periods of Vietnamese history (Do, 2006; Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Wright, 2002). In the early part of 1990s Vietnam witnessed a significant increase in the number of English language learners including young learners particularly in big cities. To meet the need for young English language learners, language-in-education policies changed to introduce English to these young learners within the national education system. Firstly, Decree No. 6627/TH was issued on 18 September, 1996 (see Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007) targeted at guiding the introduction of English as an optional subject from the second semester of grade three. Seven years later, Decree No.50/2003 QD-BGD&DT was issued to replace 1996 Decree No. 6627/TH with additional guidelines for the introduction of English in the primary school program. In 2008 the Vietnamese government

therefore launched an innovative campaign of English language education reforms including TEYL teacher education. Under Decree No. 1400 QD/Ttg (see Government of Vietnam, 2008), TEYL student teachers in public primary schools were required to attain ELP to a level of B2 according to the CEFR descriptors (i.e. this is roughly equivalent to IELTS score of 6.0 or TOEFL score of 550). Previously, TEYL teachers in public primary schools were required to attain a local standard of ELP. That is, they were formerly expected to hold a local college certificate or a BA degree majoring in English issued by local colleges or universities. The previous level of ELP was much lower than the current one in IELTS or TOEFL terms and it only focused on reading comprehension skills and grammar rather than listening and speaking skills in English.

Section 2.6 of this chapter has explained that the current pre-service TEYL teacher training program in Vietnam does not prioritise the development of ELP for TEYL teachers. Although there is about 50% of the program devoted to raising teacher ELP in theory, the reality of training is very different with only about 25% of the curriculum dedicated to the enhancement of TEYL teachers' ELP in practice. The key is that the lack of interaction opportunities to build confidence between teacher trainers and teacher trainees is one of the important factors contributing to the low quality of TEYL teachers' ELP. Without high proficiency in English it will be difficult for TEYL teachers to be able to help primary school children to be increasingly proficient in English. Many online articles in the media written by Vietnamese authors (e.g. Thu & Le, 2014; Thuy, 2012, 2014a, 2014b) show that there is growing concern about the shortage of TEYL teachers with an advanced level of ELP in Communist Vietnam, particularly in the area of spoken ELP. Despite holding BA degrees in TESOL, few Vietnamese graduating primary EFL teachers are able to attain the required international

standard of English language competence as required by government policy. In the next two chapters, the literature on (i) teachers' English language proficiency (ELP) on TEYL and on (ii) TEYL teacher education for higher levels of English language proficiency will be reviewed and critically evaluated.

## **Chapter 3. Teachers' English language proficiency in TEYL**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter critically reviews the literature relating to the area of teachers' English language proficiency (ELP) in the field of TEYL. The chapter begins by examining the concept of teachers' ELP and its importance in TEYL. This section is key to considering the issues in planning for higher levels of English language proficiency within TEYL teacher education. Following is a review of the debate on the optimal use of English as an additional language in English classes. The impact of teachers' ELP on their TEYL practice is examined in section 3.4.

### **3.2 Teachers' ELP and its importance in TEYL**

English language proficiency (ELP) is a significant factor for English language teachers including TEYL teachers. It is described as a crucial professional competence and includes both oral proficiency and academic English literacy proficiency. Richards, Conway, Roskvist and Harvey (2013) argue that teachers' subject knowledge is an essential ingredient for successful teaching and in the context of FL teaching, FL teachers' subject knowledge comprises target language proficiency. It is important here to distinguish between competence and performance. An English language teacher might have a high level of competence in English but poor performance. For example, an EFL teacher might have an excellent and sound grasp of the formal features of the English language without having very good skills in terms of performance (i.e. poor pronunciation, weak reading skills etc). Shin (2008) notes that "having an excellent command of the target language is indeed one of the most important characteristics of outstanding foreign language teachers" (p. 59). Banno (2003) highlights the

importance of FL teachers with advanced levels of target language proficiency and of possessing good pronunciation so as to maximize FL learners' target language ability. Farrell and Richards (2007) argue that in many cases, an ELP level will “determine the extent to which the teacher is able to use many current teaching methods appropriately and whether the teacher is able to provide a reliable model of target language input for his or her students” (Farrell & Richards, 2007, pp. 55-56).

TEYL teachers' English language proficiency (ELP) is one of the major factors contributing to the success of EFL instruction at the primary school level. To examine target language use in elementary English class in China, Peng & Zhang (2009) conducted a study in Chongqing, China. The participants in their study included 54 Chinese teachers of English at primary schools and 203 young English language learners at the age of ten and eleven. The findings indicated that (i) the percentage of teacher TL use in the classroom was relatively low (i.e. under 60%) and that (ii) English language teacher proficiency in English was probably insufficient for children's optimal English language learning.

TEYL teachers' English language proficiency, particularly oral English language proficiency is important for teaching English to primary school children for two key reasons: Firstly, children who start learning English early are likely to have an aptitude with their pronunciation (Baker & Tromfimovich, 2005; Gildersleeve-Newmann, Pena, Davis, & Kester, 2009; Harmer, 2007; Piske, Mackay & Flege, 2001). That is, if they are taught by an “expert user” or non-native English speaker with good pronunciation, their intonation, word stress, linking and sentence stress is likely to be good because young learners often show a natural ability for imitation, including imitation of their English language teachers' accent (Harmer, 2007; Pinter, 2009).



Secondly, children are believed to learn English as an additional language like learning their mother tongue (Pinter, 2009). Thus, TEYL teachers need to provide English language rich environments and have appropriate interactive teaching strategies for young language learners. Cameron (2003) argues that teachers of young English language learners should have a high level of oral English language proficiency to conduct lessons for children mainly in English medium. That is because children learn by picking up the English language through talking in informal contexts which are produced by TEYL teachers. Turnbull (2001) points out in FL teaching contexts “the teacher is most often the sole linguistic model for the students and is therefore the main source of TL input” (p.532). Schwartz (2003) argues that the basic input and opportunities for interaction need to be available so that young English language learners can easily pick up the English language in a natural language environment. Such a language environment needs to be created by TEYL teachers with high levels of oral English language proficiency who are able to provide children with many opportunities to hear and practise plenty of English in meaningful situations (Pinter, 2009). Murphy (2014) argues that TEYL teachers at the primary school level ideally need to be “experts in teaching young learners, and teaching languages in particular” (p.152). This thinking may be in contrast with the views of many educators in Vietnam who assume that to teach English to children, TEYL teachers do not need high proficiency in the English language, nor specialist TEYL skills.

### **3.2.1 Considerations of planning TEYL teacher education programs**

As stated above, TEYL teachers’ English language proficiency (ELP) is a crucial professional competence contributing to the successful foreign language teaching of children at the primary school level. Thus, TEYL teacher education which promotes higher levels of English

language proficiency needs to be carefully considered and planned for to ensure that TEYL teachers have high proficiency in English.

In EFL contexts where both teachers and students share the same L1, there needs to be a strong focus on the development of teachers' ELP in teacher training programs until teachers attain a high level of English language proficiency so that they are able to use English as a key means of class communication. In-service teacher training programs need to be adapted to suit teachers' developmental needs rather than being “instant noodle” (see Mai, 2014; Nguyen, 2011), one off short courses. TEYL teachers need to learn until they have extensive knowledge of English (Richards et al., 2013).

### **3.3 Debates on maximising the target language (TL) in the foreign classroom**

There is agreement in the literature that FL teachers need to maximize the target language (TL) use in class so that their students are exposed to it as frequently as possible (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 2012; Atkinson, 1993; Butzhamm, 2003; Cook, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Murphy, 2014; Peng & Zhang, 2009; Turnbull & Arnette, 2002, Turnbull, 2000, 2001). However, there does not seem to be consensus on how much exposure to the TL in class is adequate to enhance student English language proficiency.

The *TL only* strategy that has been strongly supported by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2012) suggests that FL teachers and their students should use the TL language “as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during the instructional time, and when feasible, beyond the classroom” (p.5). This would be ideal in Vietnamese primary schools because primary school children need a language

environment rich in TL. This should be provided by TEYL teachers through varied and well-constructed language learning activities so as to maximize the English language learning experiences and opportunities for children (Pinter, 2009, 2011). In addition, Butzhamm (2003) also argues that the responsibility of FL teachers is to create a friendly atmosphere rich in TL among students to facilitate their language learning. In this study, I particularly focus on the context of EFL teaching in Vietnam (i) where both EFL teachers and students share the same L1 (i.e. monolingual classes), and (ii) where classroom activities are the main source of students' exposure to the TL.

In the L1 monolingual class, the frequent use of L1 among FL teachers and students may be a valuable tool (i.e. translation between L1 & L2 may be useful in some cases) but it can cause problems. Writing in the book entitled *'Teaching monolingual classes'*, Atkinson (1993) warns that the major threat of L1 monolingual classes is that FL teachers may use the L1 as a key means of communication in class, which leads to a decrease in the teacher TL use. Teachers in L1 monolingual classes may use L1 more often for several reasons: Firstly, some FL teachers believe that using the L1 can facilitate their students' FL learning as evidenced by Nguyen's (2013b) study in the case of Vietnam. Secondly, FL teachers in L1 monolingual classes tend to heavily rely on their L1 use (Murphy, 2014) due to their limited level of English language proficiency (Richards et al., 2013).

It should be noted that some authors (e.g. Atkinson, 1993; Murphy, 2014) including me are not opposed to the idea of the L1 use in class as a pedagogical strategy. However, I support Murphy's (2014); ACTFL's (2012) and Atkinson's (1993) viewpoint that FL teachers ideally need to use the target language as much as possible in class (i.e. ideally 90% plus as the suggestion of ACTFL 2012 although this may be difficult in Vietnam in the short term). One

of the critical reasons is that the maximization of teacher TL use in class helps students realize that the TL is a means of genuine communication in class, which results in higher student motivation.

Few studies have been conducted involving the optimal use of the TL in class and this issue is still a matter for debate. Thus, it is worth considering studies that have because they provide evidence that English language teacher proficiency is important. One of the few studies was conducted by Peng and Zhang (2009) in the context of EFL teaching in China. According to these authors, less than 60% of teacher target language use in the TEYL class is inadequate for promoting children's L2 learning. Turnbull's (2000) study in the context of FL teaching in France shows that less than 25% of teacher TL use in class is too little for increasing students' target language proficiency. The data in the study carried out by Liu, Ahn, Back & Han (2004) in the setting of EFL teaching in South Korea show that Korean teachers of English use approximately 40% of the TL in class and the researchers felt that this amount of the TL use was inadequate for Korean students' L2 learning to increase their English language proficiency. Littlewood & Yu (2009) advise that FL teachers in particular contexts where both FL teachers and students share the same L1 should adopt the teaching strategy of *starting simple* by using simple English at the beginning. Richards et al. (2013) point out that FL teachers with a high level of ELP can diversify the TL use in their FL classes according to the age groups of language learners to meet their FL learning needs. For young English language learners, TEYL teachers with an advanced level of English language competence can start their class by using simple English at the beginning together with gestures, pictures or realia, then increasingly using complicated English later.

A number of studies do seem to support maximum teacher TL use (ACTFL, 2012; Butzhamm, 2003; Cook, 2001; Peng & Zhang, 2009; Turnbull & Arnette, 2002, Turnbull, 2001, 2000). This is even more important (for example, Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Turnbull, 2001, 2000) in contexts where students have very few opportunities to practice it outside the classroom (i.e. Vietnam is a case of this particular setting). Admittedly, it is not necessarily possible or even realistic to expect this of FL teachers who have very few opportunities to practice English in real life. What to do then in the real world of professional FL teaching?

### **3.4 Influences of teachers' ELP on their TEYL practice**

Literature in the area of teachers' ELP shows that there is a close relationship between teachers' ELP level and their language teaching practice (Borg, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Edge & Garton, 2009; Ellis, 2005; Farrell & Richards, 2007; Hope, 2002; Kim & Elder, 2008; Naserdeen, 2001; Richards et al., 2013; Samadi & Ah-Ghazo, 2013; Scrivener, 2005; Tsui, 2003). The aim of this section is to examine the association between teachers' ELP level and seven areas of FL teachers' teaching practices identified by Farrell and Richards (2007) and supported by many authors in the field (for example, Borg, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Edge & Garton, 2009; Ellis, 2005; Hope, 2002; Kim & Elder, 2008; Naserdeen, 2001; Richards et al., 2013; Samadi & Ah-Ghazo, 2013; Scrivener, 2005; Tsui, 2003). The areas in which FL teachers' teaching practice is impacted by their ELP level are: (i) the utilization of TL resources, (ii) classroom management using the TL, (iii) provision of rich and authentic English language input, (iv) provision of accurate English language chunks, (v) provision of corrective feedback, (vi) provision of adequate explanations and (vii) improvisation competence in FL teaching.

### **3.4.1 Utilization of target language (TL) resources.**

The appropriate deployment of TL resources is an important way of meeting students' English language learning needs. Classroom TL resources can include textbooks, DVDs, magazines and the internet. In many countries where teacher ELP is not high teachers tend to teach from textbooks without tailoring material to suit their students' language learning level and interests. Tsui (2003) for example has argued that FL teachers with limited English language proficiency tend to strictly follow course books instead of adapting and supplementing them appropriately and creatively. Farrell and Richards (2007) argue that English language teacher proficiency is important to FL teachers to be able to produce authentic teaching materials so as to engage their students. These authors verify that FL teachers with an advanced level of ELP are more able to tailor TL resources to the specific learning needs of their students in their particular contexts. Additionally, Richards et al. (2013) argue that teachers with extensive knowledge of the TL are able "to reject unsuitable aspects of the textbook and offer alternative activities for development and practice" (p. 233) more easily. Nguyen's (2013) study has shown that Vietnamese EFL teachers rely heavily on textbooks (p. 146). This may be because of their limited ELP and the low level of their students' ELP.

It should be noted that English is the most dominant language on the internet (Internet World Stats, 2015). Thus, the exploitation of the internet as an additional source of information in TEYL teaching materials can be useful for EFL teachers. Teachers with high English language proficiency (ELP) can potentially use the internet and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) better than those with low ELP. That is because TEYL teachers with a high level of ELP are able to select appropriate TL resources on the internet to meet young learners' needs. Moreover, they are able to exploit TL resources on the internet

creatively and productively to motivate young English language learners instead of relying solely on commercially published textbooks.

In summary, the adequate use of TL resources is highly likely to depend on FL teachers' level of language proficiency which is an important factor contributing to the satisfaction of language learners' needs and the enhancement of language learners' motivation.

### **3.4.2 Classroom management using the target language (TL).**

FL teachers with extensive knowledge of the TL are able to flexibly use the TL to manage their classes effectively. They are able to perform tasks in the TL such as calling the roll, asking students to work in pairs or in groups, maintaining order in class and tackling disruptive behaviour. This is significant because using the TL in classroom management helps FL students have the opportunity to hear the TL frequently in class. At least partial immersion in the TL results in the development of an awareness for FL students that the TL is a means of genuine communication in class.

Both Llurda (2006) and Mai (2014) argue that there is a close link between the level of teacher language proficiency and their self-confidence in teaching FL. Thus, FL teachers with an advanced level of language proficiency are likely to be more self-confident in using the TL than FL teachers with a limited level of language proficiency.

Many authors (e.g. Kim & Elder, 2008; Richards et al. 2013; Tsui 2003) have the view that teachers' TL use in classroom management plays an important part in students' L2 learning. Tsui (2003) states that the TL is "part of teacher knowledge" and it is both "the medium and the object of learning" (p.136). Richards et al. (2013) consider that the use of TL in organizing classroom activities is a feature of communicative language teaching, providing

students with multiple opportunities to interact with the teacher and peers in the TL. These authors also believe that FL teachers with a high level of language proficiency can “display flexibility, allowing them to adjust their language according to their learners’ language proficiency” (Richards et al., 2013, p.234).

Pinter (2009) advises that TEYL teachers should speak English as much as possible to create available opportunities in class for children to pick up the TL through meaningful situations. To help children understand what the TEYL teacher says, the use of body language, gestures and visual supports are also encouraged. Below are some examples of using English in classroom management I have already used in my own TEYL classes in Vietnam:

- (i) Greeting children when they arrive at the classroom, “Good morning/afternoon class. How are you today?”
- (ii) Settling them down, “Be quiet, please”, “Sit down please”.
- (iii) Drawing their attention to a topic, “Have you watched the film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?”
- (iv) Starting the lesson, “Today we would like to start lesson two”.
- (v) Running through the previous work, “What have we learnt in the previous lesson?”
- (vi) Presenting a new theme, “Today we learn the colours of things”.
- (vii) Setting up activities, “The first activity is that...” “Are you ready to participate in the activity?”
- (viii) Explaining the rules of the game, “Let me explain the game rules”.
- (ix) Organizing English language games, “I would like to divide you into two teams...”



- (x) Teaching children English songs, poems and tongue-twisters, “Please listen to the song...”
- (xi) Telling and acting out with children popular stories, “Once upon a time, there was a beautiful girl...”
- (xii) Monitoring the class progress, “Your progress is closely monitored”.
- (xiii) Commenting on what has done, “Generally speaking, all of you have done the activity very well. However, some at the back seem to be unenthusiastic”.
- (xiv) Praising and reprimanding children, “Good”, “Well done”, “Excellent” “You must not hit your friend on the head with your ruler”.
- (xv) Changing the activity, “Now, we would like to move to another activity”.
- (xvi) Ending the lesson, “Thank you for your participation into the lesson today. Goodbye. See you next Monday/ Friday”.

In summary, the ability to manage classes effectively using the TL is an important characteristic of FL teachers and FL teachers’ level of language proficiency is a key factor contributing to successful class management. Thus, the development of higher FL teachers’ language proficiency for effective classroom management should be specifically included in FL teacher training programs.

### **3.4.3 Provision of rich and authentic English language input.**

There is overwhelming support for the need for rich and authentic English language input (e.g. Bahrani & Soltani, 2012; Bridget, 2008; Ellis, 2005; Gilmore, 2007; Richards et al., 2013). According to Ellis (2005), the provision of rich TL input for FL learners is a fundamental principle for effective instructed language learning. Writing in an article entitled

*“Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language teaching”* Gilmore (2007) describes the ideal language input as the delivery of authentic language from an authentic speaker/writer to an authentic listener/ audience. Authentic materials including both oral and written sources are abundant. For example, newspapers, TV programs, magazines, the Internet, advertisements for events can be used as authentic materials.

A number of authors (e.g. Bahrani & Soltani, 2012; Bridget, 2008) have explained the ways in which FL teachers might go about providing rich and authentic language input. According to Bahrani & Soltani (2012) and Bridget (2008), authentic language input should be creatively integrated into the language instruction via the appropriate use of children’s songs, authentic games, authentic texts as well as stories. Both Bridget (2008) and Gilmore (2007) point out the close link between the provision of authentic English language input and young learners’ motivation. According to Gilmore (2007), the use of authentic materials is more interesting to FL learners than non-authentic ones. That is because the provision of authentic language input aims to create opportunities for real-life communication rather than present a particular aspect of the TL. Bridget (2008) and Gilmore (2007) are in agreement that if authentic materials are exploited appropriately for language learners’ age and grade level, they can help increase young learners’ motivation. Thus, TEYL teachers need to select teaching materials appropriate to the age of the learners to scaffold their learning appropriately and maintain their language learning motivation.

Richards et al. (2013) and Pinter (2009) believe that the provision of rich and authentic TL input displays FL teachers’ ability to employ the TL appropriately for their students. That is, FL teachers with extensive knowledge of the TL are able to exhibit their TL competence through the flexible use of the TL to provide FL learners with rich and authentic TL input.

For example, FL teachers with an advanced level of the TL are able to “speak the language at a natural pace, vary structures used for functional language and use longer utterances and more complex sentences with advanced learners” (Richards et al., 2013, pp. 241-242) or to use simple language with young novice learners. By contrast, FL teachers with limited TL proficiency will have difficulty in providing rich TL input through genuine communicative language activities using the TL (Farrell & Richards, 2007). Tsui (2003) is in agreement with Farrell and Richards (2007) in arguing that FL teachers with a low level of TL proficiency are likely to “emphasize seat work assignments and routinized student input as opposed to meaningful dialog” (p.54).

It is argued by Richards et al. (2013) that FL teachers with extensive knowledge of the TL are able to provide rich and authentic English language input for their students. Bahrani & Soltani (2012) point out that introducing adverse experiences through authentic TL resources can help FL learners connect the language classroom with the world outside the class and “concentrate more on content and meaning rather than the language itself” (p.801). Unfortunately, the data from Le’s (2011) study in a Vietnamese context of EFL has shown that Vietnamese EFL teachers tend to focus more on the form of the language itself than on the content and meaning. That is because they believe that helping their students with grammatical rules through the provision of language forms is the most convenient way to teach. Moreover, this may be due to the limited level of English language teacher proficiency. Also, the study conducted by Nguyen (2011) indicates that Vietnamese primary EFL teachers tend to focus on the form of the language and explain grammatical points from textbooks for primary school children. That is because they are not trained appropriately for teaching young English language learners.

In summary, the provision of rich and authentic English language input for language learners depends on FL teachers' level of language proficiency. FL teachers with an advanced level of English language proficiency are able to use the TL flexibly in accordance with the age and level of learners' ELP through the exploitation of a range of materials and activities such as authentic texts, games and songs. By contrast, FL teachers with a limited level of ELP tend to focus on the form of the language and explain grammatical points in the textbooks and this may de-motivate English language learners.

For this reason, an advanced level of English language proficiency (for example, level B2 of the CEFR for TEYL teachers as the case of Vietnam) should be aimed for in FL teacher training programs to bring young English language learners' positive language learning experiences.

#### **3.4.4 Provision of accurate English language chunks.**

FL teachers with extensive knowledge of the target language (TL) are able to provide accurate chunks for their novice language learners. Chunks are described as “formulaic language” (Wray, 2002) or meaningful groups of words in the TL that can be learnt as a unit by FL learners. Chunks may contain fixed idioms or combinations of words that go together to make meaningful phrases or sentences in particular contexts. Chunks are collocations that native English speakers use in real-life interactions. Some examples of chunks in English are, “Nice to meet you”, “How are you?”, “Make yourself at home”, “Can I have the bill, please?” and “Sorry to keep you waiting”. Learning the TL through chunks helps children master the TL quickly and accurately instead of learning to translate individual words from children's L1 into meaningful sentences in the TL (Pinter, 2009).

Chunking in the TL is more important for young language learners than learning through grammar and vocabulary learning (Pinter, 2009; Wray, 2002). To avoid explicit instruction of the TL grammar and to limit the use of children's L1 in class, FL teachers need to have a high level of TL proficiency and create authentic contexts where children can practice 'chunking' in the TL naturally and meaningfully. That is because children can learn L2 in a similar way to the way they learn their L1. Children learn their mother tongue unconsciously by picking up utterances they hear from the people around them in their community (for example from their parents, siblings and teachers). Similarly, when children learn English as an additional language, TEYL teachers should strive to actively create a learning environment rich in the TL so that children can be frequent hearers of the TL in class (Pinter, 2009; Naserdeen, 2001) through the provision of accurate TL structure, pronunciation and vocabulary. Communicating in meaningful chunks in the TL is an effective way to do this.

#### ***3.4.4.1 TEYL teachers' English pronunciation.***

The quality of TEYL teachers' English pronunciation should be also considered in TEYL teacher training programs. In current local TEYL teacher training institutions in Vietnam, the modules of teachers' English pronunciation seem to focus more on theory than providing TEYL teacher trainees with opportunities to practice spoken English with a comprehensible accent. The quality of TEYL teachers' English pronunciation is a matter of concern for many Vietnamese teacher training institutions. That is because of the shortage of teaching resources such as cassette players, CDs and computers to help TEYL teacher trainees practice spoken English as well as the insufficiency of Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainers with high-quality pronunciation in English.

The quality of primary EFL teachers' pronunciation plays an important role in the provision of accurate English language chunks for primary school children. It is noted that Vietnamese learners of English often have difficulty in communicating effectively with native English speakers and vice versa. That is because of common pronunciation mistakes that Vietnamese learners of English including Vietnamese primary EFL teachers often make when speaking English. Vietnamese TEYL teachers therefore need to be trained to ensure that they have high quality pronunciation in English.

Below are examples of two common mistakes that Vietnamese learners of English often make. I know these familiar mistakes as a result of my own English language learning and teaching English as a FL to many Vietnamese English language learners including both adult learners of English and young English language learners. These common mistakes in Vietnamese English language learners are typically categorized as follows:

(i) Omission of sounds (i.1) at the end of the English word (i.e. / k/, /t/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/) or (i.2) in the middle of the English word (i.e. /k/, /l/, /s/, /r/, /ei/, /i/, /dʒ/). Vietnamese is a mono-syllabic language whereas English is a multiple-syllabic one and so Vietnamese learners of English tend to swallow the final sounds or skip the middle sounds of the English words. For example, Vietnamese learners of English tend to leave out /k/ in the word *book*, /t/ in *dent*, /dʒ/ in *orange*.

(ii) Sound confusion between the English sounds and the Vietnamese ones. That is because some English sounds do not exist in the Vietnamese language. Thus, Vietnamese learners of English tend to produce similar sounds in Vietnamese to replace English sounds. For example, (ii.1) *Instead of /ʃ/ they say /s/* (i.e. confusion between “*sheer*” and “*seer*”; between “*ship*” and “*sip*”; (ii.2) *Instead of /dʒ/ they say /z/* (i.e. confusion between “*joke*” and “*zone*”).

In short, the quality of primary EFL teachers' pronunciation plays a significant part in the provision of precise English language chunks for primary school children. TEYL teachers with high levels of the TL should be able to flexibly provide children with accurate English language chunks in their everyday classroom management and their organisation of language learning activities for children. Ideally, FL teachers should be able to give appropriate and accurate models of the TL (Richard et al., 2013) and to have considerable expertise in teaching children and teaching FL to children in particular (Cameron, 2003; Murphy, 2014; Naserdeen, 2001). Thus, attention needs to be paid to TEYL teachers' pronunciation in TEYL teacher training programs so as to ensure that Vietnamese primary EFL teachers are accurate providers of English language input for primary school children.

#### ***3.4.4.2 Language distance (English and Vietnamese).***

An awareness of the concept of "language distance" would be useful for Vietnamese language teachers of English in helping beginning English language learners. Thus, this section examines "language distance" between the target language (English) and Vietnamese, L1 of young language learners of English in public primary schools in Vietnam.

English and Vietnamese have a considerable "language distance" from each other. They differ markedly in every respect: in grammar, vocabulary, sentence structures, syntax and other characteristics. "Language distance" refers to the degree of difference between the target language and the mother tongue of language learners (Chiswick & Miller, 2005) due to the geographical origins and historical development of the languages.

It is believed that a small language distance between the target language and L1 of language learners can facilitate language learners, whereas a greater language distance can make the language learning more difficult and time consuming. "Language distance" may have some

effect on the extent of transfer between languages as well. For example, English and German are cognate languages. Thus, native English speakers have little difficulty in understanding English speakers of German and vice versa. By contrast, Vietnamese and English are not cognate languages. Vietnamese is an Austro-Asiatic language and probably an autochthonous language of the South East Asian region (Elder & Davies, 1998). The name comes from the Latin words for South and Asia. Because of the completely different historical development and linguistic roots of Vietnamese, Vietnamese language learners of English may have more difficulties in learning English as a foreign language than, for example, German language learners of English.

Studies (for example, Chang, 2013; Llama, 2010) indicate that there exists some language distance effect on language learning. However, very few studies have given clear pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English for speakers of languages that have a greater ‘distance’ from English. That is because it is hard to separate affective factors from “language distance” factors in studies. Elder and Davies (1998) conducted an investigation into the language distance effect on language learning. English language learners were grouped into “language family”, the language spoken at home by learners (e.g. Romance: French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese; Slavic: Croatian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Polish, Russian and Serbian; Chinese: Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien, Taiwanese and other Chinese dialects. Arabic: Arabic only; Indonesian/ Malay: Indonesian/ Malay; Japanese/ Korean: Japanese and Korean; Vietnamese/ Khmer: Vietnamese and Khmer). The language families were categorized according to their distance from the English language. The study concluded that though the “language distance” effect exists, pedagogical implications are hard to draw because of the difficulty in separating the many factors that impact on language learning.



### **3.4.5 Provision of corrective feedback.**

Errors in speaking a FL can be viewed as a natural product of communication and interaction in the language learning process. There is consensus among researchers that FL teachers with a comprehensive knowledge of the TL are able to provide good quality corrective feedback for their students (Farrell & Richards, 2007; Richards et al., 2013; Scrivener, 2005; Tsui, 2003). Corrective feedback is described as an indication to the language learners that

their use of the target language is incorrect. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, “He go to school every day”, corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, “no, you should say goes, not go” or implicit “yes he goes to school every day”, and may or may not include meta-linguistic information, for example, ‘Don’t forget to make the verb agree with the subject’.

(Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp. 171-172)

Tsui (2003) argues that FL teachers with higher levels of language proficiency are

more likely to detect students’ preconceptions and correct them, to deal with students’ difficulties and to exploit opportunities for useful digressions. By contrast, less knowledgeable teachers may reinforce misconceptions, incorrectly criticize students’ correct answers and accept erroneous results.

(Tsui, 2003, p.54)

Farrell and Richards (2007) note that FL teachers with limited levels of language proficiency may have difficulty not only in providing adequate answers in response to their students’ problems, but also in differentiating their students’ errors in the use of the TL. Both Richards et al. (2013) and Scrivener (2005) argue that FL teachers with a comprehensive knowledge of the TL are able to provide meaningful comments in a brief and concise way instead of being lengthy and complicated. In order for corrective feedback to facilitate L2 students’ acquisition, Tatawy (2006) recommends that FL teachers’ provision of comments should be consistent, efficient and explicit. Moreover, students’ readiness for receiving feedback should

be also taken into account. FL teachers with high language proficiency are likely to provide more useful comments than teachers with limited target language proficiency.

#### **3.4.6 Provision of adequate explanations.**

FL teachers need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the TL so as to provide students with adequate explanations about issues in relation to the English language (i.e. not only about structures of the TL but also about cultural and pragmatic issues), particularly when being questioned simultaneously. Richards et al. (2013) and Farrell & Richards (2007) note that FL teachers with higher levels of TL proficiency are able to explicate the meaning and the use of vocabulary and language structures in a detailed way using the TL. The explanations given by FL teachers with an advanced level of language proficiency are clear, well-related and carefully selected to facilitate their students' language learning, "taking students from the familiar to the unfamiliar through fluid movement from one type of activity to another, with transparent goals and cohesive structures" (Tsui, 2003, p.55). By contrast, FL teachers with limited knowledge of the TL tend toward "straight lecturing to avoid student questions" or to adopt "mainly recall questions" (Tsui, 2003, p.54) when posing questions. Tsui (2003) also points out that FL teachers with a low level of language proficiency tend to focus on more grammatical work and avoid creating opportunities for their students to ask questions that FL teachers themselves perceive as difficult. In accordance with Tsui's (2003) study, the data from Borg's (2001) study show that FL teachers with less knowledge of the TL have difficulty in answering their students' questions spontaneously and avoiding giving a detailed explanation of grammatical points.

In summary, FL teachers' level of language proficiency plays an important part in providing adequate explanations for language learners as evidenced by Richards et al. (2013); Farrell &

Richards (2007); Tsui (2003) and Borg (2001). Thus, FL teacher training programs in Vietnam should consider this factor in improving language learning for young English language learners.

### **3.4.7 Improvisation competence in FL teaching.**

Improvisation should be a critical part of FL teaching. It is described as a useful teaching strategy adopted by English language teachers with an advanced level of English language competence (Fauzan, 2012). Improvisation aims to help increase real-life language use in class (Thornbury, 2005) where students are given a range of opportunities to use their individual knowledge in the TL to communicate with other students in class.

Research shows that FL teachers with extensive knowledge of the TL are able to improvise appropriate learning activities to facilitate their students' language learning (Adebiyi & Adelabu, 2013; Richards et al., 2013; Sawyer, 2011): “(they) ...improvise, seizing the teaching moment and responding to students' immediate needs to enhance learning and make it memorable” (Richards et al., 2013, p. 234) whereas less knowledgeable teachers run into difficulty in helping students. Tsui (2003) also notes that FL teachers with higher levels of language proficiency are able to “exploit opportunities for useful digressions” (p.54) so as to tackle their students' interests in language learning.

Lavery (2006) points out that improvisation encourages FL students (i) to make use of the TL they have available to communicate with confidence, (ii) to develop “thinking on your feet” skills and gain confidence in dealing with unpredicted situations, (iii) to practice instigating communication from nothing, (iv) to be aware of getting the message across rather than repeating dialogues parrot-fashion, (v) to use their imagination, (vi) to imagine themselves using the TL in real-life situations and (vii) to be creative users of the TL. Along the lines of

Lavery (2006), Adebisi & Adelabu (2013) argue that FL teachers' ability in improvisation helps English language learners develop their English language proficiency. They state,

Improvisation encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom. Improvisation encourages students to mobilize their vocabulary, respond to grammatical and syntactical accuracy, and develop cultural and social awareness, and gain confidence and fluency.

(Adebisi & Adelabu, 2013, p.12)

### **3.5 Summary**

The chapter has reviewed issues in relation to teachers' ELP and its importance in TEYL. Debate on the optimal use of English as an additional language in English classes has been examined in section 3.3, followed by the influences of teachers' ELP on their TEYL practice. Little evidence has been given to suggest an ultimate amount of teacher TL use to help students raise their English language proficiency although there are a number of studies supporting the maximization of teacher TL use. Seven major areas of FL teachers' teaching practices recognized by Farrell & Richards (2007) and supported by other authors in the literature have been examined including (i) utilization of TL resources, (ii) class management using the TL, (iii) provision of rich and authentic English language input, (iv) provision of accurate English language chunks, (v) provision of corrective feedback, (vi) provision of adequate explanations and (vii) improvisation competence in FL teaching.

## **Chapter 4. Developing TEYL teacher education for higher levels of English language proficiency (ELP)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the connections between English language teacher proficiency in English and teacher professional development are examined. Ideally, TEYL teacher training programs, including both pre- and in-service programs should explicitly support teachers to reach the level of ELP they need to teach English effectively. To do this, TEYL teacher training programs need (i) to identify the current levels of TEYL teachers' language competencies; (ii) to be clear about any international or other standards that TEYL teachers need to achieve by the end of the teacher training course; (iii) to plan the development activities that best meet teachers' requirements to continually improve their proficiency skills. The chapter begins by considering the place of teacher ELP in FL teacher preparation programs. Section 4.3 examines the literature on teacher professional development (TPD) concerning teachers' ELP. These two sections (4.2 & 4.3) are crucial to understanding the issues in planning for the development of higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers through pre- and in-service teacher training courses. Following this is a consideration of research on TEYL teacher education for higher levels of ELP. A gap in the research on TEYL and primary EFL teacher development for higher levels of ELP is identified in section 4.5.

### **4.2 Teachers' ELP in teacher preparation programs**

Teacher preparation programmes are seen as a key component in the development of teachers' ELP (Samadi & Al-Ghazo, 2013). As stated in section 3.2 of chapter three, teachers' ELP is an important component of teacher subject knowledge and a critical ingredient for the

effectiveness of teaching English (Richards et al., 2013). Thus, the aim of EFL teacher preparation programs should be to help EFL teachers develop teaching skills and their proficiency in English including oral English. However, the latter is a relatively limited area of many EFL teacher training programs (Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003). The 2002 American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) states that “the heart of language instruction is the ability to teach students to communicate, which can only be possible if teachers themselves exemplify effective communicative skills” (ACTFL, 2002, p.4). Thus, the Council asserts that the crucial criterion required for foreign language (FL) teacher preparation programmes in the United States of America is that FL teachers need to have an advanced level of target language proficiency in all areas of communication, but particularly in the area of oral proficiency in the target language. Additionally, FL teachers are required to continually improve their target language proficiency beyond pre-service teacher training programmes. To help FL teachers meet the required levels of language proficiency, the Council suggests carrying out on-going assessments of FL teachers involving their improvement in language proficiency.

Writing in an article entitled, *Taking charge: Teacher candidates' preparation for the oral proficiency interview*, Sullivan (2011) argues that “the French teacher who cannot speak French will not be a successful teacher of French” (p.241). Chambless (2012) agrees with Sullivan (2011), stating that

Because of the unique nature of the FL class, in which the language is not only the subject of study but also the medium of instruction, it seems uncontroversial to say that teachers must be able to speak the language in order to teach it.

(Chambless, 2012, p.142)

In line with the FL teacher preparation program standards suggested by the 2002 ACTFL as well as Sullivan's (2011) and Chambless' (2012) arguments, Vietnamese TEYL teacher preparation programmes need to be critically reviewed. In particular, the organization and content of the current TEYL teacher preparation programs should focus more on not only the quantity of time spent on pre-service programmes but also the quality of instruction and training content, particularly in the area of spoken English, a relatively weak aspect of primary EFL teacher preparation programs in Vietnam. As stated in chapter two, the quantity of time devoted to the development of TEYL teachers' ELP in teacher training curricula is not the only factor contributing to the enhancement of the current levels of teachers' ELP but also other factors such as (i) the nature and the purpose of the modules in the curriculum, (ii) the way in which TEYL teacher trainees are taught, (iii) the opportunities teacher trainees are provided with while taking the teacher training programs to develop their communicative English skills.

Fraga-Canadas (2010) and Velez-Rendon (2006) suggest that FL teacher preparation programs need to frequently assess FL student teachers' target language proficiency including through both formative and summative assessment at different times during the process of teacher training. This would ensure ongoing feedback for student teachers. In the Vietnamese TEYL teacher training programmes, only summative assessment is adopted to evaluate student learning. This is usually held at the end of each semester through a formal paper-and-pen exam. The oral skills' assessment in Vietnam seems to mainly focus on checking English language learners' memory (i.e. TEYL student teachers are required to read a given speech or written-at-home paragraphs off by heart). Communicative competence, English language

learners' ability to use English to communicate successfully, seems not to be tested. Many participants of this study also acknowledge this restriction.

The literature in the area of FL teacher education policies involving the development of language proficiency shows that many FL teacher education programmes fail to equip teachers with an adequate level of language proficiency (Harvey et al., 2010 & 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003; Schulz, 2002). For example, Schulz (2002) notes that “a major weakness in foreign language education is that numerous FL teachers in the schools have neither the communicative competence nor the confidence to use the target language as a means of classroom communication” (p. 291). The data from Nunan's (2003) study shows that “poor English skills on the part of teachers as well as inadequate teacher preparation make it very difficult, if not impossible, for many teachers to implement communicative language teaching in their classrooms” (p.606).

Regarding the content of the teacher training programs, Cooper (2004) notes that FL teacher training programs fall short of providing enough opportunities for FL teachers to focus on the development of their target language proficiency. Instead, they offer target language knowledge and knowledge about pedagogical methods for classroom teaching as evidenced by Fraga-Canadas' (2010) study. The Vietnamese TEYL teacher training programs are a particular case of this. They focus on knowledge about the language rather than actual development of TL proficiency. Results from a survey of 106 completed questionnaires in Fraga-Canadas' (2010) research project show a number of important implications for teacher educators and FL teachers. One of these is that FL teacher training programmes need to ensure that FL teachers are better equipped to encounter the increased demands of language



proficiency. This is a distinguishing and important point for the curriculum developers in Vietnam.

In short, commitment to improving target language teacher proficiency demands a long-term and significant investment of time and concerted effort. (Crabbe, 2005; Nunan, 2003; Richards et al. 2013). Steps need to be taken to help TEYL teachers become more self-confident in the use of English in the classroom, particularly in the seven influential areas in which teachers' ELP impacts on teaching practice as shown in section 3.4 of chapter three. All parties involved in English language teacher education need to realise that developing high-quality primary English language teacher proficiency in oral English is one of the most direct ways TEYL teachers will be able to provide more effective opportunities for primary school children to be increasingly proficient in spoken English.

#### **4.3 Teacher professional development (TPD) and teachers' ELP**

This section examines the literature involving teacher professional development (TPD) which explicitly aims to improve teachers' ELP. It includes (i) the theoretical frameworks of TPD, (ii) in-country teacher professional development programs and (iii) overseas immersion programs (IPs).

##### **4.3.1 Conceptual framework of teacher professional development (TPD)**

Writing in *Teacher professional learning and development: Best evidence synthesis iteration* Timperley et al. (2007) propose a theoretical framework of on-going teacher learning (Table 3), teacher education and teacher professional development (TPD) comprising three particular professional learning processes and their connected outcomes. As presented in sections 3.2 and 4.2, teachers' subject knowledge includes ELP, a crucial ingredient for effective English

language teaching (Chambless, 2012). The theoretical framework of TPD proposed by Timperley et al. (2007) can usefully be applied to developing the English language proficiency of TEYL teachers. The framework shows that on-going teacher learning, teacher education and TPD is an extensive and complicated progression concerning (i) the incorporation and the retrieval of prior professional knowledge, (ii) the development of an awareness of the application of new knowledge to particular contexts of teaching and (iii) the modification of current teaching practices so as to impact positively on students' learning. Timperley et al. (2007) argue that the process of effective TPD has repetitive and iterative characteristics. Nguyen (2013) refers to these as “deep learning processes involving teachers’ engaging with repeated learning-practice-outcome cycles” (p.62). The three processes of teacher professional learning and their associated outcomes are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Teacher learning processes and outcomes

(Iterative) Learning Processes
<p>The learning processes engaged when developing understandings and skills involve cycles of (one or more cycles of) the following:</p> <p><b>Process one:</b> Cueing and retrieving prior knowledge.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> Prior knowledge consolidated and/or examined.</p> <p><b>Process two:</b> Being aware of new information/skills and integrating them into current values and beliefs system.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> New knowledge adopted or adapted.</p> <p><b>Process three:</b> Creating dissonance with current position (values and beliefs).</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> Dissonance solved (accepted/rejected), current values and beliefs system repositioned, reconstructed.</p>

(Source: Timperley et al., 2007, p.8)

The first teacher learning process involves the integration and the retrieval of prior professional knowledge. When participating in a Teacher Professional Development (TPD) program including both pre-service and in-service, teachers need to cue and retrieve their prior knowledge. In any perspective of professional learning, teachers have their individual preconceptions of how best students learn the subject knowledge and how best to help students master the knowledge and professional skills. Their preconceptions or prior knowledge of teaching have a profound impact on their current teaching practices. However, previous knowledge of instruction may be inadequate in new situations with the development of new theories of teaching. Teaching practices may be based on individual theories of actions (i.e. traditional, habitual and unconscious characteristics) rather than an integrated theory of action based on research-based theories of teaching. To change the traditional teaching practices of teachers, professional learning opportunities need to help teachers re-evaluate the adequacy of their traditional teaching practices.

The process of cueing and retrieving is of great importance because this process lays a foundation for the other two successive processes to take place. Professional learning participation is viewed as the starting point for a change. The new knowledge and skills derived from professional learning engagements may be consistent with prior knowledge (presented in process two) or they may be inconsistent and incompatible with existing knowledge and skills (presented in process three). It should be noted that if the process of cueing and retrieving stops at this point, teachers potentially have no change or a modest change in their teaching practices.

## **(ii) Process two: Developing an awareness of new knowledge and skills**

The second teacher learning process requires teachers to understand how the application of new knowledge attained through TPD programs relates to their particular contexts of teaching. The associated outcome of this process is new knowledge adopted or adapted in teachers' daily teaching practices. However, this process has two major restrictions as evidenced by Timperley et al. (2007). Firstly, the effectiveness of students' learning outcomes in their particular contexts of teaching may be no guarantee for what is being applied through TPD programs. Secondly, the dissonance or disagreement between the conceptual frameworks underpinning existing teaching practices of teachers and the innovative practices presented in TPD programs may be challenging. Take EFL teaching in the context of Vietnam as an example. Through TPD programs both pre-service or in-service programs, many Vietnamese TEYL teachers have increased awareness of adopting new knowledge and TEYL skills (i.e. maximization of English in TEYL class, the adoption of appropriate learning activities for children such as games, English songs and other activities). However, these teachers face a number of challenges in (i) how to use English effectively in class (ii) how to make themselves understood by their primary school children, (iii) how to help children use English as a means of class communication, (iv) how to kindle young learners' curiosity and creative engagement (Cremin, 2009) by involving them in engaging classroom activities and (v) how to teach English in a completely different style so that young English language learners can develop their oral skills. These challenges may stem from TEYL teachers' limited level of ELP.

Timperley et al. (2007) point out two major models of teacher learning and TPD, namely (i) *one-off* TPD programs and (ii) extended TPD programs. *One-off* TPD programs (i.e. one-day

workshops) are unlikely to have a considerable change in teachers' teaching practices. By contrast, extended TPD programs can help teachers gradually reach a higher level of expertise through their on-going teacher professional learning and TPD. An example of an extended TPD program is the 1998 Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) in Hanoi, a form of local EFL teachers' professional development developed by the Vietnamese government with the assistance of the Australian government. I was fortunate enough to participate in this program. As stated in section 1.4 of chapter one, the three-month immersion in English and EFL teacher training gave me professional development aspirations to study an MA in Australia and later to undertake a PhD in New Zealand. It changed my teaching practices. For example, I realised that the needs of teacher trainees should be the core of my teacher training. I encouraged my teacher trainees to reflect on what they were learning and how they were learning through writing portfolios.

Timperley et al. (2007) state three critical conditions for creating effective opportunities to learn as follows:

- Adopting a coherent conceptual framework to present new knowledge and skills in relation to teachers' current contexts of teaching. This theoretical framework needs to be adapted according to the particular teaching contexts of teachers
- Encouraging teachers to be psychologically comfortable with adjusting new teaching practices to their particular teaching contexts
- Providing teachers with motivation for improvement and ongoing development

However, these three conditions for producing successful intensive opportunities to learn are influenced by policies in a number of ways. The areas of influence by policies are as follows:

(i) investment levels (i.e. money, time and available expertise), (ii) the structure of the learning program (i.e. provision of new knowledge and skills), (iii) content focus (i.e. what knowledge and skills and how long), (iv) accountability (i.e. the extent to which teacher participants, knowledge providers and leaders are accountable for their professional learning engagements), (v) incentives and norms (i.e. how to encourage teacher participation in their professional learning), (vi) connections to reform agendas (i.e. the extent to which professional learning is connected with national reform agendas) and (vii) constituency for professional development (i.e. the extent to which TPD programs are appropriate to support teacher professional learning) (Knapp, 2003). The success of the implementation of extended opportunities to learn is mediated by policy factors. Such negotiations or mediation can hinder or facilitate teacher professional learning opportunities. Take Vietnamese policies on TEYL teacher development as a case, the areas of influence by policies seems not to be carefully considered. That is to say there are low investments of time and available expertise, poor structures of learning programs and a content focus on language knowledge about TEYL rather than TEYL skills appropriate for the particular context in Vietnam.

### **(iii) Process three: Creating dissonance, conflict or inconsistency**

Process two (i.e. the development of an awareness of new knowledge and skills) may create dissonance, disagreement or conflict when new knowledge and skills challenge teachers' current belief systems or preconceptions. The outcome of this process is either approval or refusal to adopt new knowledge and skills. In order for innovative knowledge and skills to be accepted, teachers' current beliefs or preconceptions must be repositioned and reconstructed. That is, this process leads to the modification of current teaching practices so as to impact on students' learning outcomes. Timperley et al. (2007) note that teachers' current belief systems

are influenced by factors involving teachers' educational, cultural and social history and this entails issues of identity, personal conflict and motivation for modification and change. As Hargreaves (2005) points out,

Part of the challenge of change and development for teachers is struggling with letting go of old conceptions, familiar practices, and comforting routines...Integrating new ideas and techniques recently acquired on professional development courses is equally challenging in both technical and emotional terms.

(Hargreaves, 2005, p.291)

The iterative *learning-practice-outcome* framework of on-going teacher learning and TPD proposed by Timperley et al. (2007) provides a critical understanding of what is happening in the complicated process of on-going teacher learning, teacher education and TPD. The authors note that the major conditions of *novice-to-expert* developmental processes are impacted by educational policies in a number of ways. They believe that once educational policies support teacher professional learning and TPD, teachers are likely to re-examine the adequacy of their current belief systems of teaching and learning and feel psychologically comfortable in implementing new knowledge and skills in their daily teaching practices. All of this is relevant to the development of higher TEYL teachers' ELP. As stated at the beginning of this section, the *learning-practice-outcome* framework proposed by Timperley et al. (2007) can be applied to help develop higher TEYL teachers' English language proficiency particularly in the area of oral English. For example, TEYL policy should require teachers to use English as an instrument for instruction during the in-service course. Then Vietnamese TEYL teachers attempt to use English in discussing the problems arising from the course instead of adopting Vietnamese. Gradually, TEYL teachers will become more confident and feel psychologically comfortable in using English in their daily teaching practices.

From the argument of Timperley et al. (2007), Knapp (2003), Richard et al. (2013) and Chambless (2012) (also sections 3.2 & 4.2), it can be argued that once TEYL teacher education policies in the EFL teaching context in Vietnam support TEYL teacher professional development, Vietnamese TEYL teachers might be able to see English not only as TEYL teachers' subject knowledge but also a tool for classroom communication.

Townsend (2011a) argues that it is challenging to propose an effective model of on-going teacher learning, teacher education and TPD. He/she refers to this issue as a time-consuming search for "a Holy Grail" which may be impossible (p. 483). Given the importance of supporting a higher level of student achievement in schools, Townsend (2011a) suggests that those who are associated with teacher education (i.e. teacher educators, educational policy-makers, educational curriculum developers, educational researchers etc) need to reconsider a number of major factors that can impact on teachers and teacher education. These factors involve (i) rapid and significant developments in instructional high-technology and communication, (ii) increasing globalization and (iii) mobility of people from one country to others. Townsend (2011a) argues that with the speedy developments in technology and communication, children can do more things than earlier generations at their age group (e.g. 20 or more years ago). Thus, teacher education programs need to be adjusted to ensure that the needs of students' learning are fully satisfied. Additionally, Townsend (2011b) argues that to improve student achievement, changes must be made in (i) educational policies, (ii) classroom practice including (ii.a) pedagogy and (ii.b) student assessment, (iii) conception of teaching and (iv) teacher preparation, teacher education, on-going teacher learning and TPD. The challenge facing teacher educators in an increasingly complicated and speedily changing world is to train competent teachers who are expected to think and act both globally and



locally. One of the highlights of the article written by Townsend (2011b) is the argument that educational policies can impact on these changes in terms of forming a new way of thinking about educational structures, leadership and classroom practices.

In short, the conceptual framework of professional learning processes proposed by Timperley et al. (2007) and the model of teacher education suggested by Townsend (2011a, 2011b) may apply to the development of higher ELP for TEYL teachers in the particular context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam.

#### **4.3.2 In-country teacher professional development (TPD) programs.**

There are two kinds of in-country TPD programs namely (i) pre-service and (ii) in service TPD programs and each of these can take many forms. The aim of this section is to examine three models of in-country programs including both pre-service and in-service programs in relation to the development of higher English language teacher proficiency for Vietnamese TEYL teachers. They are (i) the model of a pre-service teacher education program TALK (German translation: Trainingsprogramm zum Aufbau von LehrerInnen-Kompetenzen zur Förderung von Lebenslangem Lernen) with the initiative of fostering long life learning (LLL) in schools (Finsterwald et al., 2013), (ii) the model of in-service Teacher Professional Development in Languages (TPDL) with the objective of constructing greater capacity in FL teaching (Harvey et al., 2010), (iii) the model of online in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs with the idea of creating easily-accessible opportunities for the enhancement of teachers' lifelong learning competences (Signer, 2008). These three models are selected for examination because of their suitability in the context of TEYL teacher training and TEYL teacher development in Vietnam, particularly the development of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency. These models will be detailed below.

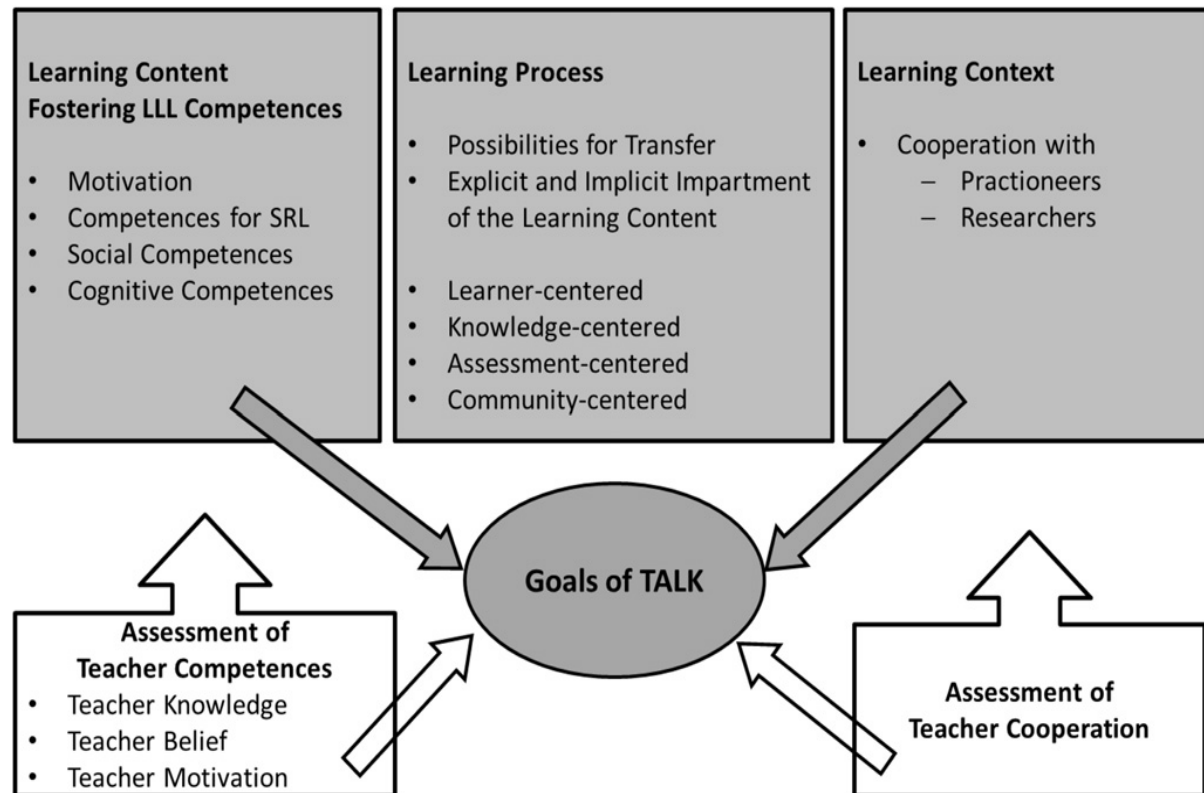
First, the innovative model of the teacher training program TALK (Figure 1) in Germany is proposed by Finsterwald et al. (2013). This model helps tackle three major issues of teacher education namely (i) teacher knowledge and professional skills, (ii) teacher beliefs and (iii) teacher motivation so that teachers can self-evaluate their personal lifelong learning (LLL) competences. It should be noted that in this model, student teachers are seen to be the centre of the teacher training program. This emphasis could be particularly helpful to TEYL teacher education policy-makers and TEYL teacher educators in Vietnam. The model could be applied to improve the current levels of primary EFL teachers' ELP, particularly in the area of oral English.

According to the model TALK suggested by Finsterwald et al. (2013), teacher educators are viewed as being capable of fostering their individual LLL competences. That is, ideally teacher educators should have knowledge and professional skills needed for enhancing both their individual LLL competences and their student teachers' LLL competences in teacher education institutions. As can be seen in Figure 1, three factors impact on student teacher learning namely (i) learning content (i.e. what to learn), (ii) the learning process (i.e. how to learn) and (iii) the learning context (i.e. in what conditions).

**(i) Learning content:** The program TALK provides students (i.e. student teachers) with an understanding of (i.a) particular educational disciplines and of (i.b) pedagogical and psychological issues. Particularly, this program focuses on the improvement of student teachers' LLL competences by enhancing teacher educators' responsibility for fostering and developing student teachers' LLL knowledge and skills. Hence, the program TALK is designed in a way that helps connect teacher training content with the goal of fostering and developing student teachers' LLL competences including (i) student teacher motivation, (ii)

student teacher competences for self-regulated learning (SRL), (iii) social competences and (iv) cognitive competences (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Theoretical framework and goals of the teacher education program TALK



Source: Finsterwald et al., 2013, p.146

**(ii) Learning process:** The program TALK takes account of “clarifying goals, articulating what the desired performance consists of and what it looks like, modelling and demonstration, scaffolding, making thinking visible, and practice with coaching” (Finsterwald et al., 2013, p.146). The program is committed to adopting an “anchored instruction” approach by providing student teachers with robust opportunities to practice what has to be learnt and to refine their knowledge and professional skills in real-life situations. Given the importance of fostering and developing student teachers’ LLL competences, the program highlights student teacher motivation by providing them with a wide range of choice in their preferred learning

activities in the teacher training program. This is a helpful lesson for primary EFL teacher education policy-makers and primary EFL teacher educators in the context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam where student teacher motivation seems to receive little attention (evidence shown by the findings in section 6.4.2). Moreover, the program TALK adopts the framework of *how people learn* to on-going teacher learning and teacher professional development (TPD) during the teacher training program to ensure that the program focuses on:

(ii.1) Student teacher-centeredness (i.e. encouraging student teachers to reflect on their learning so as to recognize particular areas that need to be improved)

(ii.2) Knowledge-centeredness (i.e. providing opportunities to widen practical, contextual and meta-cognitive knowledge for both student teachers and student teacher educators)

(ii.3) Assessment-centeredness (i.e. assessment provides feedback for upcoming improvements)

(ii.4) Community-centeredness (i.e. considering the setting of teaching and learning to ensure the efficacy of the teacher training program)

**(iii) Learning context:** The program TALK considers the learning contexts of teacher educators to ensure that they are provided with robust opportunities to develop their professional expertise. For example, they are offered facilities (iii.1) for sharing initiatives and ideas of teaching, (iii.2) for discussing innovative materials and classroom pedagogy with colleagues, (iii.3) for giving and receiving feedback from colleagues, and (iii.4) for cooperating and sharing teaching experiences with other practitioners and researchers to improve their teacher training. Close relationships between teacher educators and researchers

are encouraged in terms of working together towards a shared aim, the aim of ongoing improvement of student teacher achievement. Teacher educators are given many opportunities to put the findings of the newest educational research into their teaching practices. Similarly, researchers are encouraged to use teaching experiences of student teacher educators to conduct educational research towards significant changes in teacher education programs so as to improve student teacher achievement.

It should be noted that in the professional learning context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam, primary EFL teacher educators are not given many opportunities to develop their TEYL teacher training work (see evidence shown by the findings in section 8.3.2). Also, Vietnamese teacher educators are not encouraged to weave new ideas into their teaching practices.

As seen in Figure 1, teacher educator competences and teacher educator cooperation are two major factors contributing to the enhancement of student teachers' lifelong learning (LLL) competences. The value of this model, according to Finsterwald et al. (2013), is that it can help foster and develop not only student teachers' LLL competences but also teacher educators' LLL skills. If teacher training programs based on the TALK model are well designed, constantly evaluated and improved, they can help both teacher educators and student teachers gradually reach higher levels of professional expertise in terms of a novice-to-expert developmental progression as proposed by Timperley et al. (2007).

The TALK model is a useful source of information for primary EFL teacher education policy-makers and primary EFL teacher educators in the setting of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. That is because it can make valuable contributions towards shaping the language-in-education policy-makers' direction of changes of primary English language education and

primary EFL teacher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the nurturing and development of lifelong learning (LLL) is particularly important (UNESCO Institute for lifelong learning, 2013). In other words, the model of the teacher training TALK can be applied to make changes in the current curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education towards nurturing and developing student learning lifelong learning competences, a critical factor contributing to the increase in TEYL teachers' ELP particularly in the area of oral English (evidence shown by the findings in section 6.4.5).

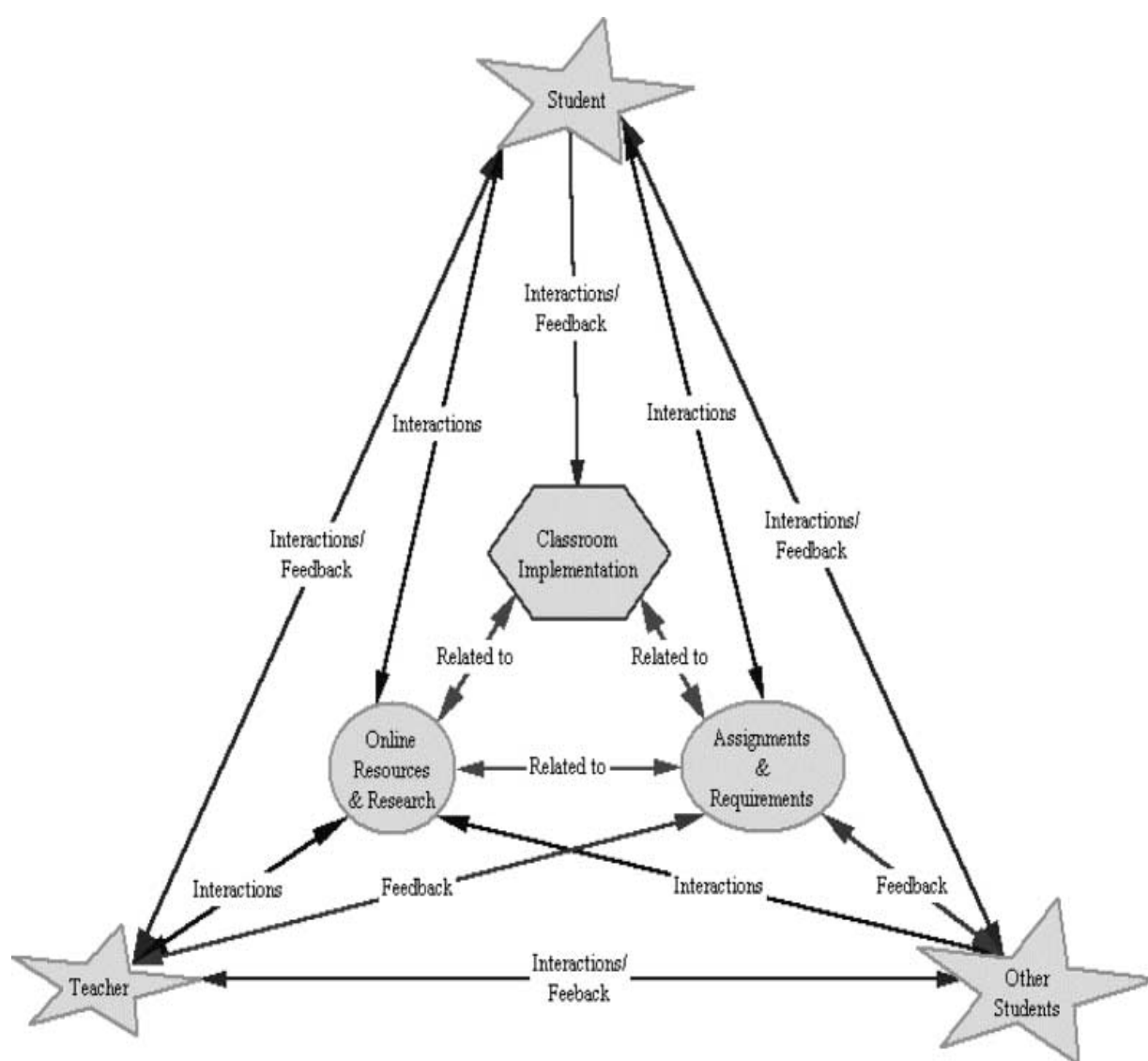
Second, the model of in-service Teacher Professional Development in Languages (TPDL) with the objective of building greater teacher capacity in language teaching was evaluated by Harvey et al. (2010). This model is selected because of its potential application to the development of TEYL teacher training, particularly the area of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency in Vietnam. TPDL is a formal, one-year, part-time professional teacher program in the context of New Zealand schools where a number of languages are taught as foreign languages (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese). The TPDL program comprises three major components to help language teachers develop their language knowledge and professional skills namely (i) language study, (ii) second language acquisition and (iii) in-school support. The first component helps language teachers develop target language (TL) knowledge and proficiency. The second component helps teachers enhance their understanding of how languages are learnt and develop classroom instruction strategies appropriate for teaching the TL and culture as required by the 2007 New Zealand curriculum (Harvey et al., 2010; Ministry of Education, 2007; Richards et al., 2013). The third component provides language teachers with opportunities to practice and reflect on their knowledge of TL, culture and classroom instruction pedagogy in their particular context of teaching.

It should be noted that language teacher proficiency is an important part of TPDL and FL teachers in New Zealand are encouraged to sit an international proficiency exam (i.e. French Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF), Spanish Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE), Chinese Proficiency Test, Japanese Language Proficiency Test and Start Deutsch or Zertifikat Deutsch). As evidenced by Harvey et al. (2010), 100% of language teachers in the study sat and passed internationally recognized language examinations at intermediate level or higher. To evaluate the long-term impact of the TPDL program on teacher language teaching practices, according to the authors, the area of student achievement needs to be investigated. The value of this model is to help construct greater teacher capacity in language teaching, particularly enabling in-service FL teachers to reach a desired level of the target language (TL) proficiency while still teaching. Although language teacher proficiency is not the only point of the TPDL program, this model can be applied to Vietnam where there is a critical need for the development of TEYL teacher training with higher levels of (i) professional expertise and of (ii) English language proficiency in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs (Moon, 2005, 2009; Nguyen, 2011).

Third, a model of online in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs (Figure 2) proposed by Signer (2008) aims to encourage opportunities for the enhancement of teachers' lifelong learning (LLL) competences. The strength of this is to promote a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective, a vital issue of teacher preparation, teacher education and teacher professional development (TPD) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; OECD/CERI, 2008). The value of this model is that it can be applied to a variety of teaching and learning situations including the development of higher levels of English language proficiency for TEYL teachers in the setting of TEYL teacher education in

Vietnam. By using English as a means of online communication between TEYL teacher educators and TEYL teachers or between TEYL teachers, TEYL teachers' English language proficiency can be gradually improved. "Practice makes perfect" is the motto of the model of online in-service ELTPD. That is, this model encourages student teachers to frequently use English as a medium of communication with their peers and teacher educators.

Figure 2. Online in-service professional development model



Source: Signer, 2008, p. 209



As a result of the frequent practice, student teachers' communicative skills in English will be enhanced. It should be noted that most of the current TPD programs in Vietnam use the Vietnamese language (L1) as the key medium for instruction in in-service teacher education program (INSTEP) courses (evidence shown in the findings of section 7.4.2). The model of online communication through the medium of English does not receive much attention among Vietnamese primary EFL teacher education policy-makers nor primary EFL teacher educators.

As explained by Signer (2008) the internet enables student teachers and teacher educators to: (i) have access to a diversity of teaching sources and innovative theories of TEYL in English, to (ii) share innovative TEYL teaching materials, to (iii) learn professional initiatives from TEYL teacher trainers and other colleagues, (iv) to solve problems involving the TEYL teacher profession and (v) to modify traditional lessons so as to engage primary school children.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the online in-service TPD course model (Signer, 2008) has three major components namely (i) classroom implementation, (ii) online resources and research and (iii) assignments and requirements. These three components are interconnected and they are planned by weeks. Each week has a particular pedagogical theme according to the pre-arranged curriculum. Each weekly theme has an assignment involving the implementation of an instructional activity that needs to be improved. The teachers are expected to have access to the online resources folder required for the weekly assignment. Online interactions between teachers are requirements of the weekly assignment. The weekly discussion postings made by the teachers determine their evaluation grade. Although the effectiveness of the online TPD program is closely connected to many factors (e.g. the quality of the teacher educators'

questions, timely responses to questions and encouraging comments), the model proposed by Signer (2008) helps teachers gradually develop teachers' professional skills by actively participating in a community of teacher professional practice.

In short, the model proposed by Signer (2008) is useful in the case of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. Through the use of English rather than Vietnamese as a means of online communication between Vietnamese TEYL teacher educators and TEYL teachers or between TEYL teachers, TEYL teachers' English language proficiency can be gradually improved.

#### **4.3.3 Overseas language and culture immersion programs (IPs).**

Overseas language and culture immersion programs (IPs) are a form of FL teacher professional development that can be applied to develop TEYL teachers' English language competence in the context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. Under Decree No. 1400 QD/Ttg signed by Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan, Vietnam is committed to providing overseas IPs for TEYL teachers as one of the ways to enhance the quality of teacher target language proficiency (Government of Vietnam, 2008).

It should be noted that there exist a number of IPs in Vietnam but there has been no research to evaluate the effectiveness of such IPs despite the fact that many authors support the idea of studying abroad. For example, Allen (2010) considers that studying abroad has a positive impact on on-going language teacher learning and teacher professional development (TPD) namely (i) enhancing target language proficiency (TLP), (ii) developing knowledge of the target language and culture and (iii) changing teachers' professional practices. A number of authors (such as Jackson, 2004, 2006; Harvey et al., 2011; Sahin, 2008) argue that such programs may have a positive effect on language teachers and their classroom teaching practices, but "changing teaching practices in ways that have significant impact on student

outcomes is not easy” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 225). To ensure impact immersion programmes need to be carefully structured to guarantee teachers gain the most from their time abroad in terms of improved target language proficiency, cultural knowledge and, if possible pedagogical knowledge.

As stated in section 4.3.1 the work of Timperley et al. (2007) does not relate directly to FL teacher training, nor the more specialised area of developing FL teachers’ language proficiency but their work can be applied to improve the current levels of ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. To maximize the effectiveness of overseas IPs in terms of enhancing IP teacher participants’ learning experiences in their sojourn and potential gains for language students from the IPs, IP teacher participants need to be provided with adequate support and preparation for their (i) pre-departure, (ii) on-site and (iii) post-sojourn phases. The following information in relation to the provision of overseas IPs may be worth considering because it relates directly to the development of higher language teacher proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teacher participants in IPs:

**(i) Pre-departure:** To fully exploit the substantive potential outcomes for language teacher participants from the IPs, ideally a pre-immersion program should be undertaken to hone the IP teacher participants’ focus on their impending trip and the ways they can prepare for learning while away. An experienced advisor (or more than one person) should be appointed prior to the sojourn and this person should be competent enough to play multiple roles in the IPs in terms of pre-, during- and post-sojourn. For example, they should be capable of working as (i) a knowledgeable facilitator, (ii) a motivator, and (iii) an evaluator of the IP teacher participants’ learning. This person may be able to help IP teacher participants:

- Orient themselves in the particular goals of the IPs.
- Set specific goals for their sojourn (e.g. improving their target language proficiency, developing an intercultural awareness, enhancing the effectiveness of intercultural communication skills and accumulating suitable resources).
- Have the opportunity to engage in immersion target language classes to learn and reflect their experiential learning.
- Obtain accurate information about their sojourn (e.g. detailed sojourn schedule, passport, visas and other travel requirements, accommodation and intercultural information).
- Work effectively toward their goals by (i) consulting and discussing any pedagogical issues involving their sojourn and by (ii) creating and maintaining momentum during the sojourn (e.g. [ii.1] keeping their daily sojourn diary to reflect their new learning, [ii.2] using blogs to share their new information and knowledge and [ii.3] preparing sojourn reports on their return from the IPs).

## **(ii) On-site**

This section presents what the facilitator might do (ii.1) and what the teachers have to do (ii.2). This will be detailed below:

### **(ii.1) The facilitator might:**

- Facilitate contacting the immersion country schools before the IP teacher participants leave their home country.
- Organise temporary accommodation until the IP teacher participants can find an appropriate place.

**(ii.2) The teachers have to:**

- Reflect constantly on their experiential learning across cultures including nerve-racking and perplexing encounters. These may be recorded through reflective journals and blogs.
- Work towards developing self-confidence and a cultural awareness of *self* and *others* by willingly learning to listen, observe, interpret, analyse and reflect on the world of *others*. Through such reflection and analysis, the IP teacher participants have the potential opportunity to increasingly improve their linguistic and intercultural communication skills in terms of (i) the use of real-life intercultural communication and (ii) the enhancement of their writing skills via writing reflective journals and post-sojourn reports.

**(iii) Post-sojourn**

The facilitator ought to:

- Provide the opportunity for teachers to debrief on the experiential learning of the IP. To ensure that the IP teacher participants can contribute their new knowledge and skills from the IPs to enhance the quality of students' language learning, a well-structured debrief should be closely incorporated into the overall structure of the IP. This helps the IP teacher participants (i) share their IP experiences, (ii) reflect on their experiential learning across cultures including positive and negative experiences, (iii) develop a particular plan of action for changes in the future and (iv) give advice on how to make better preparations for the following IPs.

The teacher participants must:

- Self-evaluate their experiential learning by completing their post-sojourn reports and other forms of debriefing on their return from the IPs. Through self-evaluation, the IP teacher participants (i) grow to be acutely conscious of the strengths and limitations of their genuine intercultural communication competences and (ii) set detailed and down-to-earth goals for their improvement in the future as well as for upcoming intercultural encounters.

(Adapted from Jackson, 2004, 2006; Harvey et al., 2011)

#### **4.4 Research on TEYL teacher education for higher levels of ELP in East and South-East Asia and Europe**

This section examines a number of studies on FL teacher education for higher levels of English language proficiency in East and South-East Asia and in Europe. Examples from East and South-East Asian and European settings are useful because Vietnam and other countries can learn from one another in terms of initiatives, programs and language-in-education policies. A comparative look at both continents, particularly where one has longer experience with TEYL (Europe) can inform TEYL developments in East and South-East Asia, including Vietnam.

##### **4.4.1 Developing ELP for teachers in East and South-East Asia.**

There is an increased requirement for higher English language teacher proficiency, particularly EFL teachers' proficiency in English for young English language learners in South East Asia where average English language teacher proficiency is relatively low (Butler, 2004 & 2005; Hu, 2007; Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003). To enhance the current levels of

language proficiency in English for TEYL teachers, governments of East and South-East Asian countries have launched different campaigns. For example, the Korean government has heavily invested in the improvement of the quality of Korean TEYL teachers' proficiency in English by taking the following measures: (i) the implementation of TEE (Teach English in English), a form of co-teaching between native English speakers and Korean teachers of English; (ii) an increase in intensive in-service teacher training courses trying out different models of teacher training with the most effective models being widely disseminated and (iii) the improvement of professional skills for teachers including English language teacher proficiency by developing multi-faceted teacher evaluation systems involving colleagues, parents and students (Jo, 2008).

To work towards the achievement of higher level English language education at the primary school level, the Chinese government has adopted a number of ways to promote the development of Chinese teachers' English language proficiency such as: (i) creating many opportunities for exposure to the English language, especially via new media and online forms of entertainment; (ii) broadcasting TEYL programmes and English language teacher training sessions on TV in China and (iii) the model of co-teaching between native English speakers and Chinese teachers of English at primary schools is encouraged and strongly supported.

The Vietnamese government has called for the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese EFL teachers by launching a campaign of English language education reforms including TEYL teacher education (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Under this Decree, Vietnamese TEYL teachers are required to reach ELP level of B2 according to the CEFR descriptors (see Government of Vietnam, 2008). Although the reforms involving TEYL teacher training education have been implemented since 2008, Vietnam is facing many challenges for

developing higher ELP for TEYL teachers in public primary schools. Thus, this study attempts to contribute a number of initiatives to help find the solutions to the current challenges in TEYL teacher education in Vietnam.

The following three investigations into TEYL in different Asian contexts critically review issues associated with the preparation of competent FL teachers with an advanced level of language proficiency and age-appropriate teaching methodologies.

In the Malaysian EFL context, Ali, Hamid & Moni (2011) carried out a study with 47 primary teacher trainees, ten primary teacher trainers and four administrators in a public university. The study focused on the implementation of English language-in-education policies at the primary school level in Malaysia. The researchers considered macro and micro-language planning perspectives and the outcomes of EFL policies (i) on students' achievement and (ii) on stakeholders' perceptions of English language proficiency among students. Like Vietnam and some other Asian countries, English language policy in Malaysia has been regulated in a top-down manner (i.e. by the Ministry of Education). That is, the Ministry of Education has been responsible for (i) English language policy development, (ii) personnel selection, (iii) curriculum, (iv) teaching methods, (v) teaching materials, (vi) resourcing and (vii) evaluation and examination as well. Interestingly, the findings showed that macro-level planning (i.e. top-down scheduling) might have not produced the desired changes in EFL teachers' teaching practices in class (i.e. micro-level work). In other words, the findings of Ali et al. (2011) demonstrated that there was an urgent need for the transformation of language-in-education policy at the macro level so that it can be translated into classroom activities.

Generally speaking, the results of the studies conducted by Ali et al. (2011) have been consistent with other research such as Nguyen (2011); Enever & Moon (2009); Lee (2009)



and Hu (2007). All these studies have supported the idea that top-down TEYL policies and insufficient preparation in TEYL teacher training programs and in-service programmes have probably contributed to the shortage and even unavailability of competent TEYL teachers with a high level of English language proficiency and with the desired level of expertise required for teaching children. It should be noted that the critical problem of top-down policies in East and South-East Asian EFL contexts is largely due to a paucity of adequate communication among related parties and adequate resourcing of the implementation of language-in-education policies (Hu, 2007; Nguyen, 2013).

With reference to the link between TEYL teacher training programs and teachers' English language competence in organizing communicative activities using English as the target language (TL), the results of Butler's (2005) study showed teacher difficulties in employing appropriate learning activities for primary school children in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan where English is taught as a compulsory FL. One hundred and twelve primary EFL teacher participants took part in Butler's (2005) study including (i) 46 Japanese teachers of English in Tokyo, (ii) 22 Korean teachers of English in Seoul and (iii) 44 Taiwanese teachers of English in Taipei. The data was collected from (i) 42 classroom observations which lasted about one hour each, (ii) semi-structured interviews which lasted from 10-30 minutes each and (iii) 24 activity clips that covered a number of various types of activities particularly in elementary classrooms in each country including (iii.1.) role playing, (iii.2.) singing, (iii.3.) chanting, (iii.4.) games and (iii.5.) Total Physical Response (TPR). Butler's (2005) data led her to the conclusion that there were a number of challenges facing EFL teachers in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan in adopting communicative activities in elementary schools using the target language. They were: (i) how to formulate appropriate goals for classroom communicative

activities, (ii) how best to identify communicative activities and help primary school children gradually develop communicative skills in English and (iii) how to organise English communicative classroom activities effectively. Butler's (2005) study also showed that South Korean teachers of English, Japanese teachers of English and Taiwanese teachers of English have limited levels of English language proficiency. This was a major hindrance to EFL teachers who wanted to adopt high quality communicative activities in their elementary schools. Butler's (2005) study did not go so far as to consider implications for constructing a particular model of how TEYL teachers should be trained to develop their English language proficiency to a higher level.

In the Vietnamese EFL context, Nguyen (2011) conducted a study on the implementation of TEYL policy at the primary school level. This researcher adopted an exploratory case study with two primary schools in Hanoi, Vietnam: school A and school B. School A was a private primary school, which was established in 2006 with 2,000 students. English in primary school A was introduced to children from grade one to grade five (i.e. children from six to eleven years of age). Apart from the principal who was in charge of primary school A, there was a special EFL advisor who was a senior lecturer in TESOL supervising the entire professional activities of the primary EFL teaching staff. It should be noted that according to the hierarchical organization of Vietnamese society, the principal of a primary school is the most significant person in a school because all school affairs including TEYL in his/her primary school is under his/her leadership and management.

School B was a public primary school. School B had been in existence for a very long time and English in this primary school was taught from grade three to grade five with a commitment to the implementation of the 2010 pilot curriculum (Nguyen, 2011). Data was

collected from (i) 16 classroom observations including eight 40-minute lessons in school A and eight 40-minute lessons in school B. Moreover, (ii) four 45-minute focus group interviews were carried out. Each focus group interview consisted of three to five stakeholder participants in each primary school. The findings showed that the private primary school (school A) provided better outcomes in English language education compared to the public primary school (school B) in terms of (i) teachers' target language use, (ii) teachers' English pronunciation, (iii) children's participation in learning activities and (iv) classroom management using the target language. That was because the private primary school was able to employ Vietnamese primary EFL teachers with a high level of ELP and adequate professional skills. Significantly, the teaching salary at the private school (school A) was high compared to the one at the public school (school B).

As evidenced by Nguyen (2011), Vietnamese EFL primary teachers in public primary schools have a limited level of English language proficiency and lack adequate techniques for teaching children, a familiar situation in Asian EFL contexts. Nguyen (2011) noted that there is an urgent need in Vietnam to train competent TEYL teachers who have a high level of English language proficiency (i.e. level B2 of the CEFR) with appropriate classroom techniques. This requirement puts pressure on educational providers to train and offer adequate pre-service TEYL teacher training courses and in-service development opportunities for TEYL teachers in public primary schools. However, Nguyen's (2011) study did not investigate how to

- Raise English language proficiency levels for primary EFL teachers particularly in the area of oral English

- Integrate the development of teachers' English language proficiency into primary EFL teacher training programs at both pre- and in-service levels

In summary, the above mentioned studies point out challenges that East and South-East Asian countries including Vietnam are facing when English is taught to children in public primary schools. One of the prevalent challenges is how to translate the implementation of language-in-education policy explicitly into pre-service TEYL teacher training programs and in-service professional development to help raise EFL teachers' English language proficiency, particularly in the area of oral English language competence. This is the nub of the problem and an important research question for my thesis (sections 1.3 & 5.4.1).

#### **4.4.2 Developing ELP for teachers in Europe.**

It is worth considering the development of ELP for teachers in Europe to see if there are issues that have been dealt with elsewhere that could provide positive examples for EFL teacher education in Vietnam and other East and South-East Asian countries. It is significant that many East and South-East Asian countries have adopted the CEFR in their own language-in-education policies. The European Union (EU) has an explicit aim of multilingualism for all citizens in its educational policies (Gyorfí, 2016). One of the EU's multilingualism aims is to encourage every European to be able to speak at least two foreign languages in addition to his/her mother tongue. Thus, European children are introduced two foreign languages from an early age including English as the first foreign language due to its popularity (if English is not the mother tongue of young language learners). The quality of FL teachers, teaching materials, and instruction methods as well as the number of FL exposure hours are critical factors for educational policy-makers in determining how to raise language proficiency including ELP for students. The adoption of many FLs including English as the working

language in many multilingual societies is a powerful force pushing educational reforms and initiatives in the FL teaching curriculum and policies towards the development of higher LP including ELP.

The following research into EFL teacher preparation programs for higher ELP in Europe has been examined to suggest positive models for EFL teacher education in Vietnam and other Asian countries. Based on classroom data drawn from a multinational longitudinal ELLiE (Early Language Learning in Europe) project study in seven European countries, Enever (2014) shows a number of weaknesses in FL teacher preparation programmes including both pre- and post-service courses. Participating in the ELLiE study were over 1,400 primary school children and their parents, primary school principals and 44 teachers from seven European countries namely (i) Croatia, (ii) England, (iii) Italy, (iv) Netherlands, (v) Poland, (vi) Spain, and (vii) Sweden. In England, French and Spanish were the two chosen foreign languages to study whereas in the other six countries in the ELLiE project, the English language was selected because of its popularity.

There are three major types of FL teachers at the primary school level in Europe including (i) generalist primary teachers, (ii) specialist primary FL teachers and (iii) semi-specialist primary FL teachers. Eurydice (2008) describes these different categories of teachers as follows: Generalist primary FL teachers are those who are qualified to teach all subjects (or almost all) in the primary school curriculum including FLs. These teachers are relied on to teach foreign languages regardless of whether they are trained in this field or not. Specialist primary FL teachers are defined as those who are qualified to teach one FL or many FLs and these teachers are trained to teach these subjects only. Semi-specialist primary FL teachers refer to those who are qualified to teach at least three different subjects in the primary school

curriculum, one or more of which is a FL. However, according to Enever (2014), “unqualified” primary teachers (who are categorized as either native speakers of the FL or university-degree-holders in the FL) should be added to the three categories to give a full description of the current state of the FL teachers of young learners in Europe. Among these categories, the generalist primary teacher model was particularly prevalent in six European countries (i.e. Croatia, England, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. Italy preferred a semi- specialist primary teacher model instead). Generalist primary teachers were required to have (i) age-appropriate classroom pedagogical skills and (ii) a suitable level of FL proficiency. However, these two requirements seemed not to be fully met in European countries. Thus, specialist primary FL teachers were regularly appointed to help generalist primary teachers without language knowledge or language teaching skills. As evidenced by Enever (2014), some generalist primary teachers across seven European countries in the ELLiE project had a limited level of FL proficiency to teach children (i.e. not beyond level A2 of the CEFR).

It is argued that primary FL teacher language competency is closely linked with the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. The ELLiE team considered that ideally all FL teachers should attain an advanced level of language proficiency, preferably level C1 of the CEFR, with the starting point of level B1 or B2. However, insights from implementation gave a picture of considerable diversity across the seven countries in the ELLiE project. Italy, the Netherlands and Poland required their primary teachers to achieve the B2 language competency level of the CEFR whereas primary teachers in Croatia and Spain were expected to pass a nationally recognized exam at roughly B2 language competency level (Enever, 2011). Currently, Sweden and England have not mandated a minimum level of FL

proficiency. Despite statements indicating required levels of language teacher proficiency, classroom observation data showed that not all FL teachers had adequate professional skills and a suitable level of language proficiency to teach children at the primary school age group. Enever's (2014) study indicated that generalist primary teachers with appropriate FL proficiency and adequate language teaching skills were not always available. Interview data from primary teachers and primary school principals showed that generalist primary teachers were aware of challenges they were facing especially in tackling spur-of-the-moment interactions to facilitate children's FL learning. Specialist teachers sometimes lacked adequate skills and expertise for teaching the FL to primary school children whereas generalist teachers were potentially better at transferable skills as a consequence of their primary teaching experience and training.

With reference to the provision of in-service courses for primary teachers, evidence from seven countries in the ELLiE project indicated that primary teachers in Poland, Spain and Sweden were not fully provided with language up-skilling courses and short workshops for professional development. By contrast, primary teachers in Croatia reported that the provision of in-service training (i.e. theory knowledge, teaching language proficiency, teaching method and practice) was available and their course attendance was compulsory. Primary teachers in England, the Netherlands and Italy reported that they were given widespread opportunities for on-going teacher professional development and their attendance at in-service workshops was mainly voluntary instead of being compulsory like Croatia (Enever, 2014). Such in-service workshops provided teachers with important opportunities to practice not only their target language proficiency but also their teaching methodology. For some primary teachers, in-service workshops might be the only opportunity to meet their colleagues to share and discuss

their primary teaching work. However, online courses for primary teachers were being increasingly offered to improve their target language proficiency as well as professional skills. The provision of in-service courses for primary teachers in these European countries is a useful source of information for Vietnamese primary EFL teacher education policy-makers in the context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam and other Asian countries. The particularly useful aspects that can be distilled from the European experience are (i) the target language and other development courses; (ii) there is provision for good quality opportunities for primary teachers to practice not only their target language proficiency but also update their foreign language teaching methods and (iii) there has been an increase in the provision of online courses for primary teachers to gradually improve the current levels of target LP.

#### **4.5 A gap in research on TEYL teachers' ELP**

As stated in chapter one, primary EFL teachers' English language proficiency is a matter of concern for many non-English speaking countries including Vietnam. However, there has been insufficient research into the development of TEYL teachers' ELP for young English language learners from the age of eight to eleven at the primary school level in South-East Asian countries (Peng & Zhang, 2009) in general and in Vietnam in particular (Nguyen, 2011). Moreover, very little research into TEYL teachers' ELP at the primary school level in Vietnam and in other South-East Asian countries has been undertaken using critical ethnography as a research method (chapter five). Ethnographical research is a kind of qualitative study, focusing on the cultural interpretation of people's behaviours in a naturalistic situation (Kawamura, 2011; Liamputtong, 2009; Starfield, 2010). It aims to provide insight into real-life behaviours of a group of people. Critical ethnography has



emerged from inside ethnography, focusing on implicit values explained through the interpretive standpoint of critical ethnographers (Madison, 2005).

This ethnographic study, therefore, is an attempt to bridge the gap in knowledge in developing teachers' ELP in both TEYL teacher preparation programs and TPD programs. The knowledge gap that I have argued here is how to improve the current English language proficiency level of primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam through pre-service and in-service TEYL teacher training programs.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter has examined the literature involving the area of TEYL teacher education for promoting higher levels of ELP. It has been planned around and directly related to four issues in relation to teachers' ELP as follows:

First, teachers' ELP in FL teacher preparation programs has been examined. The argument put forward in section 4.2 is that TEYL teacher preparation programmes in Vietnam need to be critically reviewed to ensure that the organization and content of the current TEYL teacher preparation programs focus more on the development of teacher proficiency in English language. Second, teacher professional development (TPD) involving teachers' ELP has been detailed in section 4.3. It includes (i) conceptual frameworks of TPD; (ii) in-country teacher development programs and (iii) overseas language and culture immersion programs. Third, research on TEYL teacher education for higher levels of ELP in Asia and Europe has been critically reviewed.

With reference to the increase in English language teacher proficiency, three investigations into TEYL in different South East Asian contexts have been discussed. In the setting of EFL

teacher education in Malaysia, the study conducted by Ali et al. (2011) focused on the implementation of English language-in-education policies at the primary school level in Malaysia. The findings pointed out that there was a need for the translation of language-in-education policy at the macro level into implementation at the classroom level.

In terms of the link between teacher training programs with teachers' ELP in organizing communicative activities in English, Butler's (2005) study showed teacher difficulties in employing appropriate learning activities for primary school children in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan where English was taught as a compulsory FL. In the Vietnamese EFL context, Nguyen (2011) conducted a study on the implementation of TEYL policy at the primary school level. The findings showed that the private primary school (school A) provided better outcomes in English language education compared to the public primary school (school B) in terms of (i) teachers' target language use, (ii) teachers' English pronunciation, (iii) children's participation in learning activities and (iv) classroom management using the target language. That was because the private primary school was able to employ Vietnamese primary EFL teachers with a high level of ELP and adequate professional skills.

With reference to the development of ELP for FL teachers in Europe, Enever (2014) conducted an investigation into EFL teacher preparation programs for higher ELP in seven European countries namely (i) Croatia, (ii) England, (iii) Italy, (iv) Netherlands, (v) Poland, (vi) Spain, and (vii) Sweden. The investigation shows a number of weaknesses in FL teacher preparation programmes including both pre- and post-service courses. Although there is still room for improvement, the provision and nature of in-service courses for primary teachers in these European countries is a useful source of information for Vietnam and other South East Asian countries.

Finally, a gap in research on TEYL and primary EFL teacher development for higher levels of ELP was identified in section 4.5. The knowledge gap that this research project wants to fill is how to improve the current English language proficiency level of primary EFL teachers in Vietnam through pre-service and in-service TEYL teacher training programs.

## **Chapter 5. Research methodology and design**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This thesis is a critical ethnographic study framed by social constructionism. Critical ethnography, a kind of qualitative study, has emerged from inside ethnography, focusing on implicit values explained through the interpretive standpoint of critical ethnographers (Madison, 2005). This chapter begins by presenting social constructionism (SC) as the theoretical basis of the study. It also describes SC's framing of the present research methodology and research design. The chapter goes on to explain a number of benefits as well as potential problems of critical ethnography (CE) as the selected inquiry strategy (section 5.3.2). Section 5.3.3 describes the measures taken to minimize such problems. Subsequently, section 5.4 of this chapter describes and explains the design of this research project including (i) research questions and objectives, (ii) ethical considerations, (iii) research site, (iv) research participants, (v) sampling and recruitment methods, (vi) piloting, (vii) data collection methods, (viii) data treatment using thematic analysis, and (ix) procedures of data treatment. Section 5.5 justifies the presence of the four component parts of trustworthiness namely (i) credibility; (ii) transferability; (iii) dependability and (iv) confirmability as present in this research. The overall limitations of this study are discussed in section 5.6.

### **5.2 Social constructionism (SC)**

Social constructionism (SC) is defined in different ways and it is difficult to give an accurate definition of this term. According to Stam (2001), social constructionism is "sometimes called a movement, at other times a position, a theory, a theoretical orientation, an approach" (p.294). Originally, this term comes from the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966). Berger

and Luckmann (1966) argue that knowledge is a societal product and it is constructed in social life where individuals live, work and interact with one another. Subjectivity and inter-subjectivities of individuals exist in social reality via the interaction between individuals. The viewpoints of Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Burr (2003) are consistent with that of Berger and Luckmann (1966). These authors have the view that there are a variety of ways of knowing the world. The assumption is that individuals connect with their social world and interpret it based on their cultural standpoints (Creswell, 2003). To achieve the objectives of the study, I interacted with my research participants in their daily professional practices so as to gain multiple ways of understanding TEYL and the development of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency from the perspective of my participants. Such knowledge was constructed by my communication with 29 study participants and the knowledge is, more or less, influenced by my research informants' subjectivity and inter-subjectivity via their interaction with me and other study participants. However, other forms of data in this study (i.e. government policy) helped triangulate the views of my participants.

### **5.2.1 Social constructionism (SC) and critical ethnography (CE).**

Social constructionism (SC) is the theoretical lens through which the present research, a critical ethnography (CE), is conducted. It has affected (i) ethical considerations, (ii) the selection of research participants, (iii) data collection methods, (iv) data treatment using thematic analysis and (v) interpretation and discussion of the findings.

Miller (2005) argues that in the view of social constructionists, social reality is neither absolutely subjective nor entirely objective. Complete objectivity is unattainable because each individual perceives the world from his/her standpoint and in light of his/her individual interests. I played a role as an insider and an outsider in the research field, working in close

collaboration with the informants from the three participant groups in their usual work and study settings. This is in concord with Creswell's (1998) argument that it is necessary for researchers to cooperate with participants, spending plenty of time in the field so as to understand them and their motivations well. Through my interaction with my participants, knowledge of TEYL and of the development of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency was constructed based on the inter-subjectivity between myself as researcher and the 29 participants of the study.

A critical ethnography framed by social constructionism embraces the idea that knowledge has the power for change and improvement of the "world". As Berger & Luckmann (1966) argue, "knowledge is a social product and knowledge is a factor in social change" (p.104). The social change I want to activate here is the improvement of primary teaching of English through a shift in pre- and in-service TEYL teacher training programs so as to raise TEYL teachers' English language proficiency in public primary schools in Vietnam.

### **5.3 Research methodology: Critical ethnography**

Ethnographical research is defined as a qualitative, descriptive, explanatory, non-statistical way to study people's behaviours in a *naturalistic* setting, focusing on the cultural interpretation of their behaviours (Kawamura, 2011). It aims to provide rich insight into real-life behaviours of a group of people (i.e. what people say about things and what they do in their daily or professional lives). Ethnographical research can combine several qualitative methods of data collection including both interviewing and observation (Fielding, 2008). The name 'ethnography' stems from the field of cultural anthropology (Fielding, 2008; Harklau, 2005; Heigham & Sakui, 2009; Neuman, 2003, 2011). "Ethno" means people or folk and "graphy" refers to describing or studying something (Neuman, 2003, p.366).

Critical ethnography is described as “conventional ethnography with a political purpose” (Thomas, 1993, p.4). The “political purpose” here is to encourage social modification in a human community (Liamputtong, 2009; Starfield, 2010). In the context of this research, that means applying the findings to bridging the policy/practice divide by considering how higher levels of English language proficiency could be developed, particularly in oral English for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. It is hoped that the findings may also be of interest to other developing countries who are introducing English at earlier stages of the curriculum. As a critical ethnographer and a social constructionist researcher, I have inevitably interpreted the data collected at the research location through the lens of my individual cultural experiences and background (Creswell, 2003).

### **5.3.1 Justifications for adopting critical ethnography (CE).**

I adopted a critical ethnographic approach for this study for three reasons as follows:

First, critical ethnography (CE) has value in helping me to deeply understand my participants in their natural, real-life setting (Dornyei, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2006; Mackay & Gass, 2005; Walsh, 2004). My longitudinal engagement with the 29 research participants in the field (i.e. over four months in Vietnam) provided me as a ‘research insider’ with the opportunity to develop a robust understanding of the culture under study (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). It helped me not only to understand the cultural context of my professional practice but enhanced my knowledge about my professional practice.

Second, as a social constructionist researcher and a critical ethnographer I have hopefully achieved culturally rich, thick descriptions of the social reality under study (Blommaert & Jie, 2010) and because of this the ability to encourage practice and policy improvements (Starfield, 2010) in the Vietnamese context for English language education at the primary

school level. A critical thoroughly-investigated, well-written ethnography can be a powerful instrument for giving readers an insight into the issue of teacher proficiency in English at primary school level in Vietnam and how things can be changed.

Third, CE brings me a wide range of evidence from different data sources drawn from TEYL teaching staff, TEYL student teachers and TEYL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam, as well as contextual documents like curriculum statements and educational policy. Moreover, my intimate knowledge of the educational institution and the region where I as the researcher and a critical ethnographer have lived and worked contributes considerably to the validity of the findings. Consequently, CE provides me with a strong foundation of evidence from which informed suggestions of this study are made.

### **5.3.2 Potential problems.**

In adopting a critical ethnographic approach to research, I have been aware of two possible problems. Firstly, my interviewees might have responded to the interviewing questions according to what they thought I wanted them to answer instead of presenting their actual perceptions. Thus, the results might be influenced by their perceptions. Secondly, my bias as a research insider might, more or less, be inevitable (Holliday, 2010; Kawamura, 2011; Nunan & Bailey, 2009) in the process of ethnographic data analysis and interpretation. Hence, the research results are likely, to a certain extent, to be affected by my beliefs and standpoint.

### **5.3.3 Measures taken to minimize the impact of potential problems.**

To reduce the influence of my bias as a qualitative researcher, I adopted a number of measures as follows:



(i) Triangulation of data sources (Bazeley, 2013; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In this study, I collected the data from different sources such as formal interviews, classroom observations including both TEYL classes in public primary schools and teacher training classes and also included relevant institutional and government documents and field-notes.

(ii) Triangulation of data collection methods (Patton, 2002). Three methods for data collection have been used in this study namely (ii. a.) face-to-face semi-structured interviews, (ii.b.) classroom observations and (ii. c.) relevant institutional and government documents (section 5.4.7).

(iii) Triangulation of different target groups of informants and different research sites (Sheton, 2004). Twenty-nine informants of this study came from three target groups including nine primary EFL teacher trainers in group one, ten primary EFL teacher trainees and ten primary EFL teachers. Six research sites were adopted in this study including one local teacher training college in Vietnam where informants of group one and group two were working and five different local public primary schools where informants of group three were teaching English to primary school children (sections 5.4.3 & 5.4.4).

(iv) Participation validation (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Sheton, 2004). In this study, I invited my research participants to confirm the accuracy of the given information by checking their transcripts. Also, I suggested cooperating with me to thematically code the texts (Boyatzis, 1998).

## **5.4 Research design**

As stated in section 5.2 of this chapter, social constructionism (SC) is the lens through which the present research was designed. This section gives a detailed description of the critical

ethnographic design of the study and how it is socially constructionist. Generally speaking, this research has three sequential stages namely (i) pre fieldwork, (ii) during fieldwork and (iii) post field-work. The word “sequential” here does not mean that the order of stages was rigid and completely separated because each stage has sub-stages and they can be overlapping, recursive and even simultaneous. Thus, it is difficult to divide explicitly the order of each stage. Below is a detailed description and interpretation of what I did before the fieldwork, during the fieldwork and after the fieldwork, keeping in mind that the “edges” were fuzzy and blurred into each other.

#### **A. Pre-fieldwork**

In preparation for the fieldwork, I started reviewing the literature associated with the main areas of interest in this research at the beginning of December, 2010. My engagement with the literature review in the early stages of the research project was significant because it helped direct my attention to the main issues relating to my selected area of interest. In this section, I clarify what I did in preparation for the fieldwork. Specifically, I developed research questions and objectives, examined the ethical considerations, identified the field site, selected the research participants, devised sampling and recruiting methods and carried out piloting.

##### **5.4.1 Research questions and objectives.**

The present research study was designed (as presented in section 1.3) to answer the overarching research question (RQ),

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

This overarching research question generated three sub-questions as follows:

RQ1: What contextual challenges hinder Vietnamese TEYL student teachers from meeting the international standard of English language proficiency (ELP) required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

RQ2: How could the development of higher English language proficiency (ELP), particularly oral English, be better integrated into current pre-service TEYL teacher training programmes?

RQ3: How could higher levels of English language proficiency be developed through in-service teacher education programs (INSTEPs)?

These questions are addressed in the literature review and through the findings which are presented in two chapters: six and seven.

One of the objectives of this critical ethnographic study is to construct knowledge about the current beliefs and teaching practices of primary EFL teacher trainers, of primary EFL teacher trainees and of primary EFL teachers in relation to how the current English language proficiency of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools could be improved as required by the government policy. This study embraces four specific objectives:

- (i) It critically analyzes the challenges in raising English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English language proficiency.
- (ii) It examines the integration of developing English language teacher proficiency into current TEYL teacher training programmes.
- (iii) It suggests improvements in pre-and in-service primary EFL teacher education programs for higher levels of English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers.

(iv) It provides a source of information for primary EFL teacher education policy-makers and primary EFL teacher trainers.

#### **5.4.2 Ethical considerations.**

This research project received ethics approval of AUTECH (Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee) on 7 August, 2012 (Appendix A) prior to data collection in Vietnam. Also, the research was ethically approved by the Rector of one local Teacher Training College and the five Principals of five local public primary schools in Vietnam.

This study conformed to the principle of informed and voluntary consent. Specifically, I sent each potential participant the *Participant Information Sheet* and *Consent Form* which were translated into the Vietnamese language (for both language versions see Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J & K). Moreover, I explained this study to potential participants and gave them the opportunity to ask me any questions they had concerning this study. My participants were given one week to consider my invitation. If they agreed, they signed the *Consent Form* as written evidence of their voluntary consent to participate. Furthermore, transcript checking was sent to my participants in Vietnam via emails to confirm accuracy.

Regarding the issue of “objective measure”, my participants have informed me of their current levels of ELP but I regard it as confidential. Protecting my participants’ privacy and confidentiality is my responsibility as a researcher. I do not have the right to reveal the English language proficiency data of my participants based on the international standards required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-TTg. Thus, I did not mention it in my thesis. Some people might not understand the ethnic problem here in my Vietnamese culture. They argue that a group of participants are anonymous, why not include whatever information the researcher has to hand about the estimated ELP of each participant? Merely

because of the issue of face-saving in the Vietnamese culture, I am not permitted to reveal the EL proficiency data of the European standards. For reasons of face-saving, the Vietnamese MOET and the local Department of Education require the local University/ College management to keep the English language proficiency data of local EFL teachers completely confidential for future reference in relation to the dismissal of incompetent EFL teachers of ELP. Another important reason is that the selected location of this study is the *only* local TEYL teacher training college of a poor province in Vietnam. Thus, it is very easy to recognize the participants of this study, particularly TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one.

#### **5.4.3 Research site.**

The selected research site of this study was (i) one medium-sized teacher training college and (ii) five local public primary schools in a small, rural, relatively poor province in Communist Vietnam. I selected area random sampling as a method of choosing the primary schools (also section 5.4.5). College A was familiar to me because it was the location where I had been working before undertaking a PhD at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. The local college is responsible for training, preparing and supplying primary EFL teachers for all local public primary schools including these five local public primary schools (also 5.4.4). For this reason, a majority of current primary EFL teacher participants in public primary schools were ex-graduates of this local teacher training college.

#### **5.4.4 Research participants.**

To gain a detailed picture of TEYL and the issues associated with the development of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency in Communist Vietnam, I spent over four months (i.e. from 27 August to 30 December, 2012) in the field (i.e. at the selected teacher training college

and five public primary schools in Communist Vietnam), being a research group insider in order to observe and listen to three different groups of participants namely (i) primary EFL teacher trainers, (ii) primary EFL student teachers and (iii) current primary EFL teachers. The three different groups of participants are directly involved in TEYL in the Vietnamese context. I invited 30 participants from three specific groups to contribute to this study. Very unfortunately and sadly, one teacher trainer participant fell ill and died of lung cancer at the beginning of November, 2012. Thus, only 29 participants were involved in this study instead of 30 as planned ( $N=9+10+10=29$ ). In the following sections I clarify (i) participant criteria and (ii) the demographic description.

#### ***5.4.4.1 Participant criteria.***

As stated above, 29 participants from three target groups in this study were all directly involved in preparing teachers for or teaching English to young learners (TEYL) in public primary schools in Communist Vietnam, albeit in different capacities. Criteria used for selecting participants in each group are listed below:

##### ***(i) Group one: Teacher trainer participants***

Nine participants in this group satisfied the following criteria:

(i.a) Current primary EFL teacher trainers

(i.b) Directly responsible for training EFL teacher trainees for public primary schools

(i.c) Willing to volunteer for the study

(i.d) Priority was given to male participants because female participants heavily outnumbered male ones.

***(ii) Group two: Student teacher participants***

Ten participants in this group met the following criteria:

(ii.a) Current third-year students in the English Department of the College training to work as primary EFL teachers in public primary schools

(ii.b) Voluntarily agreed to take part in the research

(ii.c) Agreed to share their academic grades in previous years with me as the researcher. The aim was to help select a variety of samples to give stratified information (this was agreed through ethical approval). Teacher trainees with high, medium and low grades in ELP were all invited to contribute to this study (also section 5.4.5)

(ii.d) Male participants were given priority because female participants heavily outnumbered male ones.

***(iii) Group three: Practicing primary teacher participants***

Ten participants from five local public primary schools in this group satisfied the following criteria:

(iii.a) Current primary EFL teacher at a local public primary school

(iii.b) Voluntarily agreed to participate in the study

(iii.c) Male teacher participants were given priority because female teacher participants heavily outnumbered male ones

(iii.d) Regular teacher participants on the payroll of primary schools were given priority.

#### ***5.4.4.2 The demographic description.***

As stated above, 29 participants in this study were directly involved in TEYL in public primary schools in Vietnam.

##### ***(i) Group one: Teacher trainer participants***

The nine Vietnamese EFL teacher trainers constituted nearly all the participants of the English Department currently working at one Teacher Training College in Vietnam. Their demographic information is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Demographic information of teacher trainer participants

<b>Category</b>		<b>Number of teacher trainers(N=9)</b>
Gender	Male	2
	Female	7
Age group	30-39	4
	40-49	5
Years of EFL teacher training experience	15-19	4
	20-25	5
Years of TEYL experience	No experience	6
	1-5	3
Degree	BA	1
	MA	8
Have been abroad	Yes	1
	No	8



As seen in Table 4 more than half of the teacher trainer participants in group one were in the age group of 40-49 and had 20-25 years of EFL teaching experience. The male teacher trainers were outnumbered more than three to one by the female participants. With reference to TEYL experience, six primary EFL teacher trainer participants had no actual classroom TEYL experience themselves.

All of the nine teacher trainer participants had not been fully trained to work as teacher trainers of TEYL. (The words “not fully trained” in the Vietnamese context mean that these TEYL teacher trainers are not formally trained to help TEYL student teachers. The knowledge and teaching skills they achieve mainly are due to their self-instruction and a number of workshops delivered recently by the MOET). This reflected a more general national lack of experienced primary EFL teacher trainers for public primary schools in Communist Vietnam.

Regarding professional qualifications, one of the nine teacher trainer participants only had a BA whereas the others held a Masters’ degree. Of the eight, one had obtained the degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management from an Australian university. The factor *have been abroad* is included in Table 4 because of its particular significance. Studying in an English speaking country is a valuable opportunity for Vietnamese EFL teacher trainer participants to interact with international students and overseas university staff who use English as a means of communication.

***(ii) Group two: Student teacher participants***

The ten Vietnamese EFL teacher trainees in this study were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of the primary EFL teacher training course (2010-2013) at the teacher training college. The participants in

group two were trained by the nine teacher trainers in group one. The demographic information of these ten teacher trainee participants is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Demographic information of ten student teacher participants

Category		Number of teacher trainees(N=10)
Gender	Male	3
	Female	7
Age group	16-20	8
	21-25	2
Year of study at college	Year 3	10
Qualification	Certificate of Secondary Education	10

*Note:* Demographic information of ten student teacher participants including six student teachers with highest and lowest grades and the remaining four student teacher participants have medium grades.

As seen in Table 5, the number of male teacher trainee participants was under half of the female participants in this group. This reflected the entire population of primary EFL teacher trainees in Communist Vietnam (Statistics of the English Department, 2010, 2011 & 2012). Regarding ages, only two participants were in the age group of 21-25 whereas the remaining eight participants were in the 16-20 age group.

### ***(iii) Group three: Practicing primary teacher participants***

The ten primary teacher participants were working at five different public primary schools in Communist Vietnam. Their demographic information is shown in Table 6.

As seen in Table 6, the majority of primary teacher participants were female and in the age group of 31-35. Though I endeavoured to seek more male primary teacher participants my efforts were in vain.

Table 6: Demographic information of primary teacher participants

Category		Number of primary teachers(N=10)
Gender	Male	1
	Female	9
Age group	25-30	2
	31-35	5
	36-40	3
Years of EFL school teaching experience	0-10	5
	11-15	5
Years of TEYL experience	1-5	6
	6-10	4
Degree	B.A	9
	College Diploma	1
Have been abroad	Yes	1
	No	9

Regarding professional qualifications, one of the ten primary school teacher participants only had a College Diploma whereas the majority of participants in this group held BA degrees. Of the nine, seven had graduated from the three-year EFL teacher training course at the above-mentioned teacher training college and had College Diplomas.

Afterward, these seven teachers, albeit in different capacities, participated in an intensive course in teacher training programs leading to a BA degree. Six of the seven became regular teachers at local public primary schools. One of the six was selected to participate in a skills training course (i.e. communicative skills) lasting for one month in Malaysia recently and she was one of the two TEYL teachers who passed the English proficiency exam for primary EFL

teachers in Communist Vietnam. The teacher that was not on the permanent payroll was working as a contract teacher due to the shortage of primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. She was not on the payroll because the government did not have enough money to pay for all the primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. Fewer than half of the primary teacher participants in this group had between five and ten years of TEYL experience in public primary schools. This reflects a lack of experienced primary schoolteachers of TEYL in Vietnam more generally. “Experienced” teachers are described as those who have five or more consecutive years of teaching experience (Helen, 2013).

#### **5.4.5 Sampling and recruitment methods.**

A sample is defined as “the segment of the population that is selected for investigation” (Bryman, 2004, p.87). Sampling and recruitment methods help the researcher achieve (i) desired goals with reliable findings and (ii) enhance the level of precision, validity and trustworthiness of research results (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Hence, when planning this study, I carefully considered the issue of sampling and attempted to select the *right* cases from the group which met participant criteria. In which ways these were “right” is explained below.

The sampling and recruitment methods in this study were carried out as follows (Figure 3). First, I contacted the Rector of the teacher training college in Vietnam for authorization for the study. Then I was introduced to the Dean of the English department of this college. On Monday morning of the first week of September 2012 in a teaching staff meeting, the Dean introduced me to all teacher trainers and teacher trainees. I invited ten TEYL teacher trainer participants (group one) to contribute to this study. These were all the teacher trainers in the department. Sadly, as mentioned previously, one teacher trainer participant died thus, only nine teacher trainer participants were involved in this study.

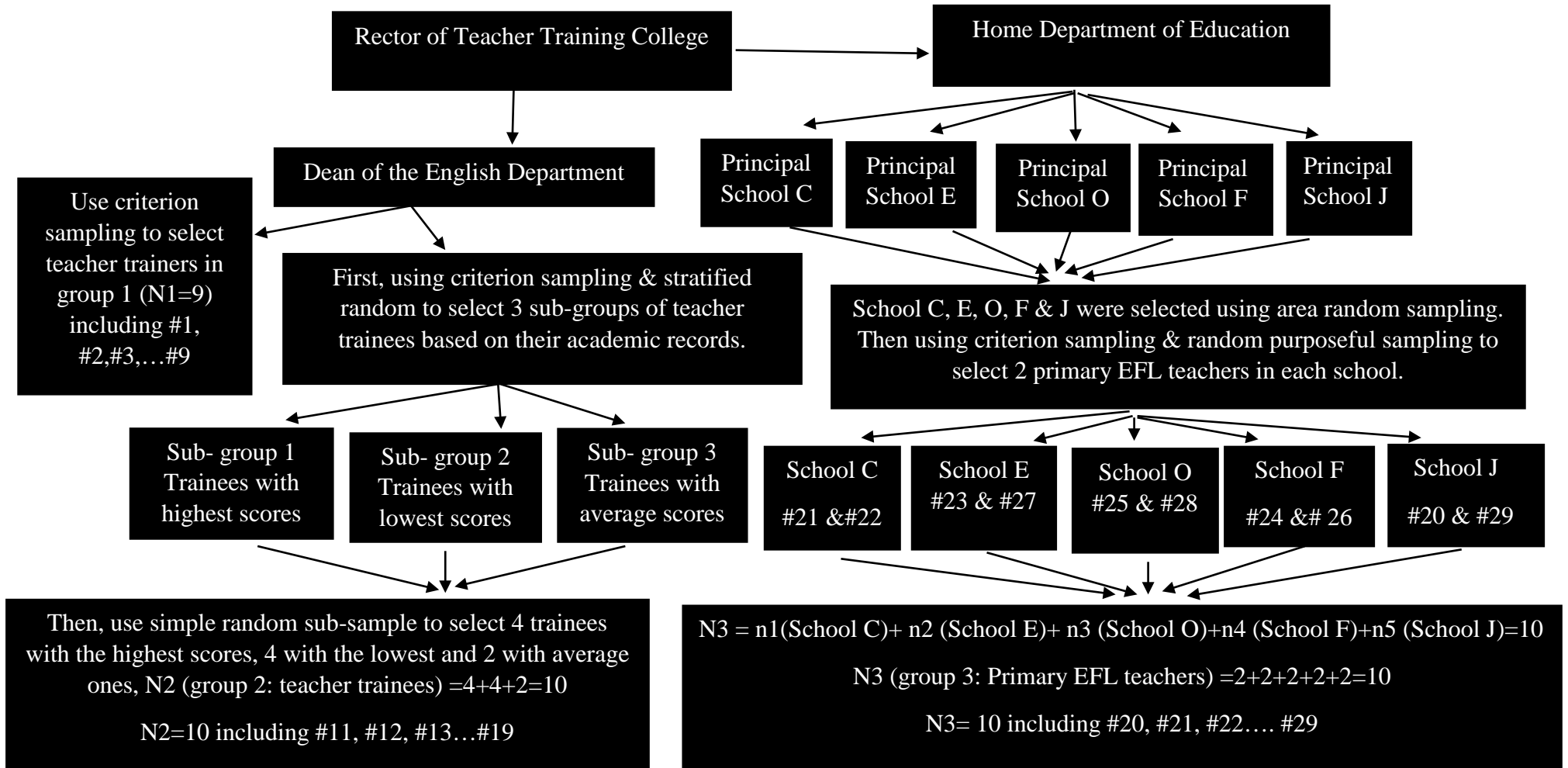
With reference to the criterion sampling for the teacher trainees, I undertook this as follows: First, the Dean's assistant put me in contact with all the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of the English Department. Then I met them at break, giving them all a 'Participant Information Sheet' in the Vietnamese language and inviting ten of them to participate in my study. Also, I showed them all the criteria for selecting ten participants in this group. When they agreed to share their academic records, I divided them into three sub-groups based on their academic achievement in English in the previous years (i.e. the first and the second years). That was, I grouped them into three sub-groups: (i) 'the highest achieving students' (i.e. with grades in ELP over 7.0 points); (ii) 'the lowest achieving students' (i.e. with grades 5.0 and under 5.0) and (iii) 'average students' (i.e. with grades 7.0 or under 7.0 but over 5.0 points). These grades reflected teacher trainee English language proficiency levels assessed by local teacher trainers according to the local standard. It should be noted that the local standard of teachers' English language proficiency is acknowledged to be lower than the international standard (Thu & Le, 2014).

For the criterion sampling of primary teachers in five public primary schools, I firstly used a random sample of public primary schools to select five primary schools namely (i) school C; (ii) school E; (iii) school O; (iv) school F and (v) school J. Then, I contacted the five principals of these public primary schools who put me in contact with their primary teachers. Next, I gave a 'Participant Information Sheet' in the Vietnamese language to primary EFL teachers and invited them to participate in my study. Then, I used random sampling to select two participants in each school.

$$N = n1(\text{school C}) + n2(\text{school E}) + n3(\text{school O}) + n4(\text{school F}) + n5(\text{school J}) = 10.$$

$$N = n1(2) + n2(2) + n3(2) + n4(2) + n5(2) = 10.$$

Figure 3: Methods for sampling recruitment of this study ( $N = N1 + N2 + N3 = 9 + 10 + 10 = 29$ )



#### **5.4.6 Piloting.**

For reliability purposes, I pre-tested the interview questions through emails and Webcam from New Zealand in April, 2012 before embarking on the actual interviews in Communist Vietnam. Piloting was beneficial because it helped improve the design of the interview questions. It should be noted that the interview questions in this study asked about both English language teacher proficiency and professional skills of primary EFL teachers in Communist Vietnam. That is because at first I wanted to focus on both areas. The study was later narrowed to ensure depth of engagement with one area of inquiry (i.e. teachers' English language proficiency).

The six Vietnamese teachers of English who participated in my piloting were working in Vietnam. These teachers were not members of the sample who later participated in the full study. Specifically, I conducted my pilot study as follows:

First, I constructed seven major interview themes developed from the literature and the particular local context related to my chosen areas of interest namely (i) the admissions policy at the teacher training college; (ii) pre-service and in-service teacher training programs; (iii) teaching materials; (iv) teacher language proficiency; (v) teaching methods; (vi) exams and learner assessment and (vii) teaching facilities.

Based on the themes, I created questions relevant for each of the three participant groups namely (i) teacher trainers; (ii) teacher trainees and (iii) primary teachers (details in Appendix L, *Interviewing question prompts*). In addition to prepared interview questions according to the seven major themes, I followed up my interviewees' responses with contextually relevant supplementary questions so that other issues had room to arise.

After that, through email I made an appointment with six Vietnamese teachers of English who agreed to participate in my pilot study. Time for the pilot study was negotiated for the convenience of my interviewees.

The following checklist was sent to my pilot participants through email as soon as the pilot study was completed so as to provide me with feedback:

**(i) Clarity of interviewing questions:**

(i.a) Were the questions clear?

(i.b) Which questions did you think were unclear and vague?

(i.c) Which questions did you find difficult to answer?

(i.d) Which questions did you find problematical?

(i.e) Did the interviewing questions help answer the research questions of this study?

**(ii) Perception of my interviewing skill as a novice qualitative interviewer:**

(ii.a) Did you feel comfortable when being interviewed by me?

(ii.b) What were your perceptions of the interview?

(ii.c) Was I a patient and attentive listener?

(ii.d) Was my body language appropriate during the interview?

(Adapted from Berg, 2009; Bryman, 2008)

As a result of the pilot, I changed the way I asked the interview questions in terms of asking one thing at a time instead of two things in one question. Moreover, I was advised to be a more patient and attentive listener.

**B. During fieldwork**



#### **5.4.7 Data collection methods.**

Data collection for the main study took place from 27 August, 2012 to 30 December, 2012 in a small city of a somewhat poor province in Vietnam. In this section, I explain how I collected data from the three groups of participants via: (i) face-to-face semi-structured interviews; (ii) classroom observations and (iii) the compilation of relevant documents at the research location and elsewhere. For example, policy documents are part of the ethnographical data and they are from online resources. Additionally, I examine the benefits and potential problems of adopting each instrument. It should be noted that semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were two critical instruments of data collection in this study. These were supplemented with full field notes as well as relevant official documents such as curriculum documents, media reports and policy documents that I collected during the period of fieldwork in Vietnam and later.

##### ***5.4.7.1 Face-to-face semi-structured interviews.***

The participants in this study were formally interviewed for about one hour. Also, they were invited (if they agreed) to participate in face-to-face communication several times on an informal basis to clarify what they had discussed in the interview. Time for subsequent communication was kept to a minimum of ten or so minutes. These follow up conversations enabled the longitudinal aspect of my research. This approach to data collection is covered in my ethical approval.

King and Horrocks (2010) view research interviewing as a form of face-to-face social communication and Stake (1995) calls it “the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). Different from structured interviews, semi-structured interviews are likely to (i) be less structured, focusing more on interviewees’ individual standpoints (Patton, 2002) and (ii) promote so-called “rambling”, thus gaining insights into what interviewees perceive as significant (Bryman, 2008).

Twenty-nine face-to-face semi-structured interviews from the three target groups of participants in this study were conducted using audio-taping and jotted field-notes (also section 5.4.9.1). In this section, I clarify (i) what I did in preparation for the interviews, (ii) report on the interviews of this study, (iii) the benefits and potential problems of adopting face-to-face semi-structured interviews and (iv) how I minimized the limitations of adopting this form of data collection.

- **Interview preparation**

As stated in section 5.4.6 of this chapter, I constructed seven major themes for the interviews based on the relevant literature and on the particular context. The themes were written out in the form of interviewing question prompts (details in Appendix L) so as to help me feel more confident while interviewing and to remind me of the major themes of the study. In addition, I followed up my interviewees' responses with contextually relevant supplementary questions. With this flexible approach, my participants were able to provide their real-life stories involving their work via the interviews so as to shape a picture of TEYL. As stated in chapter one, the research for this thesis began with a much wider focus, including TEYL teachers' professional skills, alongside their ELP. However, over the course of the research, it became apparent that more focus was necessary to properly do justice to the data. The thesis now focuses on the development of higher ELP for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools with an emphasis on oral fluency. This changed focus seemed necessary because in 2012 when I went back to Vietnam for data collection, the topic of TEYL teachers' ELP became very "hot" and my participants were all passionately interested in this issue. This passion and interest came through strongly in the interview data in particular. At that time, it was my participants' turn to be tested by the government as an "objective measure" of their current level of ELP. Participants were tested with IELTS/TOEFL/FCE/CAE- adapted tests

of English “designed” by cutting and pasting from different tests of English books. The tests were “designed” by local universities mandated by the MOET.

It should be noted that only two groups of my participants were required to sit an IELTS/TOEFL/FCE/CAE-adapted test of English to measure their ELP level. These two groups include (i) graduating primary EFL teachers in public primary schools and (ii) TEYL teacher trainers at colleges. I was not privy to the results of these tests. Regarding the selection of TEYL student teacher participants, as stated in section 5.4.5 I used their grades in ELP assessed by local teacher trainers in the two previous academic years.

- **Report on the interviews**

This section presents a detailed report on the interviews of this study (Table 7). As stated in section 5.4.5 of this chapter, the time and venue for interviews were arranged for the convenience of my research participants. The information about the 29 interviews of this study is detailed in Table 7 below.

It should be noted that besides 29 formal semi-structured interviews which were audio-recorded, I also held 49 follow-up conversations which were not audio recorded but for which I took field notes. These conversations only lasted about five or ten minutes according to the convenience and consent of my participants.

Table 7: Information about the face-to-face semi-structured interviews of this study

Participant group	Participant pseudonym	Date of interview	Venue	Time length (in hours)
<i>Group one:</i>  Primary EFL teacher trainer participants (N1=9)	#1	4 October 2012	Cafe A	35:51
	#2	8 October 2012	Cafe B	1:22:45
	#3	9 October 2012	Cafe C	1:31:01
	#4	10 October 2012	Cafe D	1:27:49
	#5	10 October 2012	Cafe E	1:11:53
	#6	11 October 2012	Cafe F	44:09
	#7	16 October 2012	Cafe B	58:59
	#8	19 October 2012	Cafe A	1:18:27
	#9	15 October 2012	Cafe F	1:05:41
				Total: <b>10:11:36</b>
<i>Group two:</i>  Primary EFL teacher trainee participants (N2=10)	#10	1 October 2012	Cafe C	24:16
	#11	1 October 2012	Cafe B	35:27
	#12	2 October 2012	Cafe A	31:26
	#13	3 October 2012	Cafe D	18:18
	#14	4 October 2012	Cafe E	23:22
	#15	27 September 2012	Cafe F	40:23
	#16	27 September 2012	Cafe B	37:54
	#17	28 September 2012	Cafe A	18:48
	#18	28 September 2012	Cafe F	37:25
	#19	29 September 2012	Cafe B	23:34
				Total: <b>4: 50:53</b>

Participant group	Participant pseudonym	Date of interview	Venue	Time length (in hours)
<i>Group three:</i> Primary EFL teacher participants (N3=2+2+2+2+2=10)	(i) School C			
	#21	4 October 2012	Hall of school C	38:48
	#22	4 October 2012	Hall of school C	32:41
	(ii) School E			
	#23	5 October 2012	Cafe F	51:26
	#27	8 October 2012	Cafe C	46:34
	(iii) School F			
	#24	5 October 2012	Cafe A	29:39
	#26	7 October 2012	Café F	46:42
	(iv) School J			
	#20	3 October 2012	Cafe H	1:00:57
	#29	3 November 2012	Cafe C	28:05
	(v) School O			
	#25	6 October 2012	Cafe J	42:29
	#28	11 October 2012	Cafe B	57:39
				Total: <b>7:15:00</b>
N= 9+10+10=29 interviews				Total (groups 1+2+3): <b>22:17: 29</b>

- **Justification for adopting face-to-face semi-structured interviews**

As stated above, this study adopted face-to-face semi-structured interviews as a key method of data collection. This type of interview has two major benefits as follows:

First, salient themes of the study were explored and developed based on my preparation for interviews as well as actual interests during the interviews. Flexibility in semi-structured

interviews as well as the adoption of the Vietnamese language possibly allowed my participants to talk about the research topic freely and unreservedly.

Second, I gauged my participants' feelings, attitudes and experiences of teaching practices. Face-to-face communication helped set the foundation for trust and understanding and this enhanced the working relationship between the researcher and the participants.

#### ***5.4.7.2 Classroom observations.***

Classroom observations were also an important feature of this ethnographic research project. They were employed for triangulation to enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). There were 16 classroom observations in this study including (i) eight primary EFL teacher training classroom observations and (ii) eight primary classroom observations in five public primary schools. Through classroom observations, I attempted to examine the consistency between what was reported in the interviews and teaching practices particularly in terms of ELP of teachers. Moreover, the choice of each language (i.e. Vietnamese or English) at different stages of the observed classrooms was considered.

Classroom observations in this study were overt, non-participant and semi-structured observations. In this section, I clarify (i) what I did in preparation for the classroom observations, (ii) how I carried out the observations (iii) I report on classroom observations of this study, (iv) the benefits and potential problems of adopting the overt, non-participant and semi-structured observations and (iv) how I minimized such problems.

- **Preparation for the classroom observations**

In order to prepare for the classroom observations, I constructed a classroom observation protocol (Appendix N). The observation protocol had a close link with the interviewing themes. The 'close link' here does not mean that the themes for the observations were the

same as for the interviews. There were differences and similarities between the themes of the two instruments for collecting data in this study. Specifically, the classroom observations focused on two major areas including (i) teachers' English language proficiency and (ii) teachers' teaching strategies to help learners use the target language (TL). The first major area consisted of seven sub-areas namely (i.a) utilization of TL resources, (i.b) class management by using the TL, (i.c) provision of rich and authentic English language input, (i.d) provision of accurate English language models, (i.e) provision of corrective feedback, (i.f) provision of adequate explanations and (i.g) improvisation competence in FL teaching. Then I constructed a classroom observation protocol for the two target groups of participants namely (i) primary EFL teacher trainer participants in group one and (ii) primary EFL teacher participants in group three (see Appendix N, "Classroom Observation Protocol"). The construction of such a carefully-prepared protocol helped me focus on (i) what should be observed, (ii) who should be observed, (iii) what should be collected, (iv) what should be recorded and (v) how recording should be done. However, I did not follow this protocol exactly.

- **What I did during the classroom observations**

The 16 classroom observations were audio-recorded for analysis. Apart from this, to help capture and remind myself of nuances of my participants' expressions through their non-verbal communications I used jotted field-notes during the classroom observations. I sat silently at the back of the class and took as many notes as possible in an unobtrusive way. I used the classroom observation protocol to remind myself of the major areas of classroom observations I needed to focus on. Moreover, at the completion of each classroom observation, I made more notes based on my recollection of the session.

- **Report on the classroom observations**

This section presents a detailed report on the classroom observations of this study (Table 8).

As stated in section 5.4.2 of this chapter, the time for classroom observations was arranged for the convenience of primary EFL teacher trainer participants and primary EFL teacher participants. This section details the 16 classroom observations. Due to the unavailability of classes for observation, one primary EFL teacher trainer participant # 7 and two primary EFL teacher participants (i.e. # 22 in school C & # 26 in school F) were not observed though they had participated in the interviews for the project.

Table 8: Information about the classroom observations

Participant Group	Participant pseudonym	Date of observation	Teaching focus (topic & skills)
<i>Group one:</i> Primary EFL teacher trainer participants	#1	13 Dec. 2012	Expressing different opinions: Situations & expressions
	#2	23 Nov. 2012	Daily routine: Controlled speaking practice
	#3	15 Nov. 2012	Entertainment: Controlled listening practice
	#4	26 Nov. 2012	Practice teaching English vocabulary involving occupations
	#5	23 Nov. 2012	Using the blackboard: Reading & translation
	#6	14 Dec. 2012	Jobs: Vocabulary practice
	#7	x	x
	#8	14 Dec. 2012	Overpopulation: Controlled speaking practice
	#9	29 Nov. 2012	Describing people: Controlled listening practice



Participant Group	Participant pseudonym	Date of observation	Teaching focus (topic & skills)
Group three: Primary EFL teacher participants	School C		
	#21	3 Nov 2012	My school: Controlled communicative practice
	#22	x	x
	School E		
	#23	16 Nov. 2012	Read and complete: Vocabulary & translation
	#27	27 Nov. 2012	Subjects at school: Controlled communicative practice
	School F		
	#24	30 Nov. 2012	Colours: Controlled communicative practice
	#26	x	x
	School J		
	#20	3 Nov.2012	My school: Controlled communicative practice
	#29	29 Nov. 2012	There is/are.... : Structure revision& translation
	School O		
	#25	27 Nov. 2012	What is this/ that? It is a(n)...: Speaking practice
	#28	30 Nov.2012	Things in class: Controlled communicative practice

- **Justifications for adopting the overt, non-participant and semi-structured observations**

This study adopted overt, non-participant and semi-structured observations. This type of observation had two major advantages. First, flexibility in semi-structured observations helped maximize opportunities for understanding (i) the research setting of TEYL and TEYL teacher education with higher levels of English language proficiency in Vietnam as well as

(ii) my participants from the three different target groups directly related to TEYL in the Vietnamese context of primary English language education. That was because despite entering the fieldwork with themes of my selected areas of interest, I was always flexible in observation so as to capture other items of interest. Second, this type of classroom observation provided me with opportunities to identify some inconsistencies between what was happening in teaching practices and what was stated in the interview.

However, there was potential for the Hawthorne effect to be in operation in adopting this kind of observation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The Hawthorne effect is described as the modification of behaviour by the subjects of a study due to their consciousness of being observed (Porter, 2012).

#### ***5.4.7.3 Relevant documents.***

As an ethnographic fieldworker, I collected a number of documents at the research location including (i) the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and (ii) eight primary EFL teacher training manuals. These augmented policy documents from online sources and helped construct a picture of TEYL practices in public schools and the development of teachers' English language proficiency in a teacher training college in Vietnam.

### **C. Post-fieldwork**

#### **5.4.8 Data treatment using thematic analysis.**

In this section, I clarify two major benefits and a potential problem of adopting thematic analysis. Also, I discuss measures taken to minimize the impact of limitations in this study.

##### ***5.4.8.1. Benefits and potential problems of adopting thematic analysis.***

This study adopted thematic analysis because it has two major benefits: First, thematic analysis is one of the most commonly-used, accessible and flexible methods of qualitative data analysis for treating substantial data sets arising from multiple sources (Matthews &

Ross, 2010). It can be useful (i) to summarize vital characteristics of a considerable body of data, (ii) to provide a thick description of the data sets, (iii) to draw attention to similarities and differences across the data sets, (iv) to gain unexpected insights and (v) to offer social and psychological understandings of data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Hence, it is often seen as an appropriate way of shaping and *taming* ethnographical data, which combine several qualitative methods of data collection including interviewing, observation and document analysis. In other words, the adoption of thematic analysis in this study helped me tackle the large data set collected at the research location.

Second, thematic analysis is one of the most effective methods of qualitative data analysis “suited to informing policy development” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.91) and finding appropriate solutions to real-life problems (Greg, 2012). This analytical method helped me construct and develop a coherent argument in my thesis by linking all emergent themes among the large data set so as to consider more appropriate solutions to the problem of developing higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam.

#### ***5.4.8.2 Measures to minimize potential problems of adopting thematic analysis.***

To address the issue of reliability, I took a number of measures: First, I checked and double-checked transcriptions and translations to ensure that they were faithful to the original documents (Gibbs, 2007). In transcribing the 29 interviews of the study, I adopted the so-called “unfocussed transcriptions” method (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.113) by faithfully writing down everything that was recorded because I did not intend to focus at first on any “particular sections or interactional aspects of the data” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.113). The work of checking and double-checking transcriptions helped me have a feeling of familiarity and further acquaintance with my data. Regarding the translation step, I adopted a rough

translation rather than a word-for-word translation. That was, I was faithful to the spirit of the originals rather than translating everything closely. After the steps of transcriptions and of translation, I summarized the information collected to condense the data. This enabled organisation of the large amount of data.

Second, I developed and monitored themes and codes carefully (Greg, 2012). In this study, I adopted data-driven themes and codes and the development of such themes and codes requires “criterion-referenced, or anchored, material” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.41). How themes and codes were monitored is clarified in section 5.4.9.2. Sample codes adopted in analyzing different sources of data are shown in Table 10 & Table 11. A sample code of triangulation of data sources is also detailed in Table 12.

Third, I wrote memos about my codes and checked them regularly for inconsistencies (Gibbs, 2007). The organisational method of my memos about the codes is presented in section 5.4.9.1 below. Fourth, I constantly compared my data during the analysis process seeking differences and similarities within a group and across groups (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

#### **5.4.9 Procedures of data analysis**

Being different from quantitative data treatments, the procedures of qualitative data collection and qualitative data analysis take place at the same time (Bryman, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As Punch puts it: “several things are going on at once” (Punch, 2009, p.175). In this section, I describe how I processed the data.

##### ***5.4.9.1 Data organization.***

The process of qualitative data collection and analysis commenced as soon as I arrived at the research location (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I used field notes to document my ideas during the process of data collection. Field notes are notes written by me and for me as the fieldworker (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used field notes to record as much as possible of

what was happening in the interviews, pre- during- and post-classroom observations in the field. I recorded particular impressions of my participants and of the research location. Thus, field notes served as valuable reminders of what I might potentially have overlooked during data collection, and which could be important to help build knowledge about the research questions.

#### ***5.4.9.2 Developing an analysis framework.***

The process of data analysis in this study involved two particular phases. Phase one engaged with the analysis of each source of data independently (i.e. interview data, classroom observation data and relevant documents collected at the field). Phase two involved the triangulation of the three different sources of data to create an advanced level of emergent themes. In phase one, I adopted the data-driven approach proposed by Boyatzis (1998) for inductive qualitative analysis. Within the data-driven approach, there were three major stages of this analysis and each stage embraced multiple steps. Stages and steps in each particular stage proposed by Boyatzis (1998) are summarized as follows:

##### **(i) Stage one:**

(i.a) Step one: Determine sampling and design issues

(i.b) Step two: Choose sub-samples

##### **(ii) Stage two:**

(ii.a) Step one: Condense raw data

(ii.b) Step two: Identify themes within sub-samples

(ii.c) Step three: Compare themes across sub-samples within each group

(ii.d) Step four: Create thematic codes

(ii.e) Step five: Decide the consistency of judgement of the thematic codes

##### **(iii) Stage three:**

(iii.a) Apply the thematic codes to the remaining raw data

(iii.b) Step two: Confirm the codes by considering the differences on each subsample involving the drafted thematic codes

(iii.c) Step three: Interpret the results.

- **Themes, codes and thematic codes**

It is necessary to clarify (i) the difference between themes, codes and thematic codes; (ii) how codes/ thematic codes relate to themes and (iii) how all these come together in this study.

Themes are different from codes. “A theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded” (Saldana, 2009, p.13). Themes are described as the main ideas emerging from the data. Codes are names given by me as the researcher to describe a particular phenomenon/ pattern that contribute to a theme. Themes can be expressed in longer phrases and sentences whereas codes tend to be shorter, critical analytic units. Thematic codes are names that I as the researcher of the study give to the main thematic ideas from different sources of data collected during the fieldwork in Vietnam.

Codes, thematic codes and themes are closely related and they come together during the process of thematic analysis. Themes are considered the final result of many cycles of coding. During the first cycle coding process, I as the researcher broke the data into first level concepts or subheadings by listing initial codes in pieces of data (i.e. field notes, participants’ interviews, classroom observations, policy materials) along with a specific description of each code means and the source of the code. In this preliminary stage, initial codes were just one word or a short sentence to describe the patterns emerging from different sources of my condensed data. Codes were categorized by me as the researcher according to particular themes of this study and thematic codes were put together to help develop a specific theme serving the interests of this study.

- **Subsamples vs samples**

It is critical to explain (i) what a sub-sample is; (ii) differences between samples and subsamples and (ii) why pairs of sub-samples are adopted in this study. Sub-samples are described as smaller parts of a sample created by splitting or subdividing the original sample

whereas samples are defined as a number of things/ people taken out from a larger group and used in the study to provide information about the investigated group. Bryman (2004) describes a sample as “the segment of the population that is selected for investigation” (p.87).

The adoption of pairs of sub-samples is to show up the differences and similarities (i) among different members of the same group as well as (ii) among different groups of informants towards the provision of a picture of developing higher ELP for TEYL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam (also see Table 9 below with a number of examples of sub-sample choice in this study).

- **Techniques to identify themes**

To identify themes within each pair of subsamples, I followed the suggestions made by Ryan and Bernards (2003). That is, I used five techniques to identify themes: (i) repetition in speech, (ii) local terms adopted in an unusual way, (iii) metaphors, (iv) transitions from one topic to another and (v) differences and similarities among the same informant or different informants.

- **The first phase of thematic analysis**

Following is a short description of the first phase of thematic analysis adopted in this study. As stated in 5.4.4.1. criterion sampling was applied to the three target groups. Raw data collected from the criterion-sampling was the basis for the development of thematic codes. That was, themes and codes were constructed inductively from raw data and they were representative of particular samples of what emerged from the data. I was sensitized to themes and codes by my understanding of both my own experiences as a student, teacher and teacher trainer and the literature. As a qualitative analyst, I often checked back to the raw data during the process of thematic code development so as to double-check whether all remaining samples were coded thematically or not. With the data-driven, inductive approach to thematic

analysis (i.e. thematic analysis coding for themes and codes), the way I selected my subsamples was an important part of the research design.

Participants' teaching experience including TEYL experience (i.e. mainly TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one and TEYL teacher participants in group three) measured by the number of years working as EFL teachers at the research location was chosen as one of the criteria for the sampling of the sub-samples in this study (Table 9). Specifically, I examined five particular categories namely (i) years of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) experience, (ii) years of experience teaching English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT), (iii) gender, (iv) age and (v) academic qualifications. Then, within each group of participants I selected subsamples. Regarding years of TEYL experience in group one (N1=9), I divided this category into two subsamples namely subsample A and subsample B in order to find differences and similarities between them. Subsample A comprised teachers with one to five years of TEYL (e.g. #2, #4 & #8) and sample B included teachers with no experience of TEYL (e.g. #1, #3, #5, #6, #7 & #9). Similarly, within group three (N3=10) subsample A consisted of a number of participants (e.g. #21, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29) who had from one to five years of TEYL experience and subsample B included participants who had experience of over five years of TEYL in public primary schools (detail in Table 9). In other words, I used the data collected from my participants in each pair of subsamples in each group (i.e. subsample A & subsample B in group one) to develop codes in the stage of initial coding. That is because the growth of data-driven thematic codes ideally needs "criterion-referenced, or anchored material" (Boyatzis, 1998, p.41). Moreover, I constructed a qualitative codebook to document the development of the whole process of coding.



Table 9: Examples of subsample choice in this study

Category	Within group one: 9 teacher trainers (N1=9)	Within group two:10 teacher trainees (N2=10)	Within group three:10 primary teachers (N3=10)
(i)Years of TEYL experience	Subsample A: 1-5 years of TEYL experience (#2, #4 & #8)		Subsample A: 1-5 years of TEYL experience (#21, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29)
	Subsample B: No TEYL experience (#1, #3, #5, #6, #7 &#9)		Subsample B: 6-10 years of TEYL experience (#20, #22,#23 & #26)
(ii)Years of EFLT experience	Subsample C: 15- 19 years of EFL teacher training experience (#2, #3, #4 & #8)		Subsample C: 11- 15 years of EFL school teaching experience (#21, #25, #27, #28 & #29)
	Subsample D: 20-24 years of EFL teacher training experience (#1, #5, #6, #7 & #9)		Subsample D: 1-10 years of TEFL (#20, #22, #23, #24 & #26)
(iii)Gender	Subsample E: male teacher trainers (#7 & #9)	Subsample E: male teacher trainees(#12,#17 & #19)	Subsample E: male primary teacher (#25)
	Subsample F: female teacher trainers (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #8)	Subsample F: female teacher trainees (#10,#11, #13, #14, #15, #16, #18 & #19)	Subsample F: female primary teachers (#20,#21, #22, #23, #24, #26, #27, #28 & #29)
(iv)Age	Subsample G: 30-39 years of age (#2, #3, #4 & #8)	Subsample G: 20 years of age (#11, #12, #13, #14 , #16, #17, #18 & #19)	Subsample G: 25-35 years of age (#20, #22,#23, #24, #26, #27 &#29)
	Subsample H: 40-49 years of age (#1, #5,	Subsample H: 21	

	#6, #7 & #9)	years of age (#10 & #15)	Subsample H: 36-40 years of age (#21, #25 & #28)
(v) Academic qualifications	Subsample I: BA degree (#3) Subsample J: MA degree (#1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9)		Subsample I: Certificate of College (#24) Subsample J: BA degree (#20, #21, #22, #23, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29)

- **How did I create thematic codes inductively?**

To create thematic codes inductively, I adopted steps suggested by Boyatzis (1998). According to Boyatzis (1998), a “good” thematic code is required to have five components namely (i) label (i.e. a code name), (ii) definition of the theme including features of the theme (i.e. indicators), (iii) descriptions of features constituting the theme, (iv) descriptions of any features that qualify or exclude the theme and (v) examples. In developing thematic codes, the five mentioned-above components were considered.

- **How did I condense the raw data?**

In condensing the raw data, I summarized the information I collected from my participants including (i) 29 interviews, (ii) 16 classroom observations and (iii) relevant documents (i.e. curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and eight EFL teacher training manuals). I coded each summary according to themes emerged from the raw data.

- **How did I quote my participants’ voice?**

As stated in sections 5.4.7.1 and 5.4.8.2 the interview data and 29 interview transcriptions were all in Vietnamese. To provide quotations of my participants’ voices in English (the language adopted for writing the thesis), I had to translate the interview data and interview

transcriptions from Vietnamese into English. However, the original quotations in my participants' own words in interview data are also shown in Appendix P. Regarding classroom observation data, I wanted to describe and show code-switching between English and Vietnamese which was evident in most classes. To help English readers who do not speak Vietnamese, I decided to translate the texts into English. I hope my data presentation helps facilitate reading (i.e. the whole text in one language) and gives me the opportunity to show my respect for the individual voices of my participants. Moreover, I would like to show that the original Vietnamese is an integral part of this thesis.

- **What did I do after creating thematic codes inductively?**

After drafting thematic codes from the first subsamples, I applied them to another subsample (i.e. subsample B, C, D in each group etc). Concurrently, I invited two colleagues of mine to apply these drafted codes to the summarized documentation (i.e. interviews, classroom observations and relevant documents) to determine the consistency of judgements of the drafted thematic codes. Then, we compared our results and some alterations to the initial codes were made. Although this is an enormous task, two colleagues of mine were willing to help me.

Subsequently, I marked inconsistent thematic codes as *negative coding*. Afterward, I reviewed and identified such *negative coding* for further consideration. By contrast, the thematic codes which achieved the consistency of the two or three coders were assumed as *positive coding* or reliable thematic codes.

- **Examples of the thematic codes adopted in this thesis:**

Below are two examples (Table10 & Table 11) of the thematic codes that I constructed and adopted in analyzing different sources of data in which participant codes were used (i.e.

participants #20 & #29 at primary school J) (The first major theme: “Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs”, chapter six)

Table 10: Sample code adopted in analyzing interview data

<p><b>Code In. 1(group three):</b></p> <p><b>-Label:</b> Low-level English language teacher proficiency, particularly a low level of oral proficiency in English</p> <p><b>-Definition:</b> The participant reported low levels of English language teacher proficiency</p> <p><b>-Indicators:</b> Code this when the participant reported one of the following issues: (i) having difficulty in passing the required exam by the MOET (Ministry of Education and Training), (ii) having difficulty in providing learners with meaningful clarifications and explanations in English, (iii) having difficulty in providing learners with appropriate levels of English language input, (iv) having difficulty in providing learners with well-informed and spur-of-the-moment answers to unexpected questions in English, (v) having difficulty in using English freely in class, (vi) a low percentage of adoption of English in class (under 50%), (vii) dependence on activities supplied by the mandated textbooks, (viii) adopting mainly L1 to help students understand the lesson.</p> <p><b>-Differentiation:</b> Participant #20 reported on (i, iv, vi &amp; viii). Participants #29 &amp; #23 reported on (i, ii, v &amp; viii). Participant #27 reported on (iii, v, vi &amp; vii). Participant #21 reported on (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi &amp; vii). Participant #22 &amp; 24 reported on (iii &amp; iv). Participant #26 reported on (ii, iii, vii &amp; viii). Participant #25 reported on the importance of English language teacher proficiency.</p>
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Table 11: Sample code adopted in analyzing classroom observation data

<p><b>Code Ob. 1(group three):</b></p> <p><b>-Label:</b> Low-level English language teacher proficiency, particularly a low level of oral proficiency in English</p> <p><b>-Definition:</b> The observed participant exhibited his/her low English language proficiency (i.e. focusing on primary EFL teachers’ oral English skills rather than helping young learners complete vocabulary- and/or grammar-oriented tasks)</p> <p><b>-Indicators:</b> Code this when the class observations showed one or more indicators listed below: (i) Vietnamese was adopted as a key means of class communication, (ii) there is a large proportion of translation from English to Vietnamese in class (iii) English was only used at the beginning of the lesson to greet learners and at the end of the lesson to say goodbye to them, (iv) young learners were not given the opportunity to express themselves freely in English through communicative activities, (v) the communicative use of English was not promoted, (vi) a high level of activities requiring repetition of what the teacher said, (vii) few opportunities were given to help young English language learners to practice</p>
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English meaningfully, (viii) few opportunities for children to express themselves in spoken English, (ix) children were asked to read whole conversation transcripts in English in pairs, translate them from English to Vietnamese and learn by heart, (x) little or almost no comprehension questions were used to check children's understanding, (xi) little or almost no link between the content of the textbook and real life experiences of the students.

***Differentiation:*** Observations by TEYL classes taught by TEYL teacher participants #20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29 showed (i, ii, iv, v, vi, viii). Participants #20, #21, #23, #24, #27, #28 & #29 showed (ix). Participants # 20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #28 & #29 showed (x & xi).

Table 10 and Table 11 show sample codes for low ELP. It should be noted that this is one example of how I coded. I also coded higher levels of ELP reported in section 6.5 with five categories including (i) exploiting teaching materials; (ii) promoting oral presentation in English; (iii) encouraging reflective journal writing; (iv) sharing portfolio and (v) developing learning-to-learn competency.

- **Phase two of thematic analysis: Triangulation of different sources of data**

As stated at the beginning of section 5.4.9.2 phase two of thematic analysis in this study involved the triangulation of the different sources of data to create an advanced level of emergent themes. In this study, I merged all the data to do the work of triangulation. Specifically, I triangulated the themes from the 29 interviews with those developed from field notes taken from pre-, during- and post- classroom observations, and the themes from 16 classroom observations with those which came from the analysis of relevant documents collected at the field (i.e. the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher curriculum and eight EFL teacher training manuals). As stated in chapter one, the TEYL teacher local curriculum is developed on the basis of the key structure of the national curriculum required by the Ministry of Education and Training (“Chương trình đào tạo Cử nhân Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm ngành tiếng Anh”, 2010. Curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and training adopted for the TEYL teacher training course 2010- 2013). Triangulation of the different data sources is viewed as “the heart of the ethnographic study, testing one source of information against

another to strip away alternative explanations” (Fetterman, 1998, p.93). Table 12 below is a sample code based on the triangulation of data sources.

Table 12: Sample code for triangulation of data sources in this study

***Code Tr.1:***

***-Label:*** Low English language teacher proficiency

***-Definition:*** Low English language teacher proficiency in teaching was evident in observations and interviews

***-Indicators:*** Code this when the participant **BOTH** reported one of the following issues: (i) having difficulty in passing the required exam by the MOET (Ministry of Education and Training), (ii) having difficulty in providing learners with meaningful clarifications and explanations in English, (iii) having difficulty in providing learners with rich English language input, (iv) having difficulty in providing learners with well-informed and spur-of-the-moment answers to unexpected questions in English, (v) having difficulty in using English freely in class, (vi) a low percentage of adopting English in class (under 50%), (vii) dependence on activities supplied by the mandated textbooks, (viii) adopting Vietnamese to help student understand the lesson **AND**(i)was observed to have low English proficiency while teaching and used a low proportion of English in class, (ii) was said to have a low level of English language teacher proficiency in interviews.

***-Differentiation:***

25 out of 29 participants reported on one or more than one of the eight listed-above indicators. Different participants had different viewpoints of low English language teacher proficiency. 28 out of 29 participants reported that the limited level of English language teacher proficiency was due to (i) curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education, (ii) English language learners’ assessment and (iii) a paucity of teaching resources. Participants #4 & #8 both reported that low English language teacher proficiency was due to (i) low English language learner proficiency. Participant #19 reported that low English language teacher proficiency potentially de-motivated English language learners. Participant #25 reported that low English language teacher proficiency was due to the inconsistencies between TEYL policies and their implementation in particular local contexts.

As stated in section 5.4.7. the findings of the study are based on multiple sources of data including interview data, observational data, field notes and other relevant documents such as policy statements and media items. The findings are presented in two chapters six and seven with two major themes and many sub-themes which emerged from combining the different data sources as a result of thematic analysis. Two major themes of this study include (i)

developing higher English language proficiency (ELP) through pre-service teacher training programs and (ii) developing higher ELP through In-service Teacher Education Programs (INSTEP) (see Table 13 below). These two major themes are presented in two chapters six and seven respectively and they are used to answer the overarching research question (RQ) as presented in sections 1.3 and 5.4.1.

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

Table 13: An overview of themes and subthemes emerging from diverse sources of data

<p><b>Thesis title: Developing higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers</b></p> <p>(i) Major theme 1: Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher education programs (chapter six)</p> <p>(ii) Major theme 2: Developing higher ELP through in-service teacher education programs (chapter seven)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>Major theme 1: Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher education programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subtheme 1: Potential opportunities to develop teachers' ELP</li> <li>• Subtheme 2: Contextual challenges in adopting in adopting the CEFR framework</li> <li>• Subtheme 3: Suggested areas of pre-service teacher education</li> </ul> <p>Major theme 2: Developing higher ELP through in-service teacher education programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subtheme 1: Reflections on INSTEP courses</li> <li>• Subtheme 2: Required improvements in INSTEP</li> </ul>
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## 5.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is my major concern as a qualitative researcher. As stated in section 5.4.9.2. triangulation of the different data sources is central to ethnographic study so as to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. To do this, I have taken different measures to ensure the

presence of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2004, 2008, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Regarding credibility, I have constructed congruence in the internal design of: (i) the research questions, (ii) the methodology, (iii) the methods for data collection and analysis as presented above. I have also used multiple sources of evidence in this study (Bazeley, 2013; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I have reviewed each interview transcription and translation to check for accuracy. With reference to transferability, I have selected an average-sized teacher training college and recruited participants who were representatives of the TEYL participant population (as presented in sections 5.4.3 & 5.4.4). In presenting findings, I have provided thick description of the phenomena under investigation (see details in chapters six and seven below) so that readers in a similar situation and background can relate the findings to their individual contexts (Bryman, 2004, 2008, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuman, 2003, 2011). As for dependability, I have generated clear research questions (sections 1.3 & 5.4.1) and data reliability during the fieldwork was checked and double-checked regularly by comparing data (Neuman, 2003, 2011). For confirmability, I have always been acutely aware of the potential impact of my bias as a qualitative researcher (Shelton, 2004). To mitigate this possible impact, I have adopted triangulation (i.e. triangulation of data sources, data collection methods, three different groups of informants and six different research sites including one teacher training college and five public primary schools, section 5.4.9.2). Moreover, I have acknowledged explicitly my participants' and my individual perspectives in presenting the findings and discussions (chapters six and seven).

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

To construct knowledge of the phenomenon of TEYL teacher education for developing higher levels of English language proficiency in Vietnam, this study has two major



restrictions besides a number of limitations stated in four sections of chapter five namely potential problems (i) of adopting a critical ethnographic study (section 5.3.2); (ii) of using semi-structured interviews (section 5.4.7.1); (iii) of taking up overt, non-participant and semi-structured observations (section 5.4.7.2); and (iv) of selecting thematic analysis (section 5.4.8.1)

The fact that I did not observe any in-service teacher education programs (INSTEPs) or interview any INSTEP facilitators or trainers is one weakness of this study. That is because workshops were not available at the time of my data collection in 2012. Nineteen interviews from two groups of participants (i.e. group one: nine teacher trainer participants and group three: ten practicing primary teachers) are not enough to give a full picture of developing higher English language proficiency (ELP) through INSTEP in Vietnam.

As stated in section 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 this study investigated a relatively small number of participants (N=29) in a province in Vietnam, so generalization is impossible. Twenty nine interviews from the three different groups of participants (N= 9+10+10) directly involving TEYL and TEYL teacher education for higher English language proficiency in one small and poor province is not representative of all provinces' TEYL practices and TEYL teacher education for higher English language proficiency at the primary school level in Vietnam. Moreover, the findings are not representative of TEYL in other countries. Sixteen out of 19 classroom observations in the provincial context including (i) eight TEYL teacher training classes and (ii) eight TEYL classes do not reveal a full picture of TEYL in public primary schools and TEYL teacher education for higher levels of English language proficiency in Vietnam.

Nevertheless, the contextual knowledge provided in this ethnographic study may be valuable to other contexts through its rich and thick descriptions of the data. The findings as presented

in three chapters (i.e. chapters six, seven and eight) will help readers to capture a contextualised picture of TEYL practices in teacher training colleges and public primary schools in Vietnam. Also, readers from different contexts may gain some insight into challenges that Vietnamese primary EFL teacher trainers face in developing higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in Vietnam. A fuller and more detailed picture of TEYL and TEYL teacher preparation for higher English language proficiency in Vietnam may be provided (i) by additional studies on the achievement of young English language learners (i.e. from year three to year five) in different public primary schools of different provinces of Vietnam as well as (ii) by further studies on the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers conducted by many different researchers in different provinces of Vietnam.

## **5.7 Summary**

Social constructionism (SC) theoretically underpins the research design and methods used in the thesis. SC is characterised by criticality in terms of understanding the world and adopting the acquired knowledge to transform the world. In this case, this means changing modes of TEYL teacher education at both pre-and in-service levels in a positive way to help primary EFL teachers have higher levels of English language proficiency. Also, SC has other characteristics such as the social construction of knowledge through human interactions (Lock & Strong, 2010). The aim of this study was to socially construct relativistic knowledge about developing higher levels of English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. This knowledge will inform TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL policy-makers and TEYL teacher training developers of potential positive changes that can be brought about involving the development of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency in similar contexts.

Knowledge was socially constructed through the interactions with my participants, I carried out the fieldwork over four months' duration, working together with 29 informants from three groups of participants including nine TEYL teacher trainers, ten TEYL teacher trainees in one teacher training college and ten TEYL teachers in five different public primary schools in Vietnam (sections 5.4.3 & 5.4.4). I collected data from three major sources: (i) face-to-face semi-structured interviews, (ii) classroom observations including both TEYL teacher training classes in a teacher training college and TEYL classes in different public primary schools and (iii) analysis of (iii.a) the TEYL curriculum policy, and (iii.b) eight EFL teacher teaching manuals in the observed classes (sections 5.4.7, 5.4.8 & 5.4.9). To answer the research questions, I have applied the method of thematic analysis to the data to discover the patterned beliefs and teaching practices of the participants in relation to the examined phenomenon (sections 5.4.8 & 5.4.9). Additionally, I have explored the differences across the data to analyse potential connections among the themes, which provided an insightful understanding of the culture of my group of participants.

With reference to ethical considerations, I have carefully followed the guidelines and procedures clarified in my ethics application which was approved on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), numbered 12/146 (Appendix A). Additionally, the present research has been ethically approved by one local teacher training college and five local public primary schools in Vietnam. I have considered three principles of (i) partnership, (ii) involvement and (iii) protection in all stages of the study in terms of (i) the participant recruitment, (ii) the data collection, (iii) the data analysis and (iv) the data presentation.

Limitations of the study have been discussed in sections 5.3, 5.4.7.1, 5.4.7.2, 5.4.8 and 5.6 accompanied by a number of measures taken to minimize such restrictions. The findings of this study may not be generalized to other contexts of TEYL, TEYL teacher training and

TEYL teacher professional development for higher English language proficiency because the aim of this ethnographic study was to socially construct local knowledge with a view of providing an in depth picture of a particular context in which teacher training for TEYL takes place. However, with the description of rich data the findings of the study are potentially relevant to other EFL teaching contexts for young English language learners in particular and language education for young language learners in general that are similar to this study.

## **Chapter 6. Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher programs**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to describe and discuss the development of higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs from the perspective of student teachers, teacher trainers and practicing primary teachers. It is structured around one major theme, *Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs*. The major theme in chapter six is accompanied by three sub-themes including (i) potential opportunities to develop teacher trainees' ELP; (ii) contextual challenges in adopting the CEFR framework and (iii) suggested areas of improvements in pre-service teacher training programs. These three sub-themes were analyzed in multiple sources of data towards answering the overarching research question and two out of three sub- research questions (i.e. RQ1 & RQ2) posed in chapter one,

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

Two sub- research questions are answered in chapter six:

RQ1: What contextual challenges hinder Vietnamese TEYL student teachers from meeting the international standard of English language proficiency (ELP) required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

RQ2: How could greater development of English language proficiency (ELP), particularly oral English, be better integrated into current pre-service TEYL teacher training programmes?

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of improving pre-service teacher programs in Vietnam by providing a summary of the major theme one with its three sub-themes (Figure

4). Then, a figure for each sub-theme and its underpinning categories will be presented in turn in section 6.3 (Figure 4.1); 6.4 (Figure 4.2) & 6.5 (Figure 4.3). Figure 4 describes the major theme one, *“Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs”* accompanied by its three subthemes. The purpose of this is to depict a brief synopsis of the close associations between the pre-service teacher training programs and TEYL teacher trainees’ ELP level. This chapter argues that the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers requires further improvements in pre-service teacher training programs. It is also argued that Vietnam must overcome the contextual challenges to achieve the desired aim of meeting or exceeding the international standard of TEYL teachers’ English language proficiency (ELP) as required in the government policy.

This chapter continues with a description and explanation of the first sub-theme stated in section 6.3 “potential opportunities to develop teachers’ ELP”. Figure 4.1 in this section provides an overview of the first sub-theme and its five underpinning categories. Five categories of the first sub-theme include (i) “TEYL teacher teaching materials” (section 6.3.1); (ii) “promoting oral presentation in English” (section 6.3.2), (iii) “encouraging reflective student teachers’ journal” (section 6.3.3), (iv) “sharing portfolio” (section 6.3.4), and (v) “developing a learning-to-learn competency” (section 6.3.5). These categories are explained and illustrated with detailed remarks made by the research participants.

Subsequently, I explain the second sub-theme (section 6.4), “contextual challenges in adopting the CEFR framework for measuring TEYL teachers’ ELP”. Figure 4.2 in this section gives us an overview insight into seven supporting categories of the second sub-theme. Seven categories of the second sub-theme namely (i) “physical settings for training TEYL student teachers” (section 6.4.1); (ii) “TEYL teacher trainees’ limited ELP level” (section 6.4.2); (iii) “low TEYL teacher trainee motivation” (section 6.4.3); (iv) “lack of prioritisation for developing ELP” (section 6.4.4), (v) “resources for training TEYL teachers”

(section 6.4.5), (vi) “low TEYL teacher trainer ELP” (section 6.4.6) and (vii) “ELT test design” (section 6.4.7) are described and exemplified with detailed remarks made by the research participants.

Finally, I explain and illustrate the third sub-theme of the major theme one (section 6.5), “suggested areas of improvements in pre-service teacher training programs”. Figure 4.3 in this section provides a summary of the third sub-theme and its four underpinning categories. Four categories of the third sub-theme including (i) “review of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education” (section 6.5.1), (ii) “review of college admissions policy” (section 6.5.2), (iii) “review of resourcing policy” (section 6.5.3) and (iv) “translation of B2-level standard into practices” (section 6.5.4) are detailed.

## 6.2 An overview of improving pre-service teacher programs

As stated in section 6.1, three sub-themes of the major theme one, “developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs” in chapter six include (i) potential opportunities to develop TEYL; (ii) contextual challenges in adopting the CEFR framework and (iii) suggested areas for improving TEYL teacher preparation programs for developing higher ELP (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The integration of raising TEYL teachers’ ELP into pre-service teacher training programs

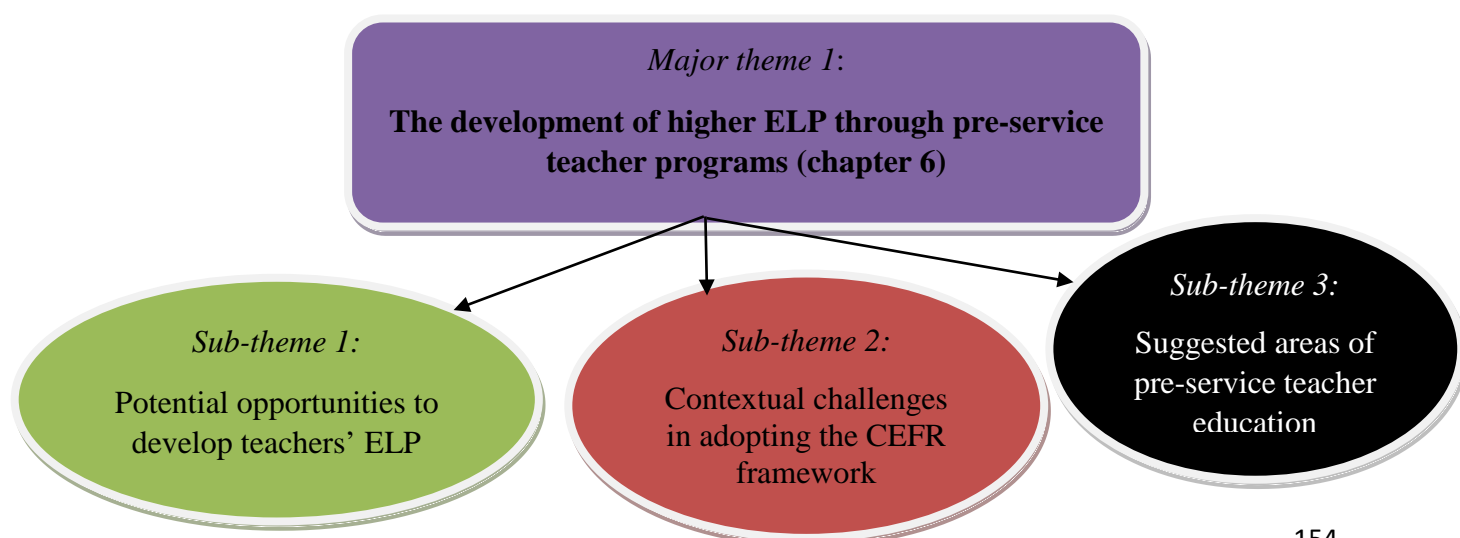


Figure 4 is a diagram reporting on the integration of TEYL teachers' ELP into the current TEYL teacher preparation programs, which emerged from all data sources. As can be seen from Figure 4, the TEYL teacher trainer participants in this study believed that the improvements in TEYL student teachers' ELP could be achieved through the integration of better strategies for teaching EL for TEYL student teachers (also Figure 4.1 below). In addition, participants believed that policy reforms involving TEYL teacher training programs at pre-service level including a review (i) of curriculum policy of TEYL teacher education, (ii) of college admission policy and (iii) of resourcing policy were needed (also Figure 4.2 & Figure 4.3 below). Most importantly, TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency assessments in English needed to be promptly attended to so that trainee teachers could be assessed by reliable internationally benchmarked examinations.

All the participants of this study shared the perception that the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers required close cooperation in which primary EFL teacher trainers were one factor influencing TEYL student teachers' ELP level within a tangled web of interacting influences. It should be noted that the readiness to collaborate closely between related parties (i.e. policy-makers, curriculum developers, TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL teacher trainees and TEYL teachers) as well as the determination to work in partnership is necessary to achieve a productive result (also section 8.5).

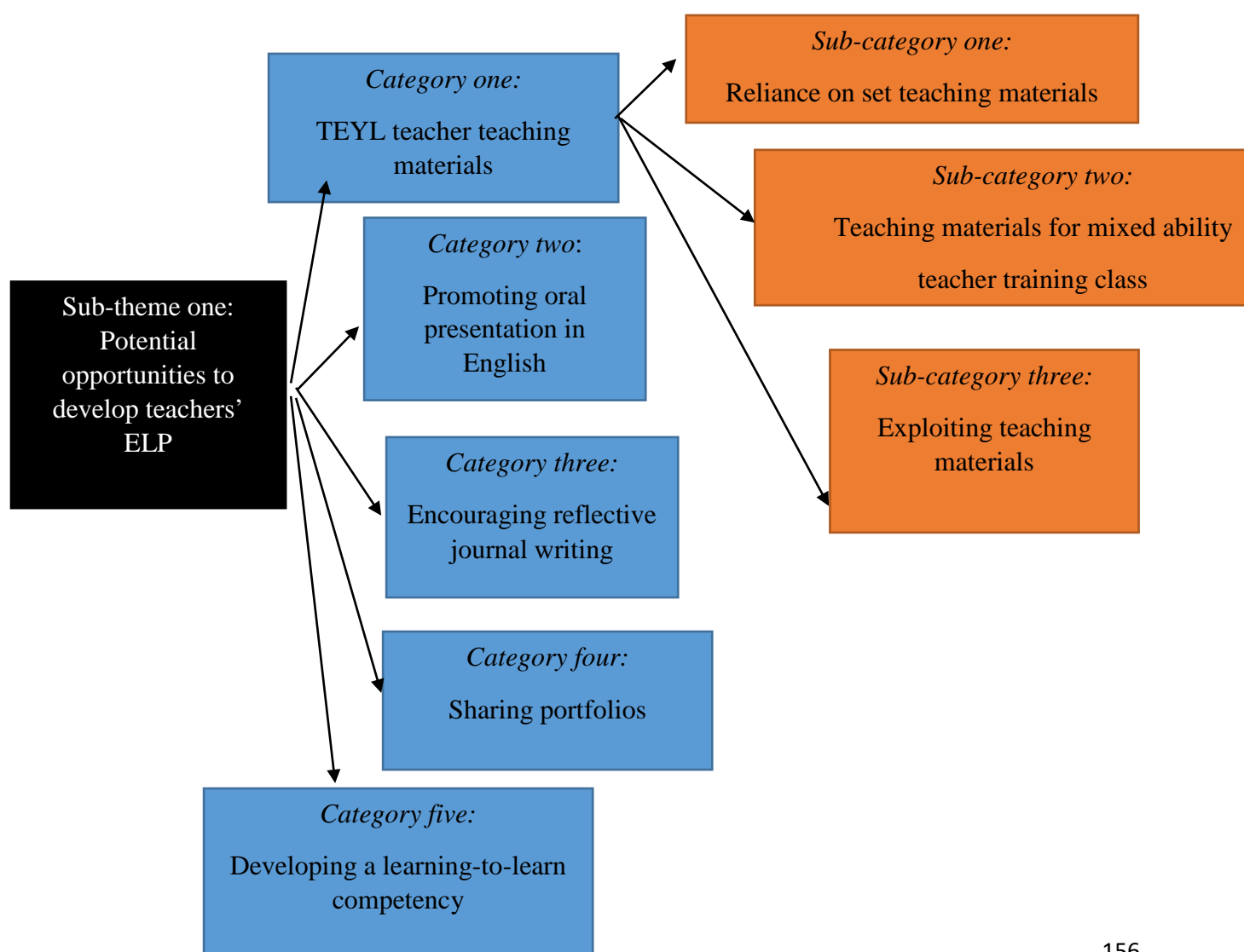
In the following sections, detailed clarification of the three sub-themes of the major theme one, "developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs" is examined. As stated above, a figure for each subtheme of its supporting categories is also depicted (Figure 4.1: sub-theme one; Figure 4.2: sub-theme two; Figure 4.3: sub-theme three).



### 6.3 Potential opportunities to develop teacher trainees' ELP

The first sub-theme, “potential opportunities to develop teacher trainees' ELP”, describes the participants' beliefs about opportunities to raise levels of English language competence within current TEYL teacher training. This sub-theme also describes a number of characteristics of the TEYL teacher trainers' teaching practices at a local college in the Vietnamese TEYL context. The five categories of this sub-theme are: (i) TEYL teacher teaching materials; (ii) promoting oral presentation in English, (iii) encouraging reflective journal writing (iv) sharing portfolios and (v) developing learning-to-learn competencies (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Sub-theme one of the major theme one and its underpinning categories



### **6.3.1 TEYL teacher teaching materials**

The category, “TEYL teacher teaching materials” refers to the kinds of TEYL teacher training materials that are adopted in current TEYL teacher preparation programs. It also describes the participants’ beliefs about TEYL teacher teaching materials. Three sub-categories include: (i) reliance on published teaching materials, (ii) teaching materials for mixed-ability teacher training classes and (iii) exploiting teaching materials (Figure 4.1). These sub-categories are detailed below:

#### ***6.3.1.1 Reliance on published teaching materials.***

The first sub-category, “reliance on published teaching materials” describes the participants’ dependence on a particular set of published teaching materials for developing TEYL student teachers’ English language competence including oral English language proficiency in their EFL teaching context. The participants, in general, and the TEYL teacher trainer participants, in particular, tended to heavily rely on the content, subject matter and lessons available in a specific set of teaching materials available on the commercial market in Vietnam, which had been approved by a group of EFL teachers in the English department or by the group head or by Dean of the English department at local college. The TEYL teacher trainer participants tended to adopt these teaching materials as the main ones in their TEYL teacher training work with or without extra sources of materials in their daily teacher teaching practices.

The data from TEYL teacher training classroom observations indicate that there were two main types of teaching materials adopted by the TEYL teacher trainers to help develop TEYL student teachers’ English language competence. The first included a series of English language textbooks available on the market in Vietnam, namely:

- Practical English Grammar by A. J. Thompson and A.V. Martinet (2006).
- First Certificate Language Practice by Michael Vince (2009).

- New Cutting Edge by Sarah Cunningham, Frances Eales and Peter Moor (2006) (This material was adopted in two teacher training classroom observations: on 26 November 2012 & on 14 December 2012).
- Ship or Sheep by Ann Baker (2006).
- Select Readings by Linda Lee and Erik Gundersen (2002).
- Tactics for Listening by Jack C. Richards (2003) (This material appeared in two teacher training classroom observations: on 15 November 2012 & on 29 November 2012).
- Teach English: A training Course for Teachers by Adrian Doff (1998) (This material was adopted in classroom observations on 23 November 2012).
- English for Primary Teachers: A Handbook of Activities and Classroom Language by Mary Slattery and Jane Willis (2001).
- Market Leader by David Cotton, David Falvey and Simon Kent (2008).
- Practice and Progress by L.G. Alexander (1971).
- Paragraph Writing: From Sentence to Paragraph by Dorothy E. Zemach (2005) (This material was adopted in classroom observations on 12 December 2012).

The second type of TEYL teacher teaching materials included teaching materials compiled from a number of existing English textbooks by a group of primary EFL teachers or an EFL teacher at a local university, or individual materials of some TEYL teacher trainers. In this case, local TEYL teacher trainers were given opportunities to select the teacher training materials that they thought were the most appropriate for their student teachers in their particular context of TEYL teacher education. As stated in section 2.7 the common framework of training TEYL teachers is provided by the MOET. Apart from compulsory “môn chung”, general knowledge modules in relation to Communist Party politics, each

college/ university has the right to select modules and teaching materials which are thought to be “relevant” in the particular context of the locality. There is not a relationship between a local college and a local university in respect of the training of primary English teachers. A local college can use the structure of key modules and teaching materials for reference but the final decision belongs to the local college which is responsible for the quality of its TEYL teacher training.

The interview data and field-notes indicate that TEYL teacher trainers tended to rely heavily on published teaching materials instead of making a few slight modifications to students’ learning needs. Eight out of nine TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that they were likely to adopt one main teaching material to develop TEYL student teachers’ English language competence. For example, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8 stated that if her TEYL student teachers studied a particular set of materials meticulously during the TEYL teacher training course such as *New Headway* by Liz Soars and John Soars (2006), they might have a high level of English language proficiency. Participant #8 believed that such teaching materials were reliable because they were written by foreign authors who might have an advanced level of expertise in raising English language learners’ ELP. The word “reliable” adopted by participant #8 here was in a sense that teaching materials written by Vietnamese authors, non-native English speakers were unreliable. Such teaching materials might have potential staging, grammatical and other problems.

Primary EFL teacher trainer participants #5 and #6 made the point that many Vietnamese lectures at national universities in Vietnam such as HCMC, DaNang, Hue, Thai Nguyen or Hanoi adopted such English language teaching materials due to their reliability. The following extract exemplifies the reliance on published teaching materials:

Extract 1: I have adopted *New Cutting Edge* as the key teaching material for developing our TEYL student teachers' ELP for years. Personally, I find it appropriate in terms of its reliability. I believe that the foreign authors of the textbook are all English experts with more experience in helping English language learners attain a desired level of ELP than Vietnamese authors.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #3, Interview on 9 October 2012)

In TEYL teacher training classroom observations, the TEYL teacher trainer participants exhibited their dependence on published teaching materials in one or many ways as follows:

Firstly, the teacher trainers tended to plan their lessons by basically organizing and designing learning activities according to the same order as the published teaching materials with or without additional activities (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #3, #4, #5 & #6). Secondly, they were likely to adopt the instructions provided in their selected teaching materials and TEYL student teachers were required to do all the related-grammar tasks given in the materials rather than speaking and listening activities. The teacher trainers tended to select only grammar and translation sections with controlled practice activities and avoided free communicative activities. The most likely explanation is that the teacher trainers might not be confident enough to use English as a means of class communication, rather than using English as a subject for transmitting English linguistic knowledge. (The problem here may be not with the quality of the textbook or the teaching materials themselves but with the TEYL teacher trainers with their favourite selections of teaching activities in the selected teaching materials). Moreover, they tended to use L1 (Vietnamese) to give complicated instructions and long utterances so as to facilitate their student teachers' understanding of the particular tasks or/and of the learning material (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). (Primary EFL teacher trainer participant # 7 did not have a formal class observation due to the unavailability of time). Finally, teacher trainers were unlikely to use improvisation (section 3.4.7). The data from teacher training classroom observations (e.g.

Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9) indicate that teacher trainers at the local college tended not to adopt improvisation as a tool to help develop student teachers' ELP, particularly oral English due to the heavy reliance on published teaching materials.

The data from the observed teacher training classes indicate that TEYL teacher trainers in this study created very few opportunities for their student teachers to freely express themselves in English using their own English vocabulary, grammar and structures through learning activities improvised by TEYL teacher trainers. In other words, TEYL teacher trainers seemed not to provide opportunities for improvisation, an important factor to help the TEYL student teachers use the English language creatively (e.g. Student teachers in classes instructed by primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9).

In interviews, TEYL student teacher participants in group two (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #17, #18 & #19) said that they were given a particular textbook in each different module (see a number of textbooks listed above) and were required to complete all the tasks provided by the TEYL teacher trainers in class or at home. TEYL student teacher participant #8 stated that TEYL teacher trainers tended to use a particular published teaching materials and strictly followed all the activities laid out in the textbooks without requiring something creative in using English from the TEYL student teachers. It should be noted that what the student teacher participants reported about teaching activities was a little different to what was observed in the teacher training classes. (Participant # 8 said that the teacher trainers tended to exactly followed *all the activities* of the textbook, but the classroom observation data and field notes data during the fieldwork indicated that *many* teaching activities were adopted, *not all the suggested activities* of the textbook. Free communicative activities suggested in the textbook were usually ignored). According to this participant, the published teaching materials were relatively undemanding

and potentially made the TEYL student teachers de-motivated, especially student teachers who had a comparatively good level of English. Although the proportion of such students was relatively small, they reported that they did not have the opportunity to maximize their full potential in using English as a means of communication.

The findings have indicated that most of student teachers had a limited level of ELP (section 6.5.1) and TEYL teacher trainers were partly responsible for this issue because of their heavy reliance of the textbook as well as their inappropriate choice of teaching activities. What seemed to be urgently needed was an increase in interaction opportunities for TEYL student teachers and the teacher trainers need to be trained appropriately to do it well. This issue needs to be considered by policy-makers who can help upgrade necessary professional skills for TEYL teacher trainers through INSTEPs.

To understand how the development of higher English language competence for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers is integrated into current teacher preparation programs in the Vietnamese TEYL teacher training context, the following section describes the participants' beliefs about teaching materials for mixed-ability teacher training classes to develop English language competence for primary EFL teachers.

#### ***6.3.1.2 Teaching materials for mixed-ability teacher training classes.***

The second sub-category, “teaching materials for mixed-ability teacher training classes” refers to the kind of teaching materials in TEYL teacher training classes adopted for training TEYL student teachers with different levels of ELP at local colleges in Vietnam.

It is necessary to clarify here why TEYL student teachers at local college have different levels of English language proficiency. (It should be noted that the number of students who have a high ELP level at local college is rather modest). The explanation is that student teachers at local college came from different systems of English language education at senior

secondary schools. Some had private tuition and hoped to have a better job after graduation. The teacher trainee participants shared with me this issue in interview data on English language proficiency.

The sub-category, “teaching materials for mixed-ability teacher training classes” was discussed by four out of nine participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #4 and #8) whereas the remaining participants of this group (e.g. Participants: #3, #5, #6, #7 & #9) did not mention this sub-category. Participant #2 reported that mixed-ability EFL teacher training classes were very common at local colleges. Because TEYL student teachers had different levels of ELP due to the particular teaching context of Vietnam, the TEYL teacher trainers needed to develop or adapt teaching materials to meet the various proficiency levels of TEYL student teachers. Participants #1 and #2 felt that the duty of TEYL teacher trainers was to find and develop the right balance of TEYL teacher training materials and resources, both interesting and challenging for TEYL student teachers with different levels of English language competence.

The interview data and classroom observation data indicate that few teacher trainers developed teaching materials appropriate to the actual language competence of different proficiency groups. This might be due to several factors. One of these was that TEYL teacher trainers had not been trained appropriately to adapt the selected teaching materials and teaching activities in accordance to the current ELP level of each primary EFL student teacher in class. Participant #4 said that a needs analysis for TEYL student teachers’ might be the best solution to resolve the issues involving TEYL teacher training materials for ascertaining strengths and weaknesses as well as what kinds of class activities TEYL student teachers liked. One outcome then might be that teacher trainers might be able to group student teachers in terms of English language proficiency into different classes to facilitate



the latter's English language learning. This is impossible in the particular Vietnamese context of TEYL teacher education because of the financial limitation of the government funding.

Participant #8 argued that it was difficult to select appropriate teaching materials for a mixed-ability teacher training class. She thought the duty of the teacher trainer was to adapt the material flexibly according to the actual language competence of each teacher trainee. According to this participant, very few teacher trainers in the locality were competent enough to develop the material appropriately for a mixed-ability teacher training class. Consequently, very few teacher trainees could pass the required exams of ELP at the national level. This participant also argued that to achieve a desired B2 level of ELP as required by the government policy, each TEYL student teacher needed to be aware of his/her own weaknesses and strengths to put more effort into his/her individual studies towards the improvement in their English skills rather than expecting TEYL teacher trainers to spoon-feed them. The view of participant #1 is in accord with that of participant #8. She said,

Extract 2:     One of the major challenges we face now is how to design and develop teacher training materials appropriately for TEYL teacher trainees' mixed-ability level of English to move to the required B2-level of international English standard.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, Interview on 4 October 2012)

Along the lines of participants #8 and #1, primary EFL student teachers #16 and #18 reported that the teaching materials adopted by the TEYL teacher trainers were relatively undemanding for TEYL student teachers with a higher level of ELP. They also said that they had the feeling of not learning much from the teaching materials utilised by the TEYL teacher trainers. That was because the teaching materials did not necessarily suit every TEYL teacher trainee in a mixed-ability class.

To develop the skills of designing and developing TEYL teacher training materials appropriate for mixed-ability teacher training classes towards the achievement of an internationally benchmarked B2-level exam of English for TEYL student teachers as required

by the government policy, TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges need to be urgently helped through TPD programs to have the professional expertise for their teacher training job. The issues involving TEYL teacher trainers' professional skills are presented in sections 6.6, 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 respectively.

### ***6.3.1.3 Exploiting teaching materials.***

The third sub-category "exploiting teaching materials" describes the participants' beliefs about the development of higher ELP for TEYL student teachers through the appropriate exploitation of published teaching materials. It also reflects the TEYL teacher trainers' teacher training strategy as a result of their beliefs about this issue.

The data from the participants' interviews and from eight observed TEYL teacher training classes indicate that the participants believed that if the TEYL teacher trainers exploited published teaching materials in class effectively, TEYL student teachers' English language competence could be improved.

In interviews, 27 out of 29 in all three groups (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants in group one: #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9; Primary EFL teacher trainee participants in group two: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19; Primary EFL teacher participants in group three: #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29) reported that they believed that TEYL student teachers' English knowledge and skills might be developed through the appropriate tailoring of published teaching materials. According to these participants, many factors contributed to the successful exploitation of teaching materials and they were documented as follows: (i) making the topic and lesson content more relevant (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #, #11, #15, #16, #18, #20, #22, #25, #27 & #29); (ii) the adaptation of TEYL teacher trainers' teaching methods to learners' need (e.g. Participants: #3, #7, #8, #13, #16, #17, #20, #23, #27 & #29); (iii) additional teaching facilities (i.e.

appropriate pictures, Internet access, cassette players, laptops, projectors and language labs) (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #12, #13, #14, #17, #18, #20, #22, #23, #25 & #28).

In the eight observed TEYL teacher training classes, the ways in which the TEYL teacher trainer participants exploited teaching materials to develop TEYL teachers' English knowledge and communicative repertoires in English displayed the following characteristics:

### **i. Teaching vocabulary & grammar:**

#### **(i.1) Teaching vocabulary:**

- Asking the TEYL student teachers to give synonyms, antonyms or the equivalent translation in L1 (in Vietnamese);
- Providing the contexts in which new words appear and asking the TEYL student teachers to guess the Vietnamese meaning of English words;
- Using visual aids to facilitate the TEYL student teachers' understanding of the meaning in a particular context of the lesson;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to make sentences with the given new words or to fill the gaps with one of the new words in the task provided by the key teaching materials.

#### **(i.2) Teaching grammar:**

- Explaining the rules and forms, then asking the TEYL student teachers to complete the required tasks in the set teaching materials in individuals or in pairs. Using the cross-check techniques to compare the results later;
- Giving some examples in which the rules and forms of the grammatical structures appear, then asking the TEYL student teachers to formulate the rules and forms.

Asking the TEYL student teachers to apply these formulations to complete the tasks provided by the key teaching materials

## **ii. Teaching listening:**

- Introducing the context in English or in L1 if the TEYL teacher trainer is unsure about their TEYL student teachers' understanding of the situation;
- Providing a number of new words in relation to the listening task to ensure that the TEYL student teachers understand the meaning of those new words;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to repeat the new words a couple of times to ensure that they get familiar with the sounds of these words from the recordings;
- Giving the TEYL student teachers a particular task before listening (i.e. listening and selecting the right picture/ listening and filling the gaps with one word or a phrase);
- Developing the strategy of prediction from the particular context;

## **During and after listening:**

- Asking the TEYL student teachers to listen to the recordings the first time and guessing the correct answer in individuals, in pairs or in groups;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to listen to the recordings the second time or the third time if they had difficulty in understanding the meaning of new words to select the correct answer;
- Rewinding the recordings and stopping at the right phrases or words to give the correct answer of the task;
- Showing the typescript of the recordings if necessary to help the TEYL student teachers understand the meaning of the whole recordings.

## **iii. Teaching speaking**

### **Before speaking:**

- Selecting a familiar topic for speaking or presenting a particular context;
- Eliciting a number of new words and phrases from the TEYL student teachers through visual aids or providing new words and phrases involving the topic for speaking through a short conversation;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to repeat these new words and phrases to familiarize them with the sound and meaning in relation to the particular topic for speaking;
- Giving the TEYL student teachers a particular amount of time to write out a short paragraph involving the specific topic for speaking;

#### **During and after speaking:**

- Asking the TEYL student teachers to work in small groups of three or four, then each individual, in turn, reading out their paragraph in relation to the topic for speaking. The other members of the group listen to their group-mates and ask questions;
- Monitoring all groups to check whether any individuals need help;
- Inviting some individuals in each group, in turn, to go to the front to present their speaking and the rest of the class question them.

#### **iv. Teaching reading**

##### **Pre-reading:**

- Asking the TEYL student teachers to look at the titles of a text and/or photos in relation to the text to predict the content and vocabulary in a particular context;
- Skimming or scanning the text to get the main ideas;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to work in individuals or in groups to write out their predictions;

##### **During and after reading:**

- Asking the TEYL student teachers to read in silence to check if their predictions are accurate or not. If not, telling the others how it differs from their guesses;
- Checking comprehension by asking some questions;
- Asking the TEYL student teachers to restate some main ideas.

## **v. Teaching writing**

### **Pre-writing:**

- Showing a picture and a particular topic for writing;
- Brainstorming some ideas and language focus;
- Discussing in groups to form opinions about the topic;
- Summarizing ideas from the TEYL student teachers;

### **During and after writing:**

- Co-operating with group-mates to write down opinions in relation to the particular topic;
- Inviting a representative in each group, in turn, to go to the front to share opinions with the whole class and answering any questions arising from the classmates.

In short, in the observed eight TEYL teacher training classes, the ways in which the TEYL teacher trainer participants exploited teaching materials to develop TEYL teachers' English knowledge and skills seemed to exhibit the following four major characteristics of the Vietnamese culture of teaching and learning:

- Treating English as a knowledge subject or sciences subject (i.e. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry...) rather than a tool for interactive classroom activities towards real-life communication in English in the future.
- Focussing on English knowledge transmission-orientated instruction rather than developing English communicative skills and using English in authentic contexts.

- Emphasising interpretation-orientated instruction (for example, interpretation teaching requires students to “comprehend” particular grammatical structures to identify the Vietnamese meaning rather than providing students with many opportunities to practice the target language in interactive classroom activities in preparation for real-life communication in English)
- Stressing eclecticism-orientated instruction through published teaching materials (Eclecticism-orientated instruction will be explained below).

It should be noted that the transmission of English linguistic knowledge rather than the practice of communicative skills to help develop English language proficiency seemed to be favoured strategy in the observed classes (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). There was a tendency to support eclecticism-orientated instruction, the mixture of grammar translation with other favourite teaching methods in the particular training context of the TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). All TEYL teacher trainers in this study thought that the eclectic approach was a good thing in the particular context of TEYL teacher training in Vietnam. For example, grammar points and new words were explicitly interpreted into Vietnamese to support accurate written work rather than oral work (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9). Oral work, particularly free English speaking practice (i.e. real communication in English) tended to be ignored deliberately in the observed classes (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9). The preferred learning activities in TEYL teacher training classes included (i) question-answer (e.g. the teacher trainer questioned and the whole class answered or an individual student teacher). Hardly any individual student teacher questioned the teacher trainer in the observed classes. For example, #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9), (ii) copying down from the chalkboard or (iii) looking at the given textbook or the delivered handout and answering the questions available in it and (iv) code-switching from English into Vietnamese (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5,

#6, #8 & #9). A focus on controlled and accuracy practice rather than free, fluency practice was chosen and preferred (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9).

For a majority of the TEYL teacher trainer participants, the following description of a TEYL teacher training class taught by participant #6 could exemplify many of the attributes in how the TEYL teacher trainers at a local college developed TEYL student teachers' English language competence through the exploitation of published teaching materials (Table 14). (It should be noted that there is not a particular stream just for TEYL teacher trainees and for other teacher trainees, particularly those who that teach English in Secondary school. The difference is that some additional modules are delivered. For example, TEYL teacher trainees are required to study music, drawing and teaching methods for children. This was further explained in section 2.7).

Table 14: TEYL teacher training classroom observation

**Classroom observation (14/12/ 2012) Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #6**

**1. Physical description:**

- A medium-sized classroom with a teacher desk and a chair.
- 12 wooded tables (1.80mx40cm) & 12 benches (1.80mx25cm) arranged in rows for 32 first year TEYL student teachers. Four of the student teachers shared one table and one bench.
- TEYL student teachers sat in a row facing a blackboard (3mx2m).
- There were no posters, pictures, wall visuals or visual aids apparent in the classroom.

**2. Resources used:**

- An English teaching textbook, *New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)*-Students' book by Sarah Cunningham, Frances Eales & Peter Moor (2006). Module 3 (Practice, continued). Vocabulary: Jobs, page 28.
- New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)* Workbook (with key) by Sarah Cunningham, Frances Eales & Peter Moor, Module 3, page 20.

**3. Chronological description of classroom teaching activities**

- Using English to greet the student teachers, 'Good morning, classes.



- Using a mixture of English and Vietnamese to introduce the lesson. Vietnamese was used when expressing complicated sentences and long utterances to ensure the student teachers' understanding of what was required. (I am referring to using these to introduce English in class).
- Asking students to look at 12 pictures available in the textbook at page 28 and adding one job for each letter (in pairs).
- Eliciting the answers from the students and asking one of the students, in turn, to write all the words involved in activity 1 on the board and then checking spellings.
- Expanding vocabulary in relation to the topic of jobs by asking the students to find additional 5-10 words according to each alphabet letter. For example, A: actor, artist, actress, architect, acrobat; B: barber, barman...; C: chef, cook..; D: dentist...
- Letting the student teachers play with the vocabulary by dividing the whole class into two groups. Each member in each group was asked to write one or more words in relation to the topic of jobs. The group that had the most accurate words was the winner.
- Checking the student teachers' answers and writing all on the board.
- Moving to activity two by asking the students to work in groups, looking at the sentences in section two of the textbook and guessing the jobs they referred to.
- Checking the answers and writing them on the board.
- Moving to activity three by asking students to divide the jobs in activity one into three categories:
  - Jobs I'd like to do
  - Jobs I wouldn't like to do
  - I know someone who does this job
- Asking the students to use the following structures to share their ideas with other students:
  - I'd like to be... because...
  - I wouldn't like to be... because....
- Calling on a few pairs of students to practice the structure, correcting their pronunciation and their grammatical errors.
- Calling on a few students to report back what their friends had just said by using the structure:
  - He/she'd like to be... because he/she...
  - He/she wouldn't like to be... because he/she...
- Moving to activity four by asking the student teachers to look at the TEYL teacher trainer's gestures and guessing what job she was describing.
- Asking the student teachers to work in groups to describe one of the jobs in section 1 and the others in the group guessed his/her job.

-Moving to another task in workbook at page 20.

-Asking students to complete the task seven in workbook at page 20.

#### **4. Observation comments:**

It should be noted that no additional authentic teaching materials were exploited from the Internet or magazines to supplement the textbook, *New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)*. Also, no additional pictures were used except the ones available in the textbook, *Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)*.

The teacher trainer asked student teachers to complete all the tasks required for module 3 of the selected English teaching textbook, *New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)*-Students' book, Module 3 (Practice, continued). Also, the section of Vocabulary: Jobs at page 28 and *New Cutting Edge (Pre-intermediate)* Workbook, Module three at page 20 were done.

The teacher trainer provided many opportunities for the student teachers to develop English vocabulary involving the selected topic by asking them to find additional 5-10 words in relation to the topic of occupations.

The teacher trainer provided a model sentence to practise the structures:

- I'd like to be... because...
- I wouldn't like to be... because....

Then she asked a number of student teachers to report back by using the structures:

- He/she'd like to be... because he/she...
- He/she wouldn't like to be... because he/she...

Analysing the observed class against the classroom observation protocol (Appendix H), the Vietnamese primary EFL student teachers were rarely able to use English in authentic communication. It should be noted that the teacher trainer might have a high level of competence in English but poor performance in terms of providing students with many opportunities to practice speaking English. There seemed to be hardly any opportunity for the trainees to improve their oral English because they had little time for oral production. For example there was no opportunity to reflect on their own preferred jobs or to offer opinions on jobs they liked and those they didn't and to give reasons for that.

### **6.3.2 Promoting oral presentation in English.**

The category “promoting oral presentation in English” refers to a few participants’ beliefs about the development of spoken English language competence for primary EFL student teachers. It describes two participants’ belief that lack of motivating speaking activities for lower level learners of English to speak spontaneously in the current TEYL teacher preparation programs would contribute to enhancing the limited level of ELP for Vietnamese TEYL student teachers. This category also describes challenges facing the TEYL teacher trainers in the implementation of the initiative of promoting oral presentation in English. Although only two primary EFL teacher trainer participants of this study mentioned this category, their initiative is worth considering.

In interviews, two TEYL teacher trainers in group one (e.g. Participants: #1 & #2) emphasized the importance of student oral presentation in class. Getting students to do oral presentations in class is a popular classroom task in developed countries (e.g. in Australia and New Zealand...) where students are required to present their task within 20 or 25 minutes and receive constructive feedback from their teachers and classmates. However, student oral presentations in English in Vietnamese primary EFL teacher training classes are uncommon in Vietnam where teacher-centred philosophies of education seem to be particularly prevalent. TEYL student teachers in most of observed teacher training classes (e.g. Participants #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9) were not to be given the opportunity for oral presentations in class.

Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1 was in strong favour of the promotion of student oral presentations to her class. She stated that student oral presentation had many benefits such as: (i) helping TEYL student teachers become more confident in using English to communicate with TEYL teacher trainer and their classmates; (ii) providing TEYL student teachers with further stimulus for studying English; (iii) enabling immediate and constructive

feedback from the teacher trainer and from peers and (iv) by participating actively in class discussion, all class members had the opportunity to strengthen the bonds among class members and help each other study harder. According to participant #1, student oral presentations could give a much needed boost to the development of higher English language competence for primary EFL student teachers.

The view of participant #2 was in agreement with that of participant #1 that the form of oral presentation should be strongly supported by all the TEYL teacher training staff in the department and the integration of this activity into the current TEYL teacher preparation programs should be promoted. The fieldnote data at the research site indicate that the promotion of student teacher oral presentation in English was not discussed together among members of the teaching staff.

In support of promoting student teacher oral presentation in English, participant #2 said that she was acutely aware of the significance of student teacher oral presentation in English, helping student teachers develop their linguistic and communicative skills through the use of authentic English. According to participant #2, the challenge facing her and other TEYL teacher trainers in the English department was how to organize effective student teacher oral presentations in class.

It should be noted that there is an increased need to help TEYL teacher trainers organize effective teacher oral presentation in English in class through INSTEP programs so as to cater for all TEYL student teachers to attain higher oral proficiency in English. The issues involving the policy and improvements in this particular area are detailed in sections 6.5; 6.4 & 7.4

### **6.3.3 Encouraging reflective journal writing.**

The category, “encouraging reflective journal writing”, describes the participants’ beliefs about the development of written English language competence for primary EFL student teachers through the encouragement of writing a reflective learning journal. Although reflective journal writing is only a small aspect of writing competence and is more about reflective learning than learning to write, it could have beneficial effects on Vietnamese TEYL student teachers’ English. That is because the form of reflective journal writing helps Vietnamese TEYL student teachers freely express themselves in written English to reflect on their learning. This category also refers to the participants’ initiatives and challenges to raise the TEYL student teachers’ written English language competence through the integration of reflective learning writing in English into the current TEYL teacher preparation programs.

Two TEYL teacher trainers in group one (e.g. Participants: #1 & #4) focussed on the significance of encouraging TEYL student teacher trainees’ reflective journal writing. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1 stated that the model of reflective journal writing was unpopular in the culture of learning and teaching in Vietnam but it was very useful to her as an English language learner. She said that she started writing a reflective learning journal when she participated in an in-service EFL teacher training workshop in Hanoi in 1998 and Australian teacher trainers had shown her what and how to write in her reflective journal. As reported by participant #1, she applied what she had learnt from the in-service workshop to her TEYL teacher teaching practices, encouraging her student teachers to write reflective journals. She also adopted this model as a way of assessing her TEYL student teachers’ written English language competence with explicit assessment criteria established at the beginning of each semester. As a result of this, her student teachers gradually got familiar with this form of writing. This participant also reported that she strongly believed that the reflective journal writing could help her TEYL teacher trainees develop higher English

language competence particularly written English. She also argued that TEYL teacher trainees' oral English could be developed as a result of their frequent practice of reflective journal writing. She explained that she provided her student teachers with the opportunity to practice using their favoured vocabulary and structures in English to make themselves understood by their teacher trainers as well as other group-mates and class-mates.

The observed data and field note data indicate that while Vietnamese TEYL student teachers were provided with a sound theoretical basis for various forms of controlled writing, very few opportunities were given for Vietnamese TEYL student teachers to practice their free writing skills (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9). Despite knowing English grammar points and understanding English vocabulary in Vietnamese, many Vietnamese TEYL student teachers had difficulty in expressing themselves in written English because of the insufficiency of free writing practice in English in real-life situations.

#### **6.3.4 Sharing portfolios.**

A portfolio of English language learning (ELL) is a collection of Vietnamese TEYL student teachers' work put together or accumulated over a period of time (i.e lasting one semester for one core module at local college). Portfolios can be updated all the time by supplementing with helpful pieces of work or taking away unhelpful ones. In this context, "helpful pieces of work" means work that TEYL teacher trainees find useful to raise their English language competence. It should be noted that Vietnamese TEYL student teachers are often required to write grammatically-correct English sentences, mainly based on English words/ phrases available in the textbooks rather than, for example, writing their own essay in English to argue a problem. Portfolios give Vietnamese TEYL student teacher additional opportunities to reflect on their individual ELL by organizing their own work under the guidelines of their teacher trainers so as to achieve their desired ELL.

The category, “sharing portfolios” refers to the participants’ beliefs about encouraging the TEYL student teachers to share their portfolios as a way of developing the TEYL student teachers’ English language competence including both written and spoken English language proficiency. It also describes the participants’ initiatives to raise the TEYL student teachers’ English language competence through the integration of sharing portfolios in English into the current TEYL teacher preparation programs.

Two TEYL teacher trainers in group one (e.g. Participants: #1 & #8) stressed the significance of sharing portfolios in English.

Participant #1 reported that the initiatives of sharing portfolios were taken from the ideas of the in-service EFL teacher training workshop that she participated in 1998 guided by Australian teacher trainers. This participant said that although the ideas came to her a long time ago, they were valued for their practicalities in the Vietnamese context of TEYL teacher education. She stated that she devised a number of teaching strategies to help her TEYL student teachers have opportunities to share their initiatives in English. As exemplified by participant #1, she asked her student teachers to document a number of learning activities (such as games or children’s songs in English from the Internet or resource books) appropriate for teaching English to primary school children during the long semester, then each TEYL student teacher was required to say and write the procedures of his/her implementation in English by sharing their portfolios in class. The data from my observation of her class could verify her statement in the interview. According to participant #1, the way in which the TEYL teacher trainers prepared for their TEYL student teachers to share their portfolios was of great importance to help develop the TEYL student teachers’ English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English. Participant #1 felt that the TEYL teacher trainers should have initiatives to guide their student teachers to connect their academic learning with their reflection through sharing their portfolios.

Along the lines of participant #1's argument, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8 stated that she was aware of many benefits of encouraging the TEYL student teachers to share their portfolios to gradually develop their English language competence including written and spoken English language proficiency. This participant reported that the ideas of sharing portfolios in English language class were new ways of learning English in Vietnam and this initiative was not common and widespread in TEYL teacher training classes. She said that she had been using the technique, "sharing portfolio" since 1998. However, many of her local college have never adopted this way to help raising ELP levels for their ELP. She also reported that many Vietnamese teachers of English might not be confident enough to apply this initiative to their daily teacher teaching practices despite the fact that they had learnt many teaching strategies from the Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) in Hanoi, a form of local EFL teachers' professional development made by the Vietnamese government with the assistance of the Australian government.

According to participant #8, portfolios might provide more accurate evidence for TEYL student teacher achievement compared to a single test focussing on grammar and vocabulary. However, student portfolio assessment might be challenging for many Vietnamese teachers of English.

The use of portfolios in classroom English language learning is just one example of additional creative ways to engage learners. Of course there are many more methods for effectively learning a language to help develop higher levels of ELP for primary EFL teachers. However, TEYL teacher trainers need to be more adequately trained to become proactive and creative in their TEYL teacher training work. It would be good if TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges could attempt initiatives like using portfolios in their in-



service workshop and in their other teacher training practices. The issues involving required improvements will be detailed in sections 6.6 and 7.4 respectively.

### **6.3.5 Developing learning-to-learn competency.**

The fifth category, “developing learning-to-learn competency” describes the participants’ beliefs about raising TEYL teachers’ consciousness of developing learning-to-learn skills, an important factor contributing to the development of higher levels of English language competence for primary EFL teachers over time and through their careers. This sub-theme also refers to the participants’ beliefs that there is a close relationship between striving for the internationally-recognized B2-level standard and the development of TEYL student teachers’ awareness of learning-to-learn competency. The connection is that if TEYL student teachers have learning-to-learn competency, they will have intrinsic motivation to set their learning goals, to engage in their studies enthusiastically as well as to work hard towards the improvement in their English skills.

The interview and fieldnote data indicate that the initiative of developing learning-to-learn competency was supported by many participants to help raise higher ELP for TEYL student teachers. A majority of the TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8) reported that TEYL student teachers needed to supplement their English knowledge and skills by developing their individual learning strategies to enhance their English language competence. That was because the English knowledge and skills provided by the TEYL teacher trainers during the TEYL teacher training course might be insufficient to help the TEYL student teachers achieve a B2-level of English. The participants in this group reported that a majority of TEYL teacher trainees tended to totally depend on the TEYL teacher trainers (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #8) who were seen as all knowing-gurus. They also stated that very few TEYL high achieving students tended to be completely independent learners of English. Low and average achieving student

teachers tended to be dependent English language learners who were highly likely to study what was required by the TEYL teacher trainers to meet a local standard of English language competence. As stated by many participants in this group (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #8), dependent TEYL student teachers needed to be helped to become independent and self-directed learners of English.

The following extracts exemplify the TEYL teacher trainer participants' beliefs about the importance of the development of the TEYL student teachers' awareness of learning-to-learn competency:

Extract 3: I envisage that only one-third TEYL teacher trainees can attain level B1 and B2 of the CEFR because they are inactive and lazy. Few TEYL teacher trainees come to the library to look for some more books for reference. Students tend to learn in the given textbook or delivered handouts. They do not have an independent habit of learning and lack learning-to-learn competency.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #5, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4 reported that many TEYL teacher trainees lacked learning-to-learn skills, a basis for effective lifelong learning (LLL) and they tended to completely depend on the TEYL teacher trainers. According to this participant, the TEYL student teachers needed to be guided clearly about what to learn and how to learn. This might be fundamentally about Vietnamese educational culture. As stated by participant #4, she taught her TEYL student teachers the simple past tense, asking them to learn some irregular verbs by heart. Then, the following days, she checked whether they learnt the given irregular verbs or not, and discovered that many TEYL student teachers had not completed their task. They told her that they had not learnt the irregular verbs yet because they did not know what books had these verbs. Participant #4 complained that she had to show her TEYL student teachers a particular book and specific pages, asking them to group these verbs according to the particular features of these verbs. However, when she taught the present perfect tense,

many students did not remember the given irregular verbs. Here I agree with participant #4 that many TEYL student teachers are inactive in their learning and expect to be spoon-fed by the TEYL teacher trainers. As reported by this participant that the TEYL student teachers' passivity in their English language learning and the lack of awareness of learning-to-learn skills were important factors contributing to the failure of reaching level B2 of the CEFR as required by the MOET. As stated in chapters two and six, graduating TEYL student teachers are required to reach B2-level standard. Although these TEYL student teachers in this study never get to sit an international equivalent exam to the level B2 standard, they have made an unsuccessful attempt at a B2-adapted exam designed by the local TEYL teacher trainers (i.e. only 10% TEYL student teachers are competent enough to attain the B2- adapted standard). My participants shared the information with me through informal conversations during the four-month fieldwork at the research site in Vietnam.

When asked about why TEYL student teacher have limited learning-to-learn skills, many participants in group two reported the following reasons:

- Firstly, they had difficulty in finding the appropriate learning materials in the library that helped increase their English language competence (as reported by participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #16 & #19);
- Secondly, they could neither get access to the Internet at home due to their financial conditions nor at the local college (as stated by participants: #10, #12, #16, #19). Only six or seven desktop computers in the college library worked well and these computers were always occupied because there were nearly 1,000 students in different departments at college (e.g. Participants: #10, #15 & #16);
- Thirdly, they had difficulty in managing their time to study English because there were too many general-knowledge subjects (môn chung) required to learn in the

current TEYL teacher training program (as discussed by participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19);

- Fourthly, they said that they hadn't been taught to develop learning-to-learn skills and they did not know where to start learning to develop their limited English (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #16 & 19).

The TEYL teacher participants in group three reported that the learning-to-learn competency was important (e.g. Participants: #20, #22, #24, #25 & #26) to help them reach higher levels of proficiency in English. Five other participants in this group did not explain their views on this subject. Some participants (e.g. #22 & #26) in this group noted that it was challenging to develop learners' learning-to-learn competency. That was because (i) the particular setting of teaching and learning (e.g. Participants #22 & #26); (ii) the culture of traditional instruction and learning (e.g. Participant #26); (iii) the heavy workload of many TEYL teachers (e.g. Participants: #22 & #26). These issues might be major challenges to the nurturing and development of learning-to-learn skills of TEYL teachers. In order to develop TEYL teacher trainees' awareness of lifelong learning competences, concerted efforts need to be made among parties involve in TEYL teacher education (i.e. policy makers, curriculum developers, TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL teacher trainees and TEYL teachers). The issues involving these parties will be detailed in sections 6.5; 6.6 and 7.4 respectively.

#### **6.4 Challenges in adopting the CEFR framework**

This section reports on the participants' views of the challenges in adopting the B2 European standard to measure TEYL teachers' ELP level. This is the second sub-theme of the first major theme that emerged from the data analysis of this study (Table 15).

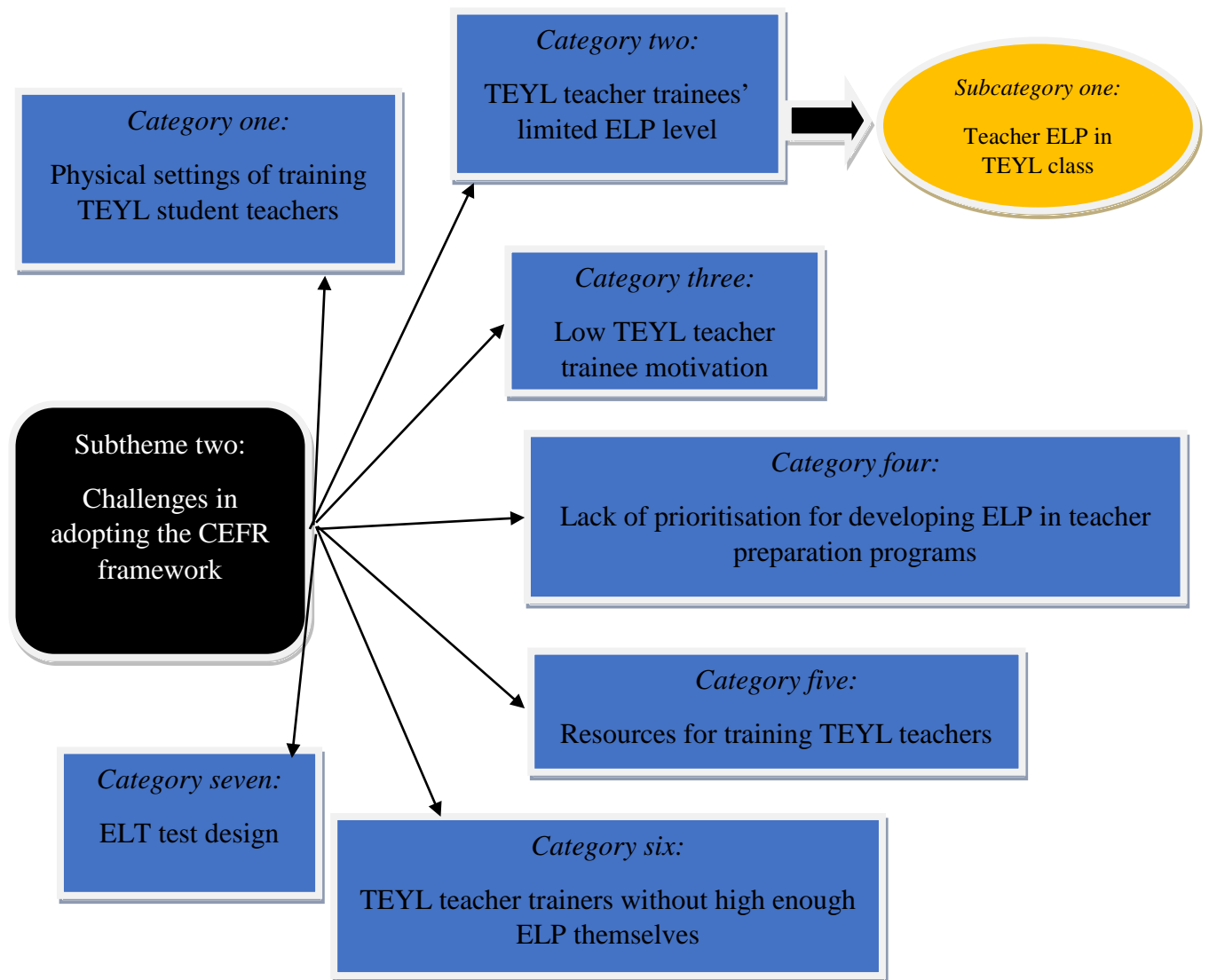
Table 15: Challenges in adopting the CEFR framework

<i>Participant group</i>	<i>Participant pseudonym</i>	<b>1*</b>	<b>2*</b>	<b>3*</b>	<b>4*</b>	<b>5*</b>	<b>6*</b>	<b>7*</b>
Group one: Primary EFL teacher trainer participants N1=9	#1		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	#2		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	#3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	#4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	#5	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	#6	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	#7		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	#8		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	#9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Group two: Primary EFL teacher trainee participants N2=10	#10			✓	✓	✓	✓	
	#11		✓	✓		✓		
	#12		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	#13			✓	✓	✓		
	#14		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	#15			✓		✓	✓	
	#16		✓	✓		✓		
	#17			✓	✓	✓		
	#18		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	#19			✓	✓	✓		
Group three: Primary EFL teacher participants N3=2+2+2+2+2=10	School C #21					✓		
	#22		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	School E #23				✓	✓		
	#27		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	School F #24			✓	✓	✓		✓
	#26		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	School J #20		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	#29		✓		✓	✓		
	School O #25		✓					
	#28		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total: N=N1+N2+N3= 9+10+10=29	<b>5/29</b>	<b>19/29</b>	<b>22/29</b>	<b>24/29</b>	<b>29/29</b>	<b>10/29</b>	<b>11/29</b>

*Notes:* 1\*: Physical settings for training TEYL student teachers; 2\* TEYL teacher trainees' limited ELP level; 3\*: Low TEYL teacher trainee motivation; 4\*: Lack of prioritisation for developing ELP; 5\*: Resources for training TEYL teachers; 6\*: Low TEYL teacher trainer ELP; 7\*: ELT test design.

The seven categories of the sub-theme, “challenges in adopting the CEFR framework” will be described and analysed in turn. Figure 4.2 below provides an overview of sub-theme two and its underpinning categories.

Figure 4.2 Sub-theme two of the major theme one and its underpinning categories



#### **6.4.1 Physical settings for training TEYL student teachers**

The category “physical settings for training TEYL student teachers” describes classrooms where local TEYL student teachers are trained. The TEYL teacher trainer classroom observation data and field-notes show that TEYL teacher training class size was from 35 to 45 students. The TEYL teacher training classes taught by primary EFL teacher trainer participants #3, #4, #5, #6 and #9 were with 45 students. These participants report in their interviews that it was difficult to effectively organize pair work or group work for communicative language learning in crowded classes with mixed levels of English language proficiency. These participants also report that one of the reasons was that competent TEYL teacher trainees tended to dominate incompetent ones who had few opportunities to show their views in learning activities.

Eight out of nine TEYL teacher trainer participants who were observed in their TEYL teacher training class used four rooms of the local college. In these rooms, there were from forty to forty-five tables and chairs each for 45 TEYL teacher trainees. Each table was fixed to each chair, which was convenient for each TEYL teacher trainee to use. The movable tables and chairs were arranged by the TEYL teacher trainers depending on the learning activities they had organised. One of the four classrooms that the observed TEYL teacher trainer participants used for teaching and training TEYL teacher trainees was not in good condition. One of the four windows of this room was broken due to strong winds and it had not been repaired. There were some broken chairs and tables at the back of this classroom and they were not mended. The windows of this room were open wide to admit sunlight into the room because one of the two ceiling lights did not work well. It flashed on and off all the time and the TEYL teacher trainees in the observed classes could not concentrate on their work. Thus, this ceiling light was turned off.

The teaching facilities provided in the four rooms were only a desk and a chair for the TEYL teacher trainer and a chalkboard (3m x1.6m). One of the four chalkboards was not in good condition. The TEYL teacher trainees who sat at the back of the classroom could not see what was written on the board because the paintwork on the chalkboard had flaked off. It should be noted that the chalkboard was used as the main TEYL teacher training aid in the observed TEYL teacher training classes (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). None of the four rooms were equipped with a projector, a screen, a cassette player or a desktop computer. Apart from the college library, no teaching rooms for English had access to the internet. Unlike the TEYL teacher trainer participants #2, #4, #5, #6 and #8, the TEYL teacher trainer participants #1, #3 and #9 brought their own laptops, an extension cord and loudspeakers to their observed classrooms. These TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #3 & #9) spent from 20-30 minutes installing the projector by themselves to make sure that it could work well during the observed forty-five-minute teaching session. I think that they did it because their classes were being observed. The TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9) used the chalkboard for various purposes such as: (i) presenting new words and expressions, (ii) writing and explaining some new terms, (iii) introducing some grammatical points and (iv) checking TEYL teacher trainees' written work. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants #1, #3 and #9 used the chalkboard as a screen to show pictures and images from their own laptops. To help TEYL teacher trainees see clearly what was shown on the screen, these TEYL teacher trainer participants closed all the shutters of the observed room. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants #3 and #9 also used their own laptop to let TEYL teacher trainees listen to the recordings in listening activities with their attached loudspeakers. The TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9) reported that the adoption of Information



and Communications Technology (ICT) in their teaching was infrequent and uncommon because ICT at college was difficult. The projector was either not installed or not ready to use.

Physical settings for training TEYL teacher trainees provide us with some insight that these teacher trainers are teaching in difficult conditions with multiple pressures to develop higher ELP for primary EFL teacher trainees. To improve ELP and learning physical environments is a critical ingredient contributing to the development of higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees. Thus, TEYL policy-makers need to carefully consider this factor.

#### **6.4.2 TEYL teacher trainees' limited ELP.**

The category, "TEYL teacher trainees' limited ELP", describes the low level of TEYL teacher trainees' ELP when they graduate from training college in Vietnam and it relates to their level of proficiency when they enter College. (According to the local College admissions policy, TEYL teacher trainee grades are roughly equivalent to an IELTS score of 1.0 and higher. After the three-year teacher training course at the local College, TEYL teacher trainees' ELP levels are approximately equivalent to an IELTS of 3.0 and higher. Their oral communicative skills in English remain a matter of concern to the local management). This low level of ELP was discussed by 19 out of twenty-nine participants of three groups (Table 15). However, each group of informants had different opinions about the issue. The participants in this study tended to adopt the following phrases to express the relatively low level of TEYL teacher trainees' English language competence particularly in the area of oral English, "the limitation of teachers' English knowledge in oral communication/the limited level of teachers' ability in listening and speaking in English/the underachievement of teachers' ability to communicate in English" (in the Vietnamese words of the participants, 'mức tiếng Anh/ trình độ tiếng Anh/ khả năng tiếng Anh-đặt biệt là kỹ

năng nghe-nói/ kỹ năng giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh-thấp/ yếu/kém/ không đạt chuẩn/ chưa đạt chuẩn/ chưa đạt yêu cầu'). The following extracts shed light on the limited level of ELP of Vietnamese primary EFL teacher trainees in relation to the desired B2 level of the CEFR required by the Vietnamese government and different perceptions of the participants in three groups.

Extract 4: Our students (i.e. graduating TEYL teacher trainees) have a relatively low level of English language proficiency, particularly in the area of oral communication because they have been trained to achieve the domestic standard of ELP for a long time (i.e. the domestic standard or the local standard of ELP was set by Vietnamese teacher trainers at local colleges/ universities and this standard is acknowledged by the government before the birth of Decree No. 1400 QD/TTg in 2008. This domestic standard is not related to IELTS or TOEFL, see chapter two). The domestic standard of ELP is often constructed by a local college or a local university and the standard of ELP between local colleges or local universities may be non-equivalent.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7, Interview on 16 October 2012)

Extract 5: As far as I know, European standards have been in existence for a long time. However, Vietnam has not adopted these standards to measure English language learner proficiency level before. Thus, the quality of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam is low and it is difficult to catch up with other countries in the world. It is easy to understand why our students have difficulty in passing internationally recognized exams.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 6: As far as I know, a number of EFL teachers who are currently working in public primary schools and junior secondary schools are incompetent in terms of English language teacher proficiency and professional skills. If these incompetent teachers continue working as EFL teachers, the situation of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam is at stake.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, Interview on 4 October 2012)

Extract 7: The teacher training quality is low and few of us (i.e. TEYL teacher trainees) are competent enough to attain a CEFR level of B2 because we are not provided with many opportunities to develop higher levels of English language competence.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18, Interview on 28 September 2012)

Extract 8: I have heard about the European standard. With our current level of English language proficiency, it is challenging to pass the required B2 exam. (Deeply sigh) listening, speaking, reading and writing in English are all difficult.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #11, Interview on 1 October 2012)

Extract 9: Some students can pass the college entrance exam with a low level of English language proficiency, particularly their limited English ability in listening and speaking due to the current College Admission policy. After the three-year teacher training course at the local college, these students are required to pass the B2 exam. It is impossible for them. There is a very, very big gap between their current English language proficiency and the required level by the MOET, I think.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #22, Interview on 4 October 2012)

The data from classroom observations and field notes were in accordance with the interview data, showing that TEYL teacher trainees had a low level of ELP. Two issues need to be argued here: (i) one is about TEYL teacher trainees' actual level of proficiency in English and (ii) the other is about how they were taught at local college to achieve the desired ELP required by the government policy.

Regarding their actual ELP level, most of the teacher trainers (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9) stated that TEYL teacher trainees had a limited level of English language proficiency. They had difficulty in expressing long and complicated sentences in English as shown in most of the teacher training class observations (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: # 2, #3, #4, #5, #6 and #9). Most of the TEYL teacher trainees used the Vietnamese language as the main tool for classroom interaction instead of using English to communicate with one another in TEYL teacher training classes (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #5, #6, #8 & #9). In interviews, many TEYL teacher trainees (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #14, #15, #16, #18 & #19) reported that they were not confident enough to sit an internationally FCE/IELTS/TOEFL-adapted exam of ELP as required by the MOET.

With reference to how TEYL teacher trainees were taught to enhance their ELP, most of the current TEYL teachers in public schools (e.g. Participants: #20, #21, #22, #24, #25, #27 & #29) said that TEYL teacher trainees at local colleges were not given many opportunities to

express freely what they wanted to say. Instead they had to repeat words, phrases or structures from the textbook (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9). TEYL teacher training class observations (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 and #9) indicated that TEYL teacher trainees were provided very few opportunities to practice using English creatively and freely. Controlled practice was paid much more attention than free practice. Thus, TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges need to be directly responsible for trainees' limited ELP.

In interviews, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7 stated that many challenges faced TEYL teacher trainers in training TEYL student teachers to achieve the required international standard. One of these challenges was that they do not have any experience of training primary EFL teachers with the European standard as required by the MOET. Nobody has told them what to do to enhance the current level of ELP for TEYL teacher trainees. Many TEYL teacher trainers (e.g. Participants: #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that it was very challenging for TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges to provide TEYL teacher trainees with effective strategies for preparations for IELTS/ TOEFL exams because these teacher trainers have never sat an international English language proficiency. If TEYL teacher trainers had sat the exams themselves, they would have more idea about how to provide TEYL teacher trainees with accurate instruction in and preparations for IELTS/ TOEFL.

A majority of the teacher trainer participants in this study (i.e. Participants: #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8) considered that sitting an international exam was necessary for them. According to primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7, the gap between the international exams and the locally developed ones was possibly quite considerable (i.e. 2008-2020 according to Decree No.1400 QD/TTg signed by Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan in 2008).

As stated in section 2.3, although Vietnam has adopted the CEFR in FL policies at the national level, there is no evidence of the translation of the CEFR standard (i) into current TEYL teacher training programs, (ii) into the development of TEYL teacher training materials and (iii) into TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency assessment. These points were confirmed and discussed by the participants in this study (i.e. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9).

Many TEYL teacher trainer participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #1, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that the nature of the current TEYL teacher preparation program was one of the factors contributing to the limited ELP level of graduating TEYL student teachers at the local college. The lack of prioritisation for developing ELP, particularly spoken English (section 6.5.3) was a matter of concern to TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Participants: #1, #4 & #8). Thus, the training program needed to be critically reviewed to ensure that TEYL teachers were appropriately trained to have higher levels of English language proficiency particularly in the area of oral English. Specifically, the current teacher training programs need to cut down on less relevant modules in the current TEYL teacher training program such as basic knowledge involving party politics (section 2.7). This move was recommended by many participants in this study (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9; Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19; Practicing primary EFL teacher participants: #20, #21, #24, #25, #27 & #28).

Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #9 stated that it was challenging for TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges to reform the current TEYL teacher training program to enhance the level of teacher trainees' ELP because the main modules of the TEYL teacher training framework were designed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Consequently, without the strong support of the MOET, the improvement in the current

TEYL teacher preparation program for the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers was beyond the reach of TEYL teacher trainers. The topic of reviewing policies and support for the integration of raising TEYL teachers' ELP and TEYL teachers' professional development will be further discussed in sections 6.6 and 7.4 below.

#### ***6.4.2.1 Teacher ELP in TEYL class.***

The sub-category, "teacher ELP in TEYL class", refers to the participants' beliefs and teaching practices in relation to TEYL teachers' English language competence, particularly oral English language proficiency in TEYL class. As stated in section 6.5.1 most of the participants in this study were aware of the importance of TEYL teachers' ELP and they assumed teachers' ELP to be an important factor in the success of TEYL. However, they tended to treat English as a knowledge subject or sciences subject, focussing on interpretation-oriented instruction rather than using English as a means for interactive classroom activities to develop students' English language competence. Although the participants of the three groups (i.e. group one: TEYL teacher trainers; group two: TEYL teacher trainees and group three: TEYL teachers) stressed the importance of TEYL teachers' ELP in class, they seemed to have different opinions of the functions of TEYL teachers' English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English language. Table 16 below describes the participants' viewpoints about the use of TEYL teachers' ELP. The participants believed that the proportion of teacher use of English in the classroom correlated with teachers' ELP.

Here I am presenting an overview of the optimal use of English in a TEYL context according to the different viewpoints of the participants and the participants' use of English in their own context.

Table 16: TEYL teachers' ELP in interview

Participants	The optimal use of English in a TEYL context		The use of English in the participant's own TEYL context	
	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>
<b>Group 1: teacher trainers</b>				
#1	70-80%	20-30%	50%	50%
#2	No information		No information	
#3	60-70%	30-40%	No information	
#4	80-90%	10-20%	Under 50%	Over 50%
#5	No information		No information	
#6	No information		No information	
#7	80-90%	10-20%	Under 50%	Over 50%
#8	70-80%	20-30%	No information	
#9	No information		No information	

Participants	The optimal use of English in a TEYL context		The use of English in the participant's own TEYL context	
	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>
<b>Group 2: teacher trainees</b>				
#10	50%	50%	No information	
#11	No information		No information	
#12	50 %	50%	No information	
#13	50%	50%	No information	
#14	No information		No information	
#15	No information		No information	
#16	80-90%	10-20%	No information	
#17	No information		No information	
#18	70-80%	20-30%	No information	
#19	No information		No information	



Participants	The optimal use of English in a TEYL context		The use of English in the participant's own TEYL context	
<b>Group 3: primary teachers</b>	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>L1</i>
#20	60-70%	30-40%	50%	50%
#21	60%	40%	No information	
#22	80-90%	10-20%	60%	40%
#23	60%	40%	50%	50%
#24	80-90%	10-20%	50%	50%
#25	No information		Under 50%	Over 50%
#26	60-70%	30-40%	50%	50%
#27	60%	40%	50%	50%
#28	60-70%	30-40%	50%	50%
#29	No information		No information	

As can be seen in Table 16, eighteen out of 29 participants reported in interviews that the optimal use of English in class should be 60% or more than that percentage. This is consistent with the literature involving the area of teachers' ELP that FL teachers ideally need to maximize the target language (TL) use in class so that their students are exposed to it as frequently as possible (ACTFL, 2012; Butzhamm, 2003; Cook, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Murphy, 2014; Peng & Zhang, 2009; Turnbull, 2000 & 2001; Turnbull & Arnette, 2002). It should be noted that this is not a black-and-white issue of an alternative view. Here I am not totally opposed to the use of L1 to facilitate students' understanding in class (see Garcia &

Kleyn, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) to mount a somewhat one-sided argument, rather than supporting the view of maximizing possible opportunities for target language use in class to develop EFL learners' ELP, particularly oral English language skills in TEYL, a matter of concern for Vietnam and many non-Anglo countries.

In interviews, eighteen out of 29 participants, as shown in Table 16, did not give any opinion about the ideal use of English of TEYL teachers in their own individual context. Two out of nine TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one reported that the ideal percentage of TEYL teachers' use of English might be less than 50%, which was consistent with the viewpoint of just one primary EFL teacher participant (#25) in group three. It should be noted that all ten primary EFL teacher trainees in group two did not report on the ideal percentage of the use of teachers' ELP whereas most of primary EFL teacher participants reported that English and L1 should be given an equal distribution in TEYL class (i.e. 50% English -50 % L1).

The data from TEYL classroom observations show that primary EFL teachers' actual use of English in their recorded class was less than 50% (see Table 17).

Table 17: Teachers' use of English in TEYL class in classroom observation data

<i>Participants</i>	<i>English words</i>	<i>English percentage</i>	<i>L1 words</i>	<i>L1 percentage</i>	Total (Word counts)
#20	3,289	44.8%	4,052	55.2%	7,341
#21	3,599	53.5%	3,362	46.5 %	6,721
#22	x	x	x	x	x
#23	2,289	30.4%	4,227	69.6%	7,516
#24	2,998	43.6%	3,875	56.4%	6,873
#25	4,211	51.2 %	4,008	48.8%	8,219
#26	x	x	x	x	x
#27	2,558	34.8%	4,779	65.2%	7,337
#28	4,332	52%	3,994	48%	8,326
#29	2,165	38.2%	3,488	61.8%	5,653
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,236</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>3,973</b>	<b>55.2%</b>	<b>7,209</b>

As can be seen from Table 17, on average a TEYL teacher in my study generated 7,209 words in a 35 minute class including 3,236 English words (=44.8%) and 3,973 Vietnamese words (=55.2%). That is, the ratio between the English words and the Vietnamese words used by an average TEYL teacher in this study was approximately **45/55**. It should be noted that a majority of the English words (3,236 words) were *read* and *repeated* from the textbook, rather than *being spoken* by the TEYL teacher (see Table 18 below).

Table 18: English words read from the textbook and spoken by the TEYL teacher in TEYL classroom observation

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Total (English words)</i>	<i>English words read from the textbook</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>English words spoken by the teacher</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
#20	3,289	3,133	95.3%	156	4.7%
#21	3,599	3,226	89.7%	373	10.3%
#22	x	x	x	x	x
#23	2,289	2,061	90.1%	228	9.9%
#24	2,998	2,722	90.8%	276	9.2%
#25	4,211	3,983	94.6%	228	5.4%
#26	x	x	x	x	x
#27	2,558	2,387	93.4%	171	6.6%
#28	4,332	4,151	95.9%	181	4.1%
#29	2,165	1,824	86.5%	341	13.5%
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,236</b>	<b>2,935</b>	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>7.5%</b>

As can be seen from Table 18, an average TEYL teacher *read* 2,935 words from the textbook and let his/her children *repeat* the sentences from the textbook many times. Teacher #28, as shown in Table 16, read out the largest number of words from the textbook (95.9 %) whereas teacher # 29 read the smallest quantity. Overall, TEYL teachers tended to *read* the English words from the textbook rather than *speak* English in TEYL class and this was confirmed by the modest ratio of the actual use of teacher-generated spoken English in TEYL class (Table18).

It is possible that TEYL teachers were using L1/Vietnamese so that their students could understand more easily and this is recognized by a number of researchers such as Garcia & Kleyn, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003. However, the weight of the literature in the area of teachers' ELP (as stated in section 3.4) shows that there is a close relationship between teachers' ELP level and their language teaching practice (e.g. Borg, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Edge & Garton, 2009; Ellis, 2005; Farrell & Richards, 2007; Hope, 2002; Kim & Elder, 2008; Naserdeen, 2001; Richards et al., 2013; Samadi & Ah-Ghazo, 2013; Scrivener, 2005; Tsui, 2003). The areas in which FL teachers' teaching practice is impacted by their ELP level are: (i) the utilization of TL resources; (ii) class management using the TL; (iii) provision of rich and authentic English language input; (iv) provision of accurate English language chunks; (v) provision of corrective feedback; (vi) provision of adequate explanations and (vii) improvisation competence in FL teaching. Thus, the fact that Vietnamese TEYL teachers at local college did not use English enough in TEYL classes did possibly indicate their own relatively low level of ELP.

The findings from the analysis of TEYL teacher observation data using the observation protocol (Appendix H) have indicated that most of the observed TEYL teachers had a limited level of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English (Table 17). They had difficulty in speaking English and in expressing complicated ideas and generating long utterances. They were unable to improvise (section 3.4.7) to make the English lessons for primary school children more enjoyable and interesting. The following summary of a TEYL class taught by primary EFL teacher #21 (Table 19) is one example of how Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam teach English to young English language learners.

Regarding the level of awareness of teachers regarding their language choices during lessons, the interview data indicate that the participants had a range of ideas as to whether they should

choose L1 (Vietnamese) or L2/ the target language (English) at different points of their English language lessons. According to participants #9 & #29, there did not exist a specific government policy on how much L2 (English) should be used in class in the Vietnamese context of TEYL and TEYL teacher education. The general idea of many participants in this study was that teachers' use of L1 or L2/ the target language depended on the level of teachers' ELP and learners' English language competence.

Table 19: TEYL teacher classroom observation

**TEYL Classroom observation (3/11/2012)**

Primary EFL teacher participant #21, school C

**1. Physical description:**

- A medium-sized classroom with a teacher desk and a chair.
- 24 wooden desks (1m x 40cm) closely attached to 24 benches (1m x 25cm) arranged in rows for 45 children of grade 3 (25 girls and 20 boys).
- . The children sat in rows facing a chalk blackboard (3m x 2m).
- No posters, pictures, wall visuals or visual aids in class were apparent.

**2. Resources used:**

- A cassette player brought with the teacher to her class (school C did not provide enough cassette players for five primary EFL teachers).
- The compulsory textbook, 'Tiếng Anh 3' (English 3), Unit6, My school.
- No additional authentic teaching materials were used from the internet or magazines to supplement the textbook.
- No additional pictures were used except the ones available in the textbook, Tiếng Anh 3.

**3. Chronological description of classroom teaching activities**

- Teacher used English to greet the children, 'Good morning, class.'
- Teacher used Vietnamese to ask the children to sing a familiar English song in order to motivate them at the beginning of a lesson (i.e. the ABC song).
- Teacher used a mixture of English and Vietnamese to introduce the lesson. Vietnamese was used when expressing complicated sentences and long utterances (in the words of the observed teacher, À , Mai có 1 bức tranh về trường học, và Mai giới thiệu với Tony về trường học của mình and trường tên là gì. Cuộc hội thoại như sau). English was used in familiar expressions (i.e. Today we study unit 6, My school. Open your book at page 42). Code-

switching was used all the time by the teacher to ensure that the children understood everything the teacher said in class.

- Teacher introduced new words by giving direct translation (i.e. 'primary school' nghĩa là trường tiểu học' and pictures available from the textbook, 'Tieng Anh 3'.

- Teacher asked the children to repeat individual words first, 'school' then the collocation, 'primary school'.

- Teacher directed the children to practice the individual words and the collocation, 'primary school' through repetitive drilling in chorus twice.

- Teacher invited individuals, in turn, to repeat the collocation, 'primary school'.

- Teacher corrected immediately when the children mispronounced the new words to ensure that the 'correct' pronunciation was given.

- Teacher provided corrective feedback in both English and Vietnamese and used English with familiar phrases (i.e. Good/Very good/ Excellent). She used Vietnamese when giving complex sentences and long utterances (in the words of the teacher, bây giờ cô đi xem thử các bạn có kết quả giống cô không? Nào cô đi kiểm tra nha. Xem thử, An không nhớ từ hả?- Now I would like to compare the result of your work with that of mine. I will start now. An (name of a boy in TEYL class), you do not remember the Vietnamese meaning of this word, do you?

- Teacher gave instructions in Vietnamese to ensure that the children understood what they were required to do (in the words of the teacher, Bây giờ cô mời các em nhìn thật kỹ các chữ cái có trong từ 'primary school'. Bây giờ cô sẽ cho các em 1 trò chơi điền từ. Phát cho mỗi người 1 cái (Pr..m..r.. Sc..oo..) Chúng ta sẽ điền vào chỗ trống của những từ còn thiếu. Gấp sách lại. Now, I would like to invite you to have a careful look at every set of letters in a fixed order of the word 'primary school'. Then, I will give you a game of filling a letter in the phrase 'primary school'. Close your books, please. Each of you will be given a paper card, "PR...M...R... ...SC...OO...". Please fill in the dots with one letter to make the phrase, primary school).

- Teacher checked and double-checked the meaning of the phrase, 'primary school' at the end of each stage of repetitive drilling.

- Teacher used the pictures available from the textbook to introduce the context of the conversation. The Vietnamese language was adopted to express complicated ideas to make sure that the children understood the given setting.

- Teacher read the four-sentence conversation from the textbook and translated each sentence, in turn, into Vietnamese.

- Teacher asked the children to listen to the cassette player twice and followed the order of the conversation from the textbook.

- Teacher repeated sentence by sentence in chorus twice and then in individuals.

- Teacher asked the children to reproduce the conversation from the textbook through repetition and substitution drilling.

- Teacher provided a model sentence from the conversation, 'It's... primary school'.
- Teacher drew a formulation for the children to remember, 'It's+ school name+ primary school' / It's + (hum-hum) + primary school.
- Teacher asked the children to use the given formulation to make sentences.
- Teacher asked the children to complete all the given tasks from the textbook using the provided formulation.
- Teacher asked the children to practice speaking and writing English using the given formula.
- Teacher completed the lesson by asking the children to sing a familiar song (i.e. the ABC song).

#### **4. Researcher comments**

The TEYL teacher completed all the tasks required for unit 6 of the compulsory textbook, Tieng Anh 3. She provided many opportunities for primary school children to practice English but only through repetition and substitution drilling (i.e. in chorus, in pairs and individually).

The teacher provided a model sentence from the conversation of the textbook, 'It's... primary school', a chunked formula for the children to remember, 'It' s+ school name+ primary school'. Comparing what was seen and heard from the observed class with the classroom observation protocol (Appendix H), I wondered if Vietnamese primary school children at School C were able to use authentic English since in the class I observed they were given very few opportunities to engage in communicative or well-contextualised activities. For example the children were not given the opportunity to *say anything true* about their own primary school.

The above summary shows the TEYL teacher's restricted teaching practices. She might have a high level of competence in English but poor performance. She seemed not to provide young English language learners with many opportunities to practice speaking English in an authentic context. She was not able to use English creatively to teach the English language class. The summary relates to themes stated in section 6.3 above. It is also associated with the categories of the sub-themes presented in sections 6.5.2; 6.5.3; 6.5.4; 6.5.5 and 6.5.6 below.

#### **6.4.3 Low TEYL teacher trainee motivation.**

The second category of the third sub-theme, "low teacher trainee motivation", refers to the lack of teacher trainees' enthusiasm for their English language learning at the local college.



This may seem odd since they are being trained to be TEYL teachers and begs the questions: Why did they pick this course of TEYL teacher training? What makes TEYL teacher trainees unmotivated and why do TEYL teacher trainees have a negative attitude to their studies?

In response to these questions, the TEYL student teacher participants in group two presented their different opinions and the documentation is detailed in Table 20 below.

As can be seen from Table 20, seven factors significantly contribute to low student motivation and the students' negative attitudes towards learning English. All teacher trainee participants in group two (e.g. #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that five of seven of these factors were particularly important. They were: (i) the structure of the TEYL teacher training course; (ii) the unavailability of relevant books in the college library; (iii) inaccessibility of ICT; (iv) the tediousness and boredom of the methods of training and (v) a paucity of extra-curricular programs. Eight out of ten participants in group two (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #11, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that their individual financial/family circumstances contributed to de-motivation in their studies. Seven out of ten participants in this group (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #11, #12, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that social inequalities in recruitment and finding employment were also a major factor contributing to their negative attitudes towards their studies.

Table 20: Factors leading to low teacher trainee motivation and negative attitudes towards learning English

<i>Participant</i> <i>pseudonym</i>	<b>*1</b>	<b>*2</b>	<b>*3</b>	<b>*4</b>	<b>*5</b>	<b>*6</b>	<b>*7</b>
#10		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#12		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	<b>8/10</b>	<b>10/10</b>	<b>10/10</b>	<b>10/10</b>	<b>10/10</b>	<b>10/10</b>	<b>7/10</b>
N2=10							

Notes:\*1: Financial/ family circumstances;\*2: Structure of the TEYL teacher training course;\*3: Unavailability of relevant books in the library;\*4: Inaccessibility of information and communications technology (ICT);\*5: Tediousness and boredom of the methods of training;\*6: Paucity of extra-curricular programs; \*7: Social inequalities of recruitment and finding employment

Seven factors that contributed to low TEYL teacher trainee motivation to learn English are detailed below:

#### **(i) Factor one: Financial/ family circumstances**

This section describes and explains the reason why TEYL teacher trainees in this study picked this course of primary EFL teacher training.

In interviews, primary EFL teacher trainer participants #1, #3 and #9 reported that the great majority of TEYL teacher trainees selected their TEYL teacher profession as they “reached an impasse or a deadlock” or they “had no choice” (in their Vietnamese words, “rơi vào bước

đường cùng”, “không còn sự chọn lựa”, “sự lựa chọn sau cùng”). That was because most of the TEYL teacher trainees had difficult financial circumstances (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1 & #3) and their parents could not afford to financially support them to go to university in big cities (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) (chapter two). This issue was confirmed by eight out of ten TEYL teacher trainee participants in group two (e.g. Participants: #11, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19). In other words, financial/family circumstances are a locally contextual factor contributing to low teacher trainee motivation in their studying English at college. The following extracts will illustrate this issue:

Extract 10: I do not want to be a primary EFL teacher. I selected this career because I have no choice. My parents are very poor and they cannot afford to financially support me to study at university in HCMC. If I study at the local college, my parents do not have to pay for my tuition fees.

(Primary teacher trainee participant #11, Interview on 1 October 2012)

Extract 11: I am not able to achieve the required score to study at a university in HCMC that I like. Thus, I selected to study here (i.e. a small local college). I want to have a job and do not like being dependent on my parents. I have reached an impasse. I have no choice. I accept to be a primary EFL teacher although I do not like this career.

(Primary teacher trainee participant #18, Interview on 28 September 2012)

## **(ii) Factor two: Structure of the TEYL teacher training course**

Another factor that contributes to the low motivation of primary EFL student teachers at local college is the current structure of the TEYL teacher training course. This is different from some of the other teacher professional development programmes. For example, TALK proposed by Finsterward et al. (2013) is presented in the literature (section 4.3.2).

The data from interviews, field notes and policy documentation collected at the research location indicate that participants thought that the structure of the TEYL teacher training program was unsatisfactory to help Vietnamese TEYL student teachers attain the desired international standard of ELP at B2 level on the CEFR as required by the government policy.

Most of the TEYL teacher trainee participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that the structure of the teacher training was inappropriate due to the prioritisation of Communist Party politics modules instead of the enhancement of TEYL teacher trainees' ELP particularly. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1 in this study said that she could not see any benefits from letting TEYL teacher trainees study irrelevant modules (like Party politics and philosophy) in developing TEYL teacher trainees' future teaching careers. Many TEYL teacher trainee participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #11, #13, #14, #15, #17 & #19) reported that they did not have much time to practice English including (i) speaking English with their friends, or (ii) practicing doing English tests in the textbooks because they were busy studying modules involving Communist Party politics. These participants also added that they were worried about these modules because many TEYL teacher trainee participants in the English department had failed in the previous exams relating to Communist Party politics modules of the TEYL teacher training program. They failed because these Communist Party politics modules were boring and tedious. They were forced to study these mind-numbing modules (reported by participants #11, #15, #16 & #19) to have a recognised certificate in TEYL so that they could work as a contract TEYL teacher for a public primary school in the locality.

### **(iii) Factor three: Unavailability of relevant books in the library**

All the teacher trainee participants in group two (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 and #19) said that the unavailability of relevant books and online resources in the college library contributed to de-motivation in their studies.

According to TEYL teacher trainee participants of this study, what they needed to develop their ELP was to have access to relevant learning resources at the local library. The following extract explains this issue:

Extract 12: We would like to find relevant sources of learning English at the local college but we fail to do so. Although there are many interesting books of English on the market, we cannot afford financially to buy them. We just buy one or two books that we think are appropriate. Actually we do not know for sure if these books are relevant to enhance our level of ELP or not.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #19, Interview on 29 September 2012)

**(iv) Factor four: Inaccessibility of information and communications technology (ICT)**

The data from interviews, classroom observations, field notes in relation to the description of the research site (Appendix O) indicate that TEYL student teachers ran into difficulty with the inaccessibility of ICT in the locality. All TEYL teacher trainee participants (e.g. #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that the inaccessibility of ICT at local colleges contributed to their de-motivation to learn English. Many TEYL teacher participants (e.g. Primary EFL teacher participants: #20, #22, #25, #27, #28 and #29) said that the deficiency of ICT at local colleges seemed an intractable problem. Participant #28 reported that ICT played an important part in motivating TEYL student teachers. She used the Vietnamese words, “*đạy chay và học chay*” to refer to the teaching and learning of English without the help of ICT, a relatively common form of teaching and teaching English in the locality. According to this participant, such teaching and learning was very boring and uninteresting at local colleges.

The data from field-notes and TEYL teacher training classroom observations (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #4, #5, #6 & #8) show that the limitation and inadequacy of the adoption of ICT at local colleges was a significant factor that made TEYL student teachers unmotivated. This was observable through the learning attitudes of TEYL teacher trainees in eight observed TEYL teacher training classes. For example, the data from classroom observations showed that teacher trainees were unmotivated (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: # 2, #4, #5 & #8), lacking in enthusiasm for their studies (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #5, #6 & #9). Most of the teacher trainees were not

active in participating in learning activities (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). Some TEYL teacher trainees had a poor habit of study (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #5, #6 & #9) and a lack of connection to the learning activities (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #4 & #8). The following extract from primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8 exemplifies this challenge,

Extract 13: I have prepared my lecture very carefully before coming to class but many times I feel disappointed due to the inaccessibility of ICT...I find it difficult to motivate our students. I do not understand why our students have such a low level of motivation and a negative attitude towards their studies. I often prepare a number of funny learning activities to motivate students but when I come to class, the TEYL teacher trainees' negative attitudes towards learning make me unenthusiastic and unmotivated. They tell me that they feel bored stiff. I ask them what makes them bored. They say that many things in daily life bore them, i.e. the structure of the course with too many secondary modules ("môn chung"), the paucity of books available for their studies in the library, the tediousness and monotony of the traditional methods of teaching and training, the social inequalities of recruitment and finding employment...I advise them to study hard first to reach level B2 of the CEFR.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8, Interview on 19 October 2012)

#### **(v) Factor five: Tediousness and boredom of the methods of teacher training**

It should be noted that although the teacher trainer participant above said that she tried to make the class and funny and interesting, the interview data and field notes collected from group two (i.e. teacher trainees) of this study indicate that one of the factors contributing to low teacher trainee motivation was the monotony and dullness of the current methods of teacher training at local college. TEYL teacher trainee participants (e.g. #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that the tediousness and boredom of the traditional methods of training made them unmotivated to learn English. Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18 said that most of the teacher trainers followed the textbooks firmly and lacked the creativity to design interesting learning activities for TEYL teacher trainees. According to this participant, such a teaching method did not motivate TEYL teacher trainees to learn English effectively. The following extracts exemplify this view:

Extract 14: I think that the monotony and dullness of the traditional teaching method partly contributes to TEYL teacher trainees' lack of motivation to learn English. TEYL teacher trainers seem not to know how to exploit the teaching materials effectively to make them become more interesting and exciting. TEYL teacher trainers follow the textbooks inflexibly and we feel bored to death.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18, Interview on 28 September 2012)

Extract 15: In my opinion, the way that TEYL teacher trainers give a lecture is monotonous and boring. I like a diversity of teaching methods which can stimulate interest in TEYL teacher trainees' learning English.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #15, Interview on 27 September 2012)

What TEYL teacher trainee participants #20 and #21 stated in face-to-face interviews was consistent with the data in TEYL teacher training class observations (section 6.4.1.3). In interviews, primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in group three did not report on this issue but TEYL teacher trainer participants #1 & #8 in group one reported that some TEYL teacher trainers, particularly busy TEYL teacher trainers liked adopting the traditional teaching method because of its handiness and effortlessness. The following extract explains the reasons why some TEYL teacher trainers are still in favour of the traditional teacher training method despite it being tedious and boring.

Extract 16: I think that most TEYL teacher trainers know that the adoption of the traditional teacher training method can de-motivate TEYL teacher trainees' learning English. However, some busy TEYL teacher trainers like using this method because of its convenience and simplicity. These teacher trainers do not spend much time in preparations for their lectures because they are so busy with their extra-teaching classes at home. They strictly follow the procedures of the textbooks and the assistance of teachers' books with accurate answer keys to the questions posed in the textbooks.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, Interview on 4 October 2012)

#### **(vi) Factor six: Paucity of extra-curricular programs**

The data from interviews, fieldnotes as well as observations at the research site indicate that there was a paucity of extra-curricular programs to help develop higher ELP for Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainees at the locality. All TEYL teacher trainee participants in group two (i.e.

#10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that the lack of extra-curricular programs with the intention of developing higher English language proficiency for would-be primary EFL teachers contributed to the low level of TEYL teacher trainee motivation in learning English. According to primary EFL teacher trainee participant #11, extra-curricular activities were of great importance to help TEYL teacher trainees become more motivated in their learning of English. The participants in this study tended to use the Vietnamese words “hoạt động ngoại khóa chuyên ngành”, “hoạt động ngoại khóa chuyên môn”, “hoạt động ngoại khóa để phát triển kỹ năng tiếng Anh”, “hoạt động giao lưu, học hỏi, tiếp xúc với người nước ngoài” (extra-curricular programs with the target of enhancing ELP for primary EFL teacher trainees). The extra-curricular programs that the participants of this study mentioned include: (i) English speaking clubs, (ii) live performances in English, (iii) contests of eloquence in English, (iv) a general knowledge quiz in English, (v) talks or discussions with English speakers from different cultures on social, cultural and educational issues. The following extract exemplifies the viewpoint of Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #11:

Extract 17: I have learnt English here (i.e. at the local college) for nearly three years but no extra-curricula programs have been launched with the aim of developing higher English language proficiency for TEYL teacher trainees. Neither an English speaking club nor a live performance has been set up so far. In my opinion, the absence of extra-curricula programs in TEYL teacher education is a component contributing to low TEYL teacher trainee motivation in learning English. The English speaking skill of most TEYL teacher trainees at local college including me is weak. We need more opportunities to practice speaking English more confidently. Two forty-five- minute periods of English speaking in class per week are not enough to raise our confidence.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #11, interview on 1 October 2012)

Extract 18: We have low motivation in learning English because we are short of extra-curricular programs including English speaking clubs and informal talks in English with English speakers from different English-speaking countries. I think that we would have higher motivation in learning English if we were given opportunities to talk in English with foreigners.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #14, interview on 4 October 2012)



The primary EFL teacher participants in group three did not state anything about this issue but the primary EFL teacher trainer participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #1, #3, #4, #7 & #9) reported that extra-curricular programs were not often deployed because of the following factors: (i) the insufficiency of teacher training budget for extra-curricular activities (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #3, #4, #7 & #9), (ii) TEYL teacher trainees tended to be poorly motivated to improve their current levels of ELP through extra-curricular programs launched by the English department (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #4 & #9) and (iii) the TEYL teacher trainers' commitment to setting up extra-curricular activities with the aim of developing higher ELP for student teachers was poor (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1 & #9). The other TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. #2, #5, #6 & #8) did not report anything about this issue.

#### **(vii) Factor seven: Social inequalities of recruitment and finding employment**

The data from interviews and field notes in relation to what was observed, heard and seen during the field work at the research site indicate that TYEL student teachers ran into difficulty with gaining employment after graduation due to the increasing social inequality of recruitment in Vietnam. This might be one of the factors contributing to current low student teacher motivation in learning English at the local college to become qualified TEYL teachers.

Seven out of ten primary EFL teacher trainee participants in group two (e.g. Participants: #11, #12, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) reported that the social inequalities of recruitment and finding employment were significant factors contributing to the low status of TEYL teacher trainee motivation in learning English. The participants in this study tended to use the words, “bất hợp lý trong việc tuyển dụng và tìm kiếm việc làm”, “bất công trong tuyển biên chế nhà nước” (the unsuitability/ the inappropriateness of teacher recruitment and finding

employment in public schools). The following extracts exemplify the view of the participants:

Extract 19: Personally, I think that there are many possible causes of low TEYL teacher trainee motivation. Low motivation may come from the poor study habits of teacher students, the lack of a professional environment of teaching and learning English and the teaching methods adopted by teacher trainers. Moreover, in the current Vietnamese context of education, social inequalities in recruitment and finding employment have contributed to low teacher trainee motivation in learning English. Many graduates with high scores from ordinary people in society have not found an appropriate job in public schools whereas close and distant relatives and children of local leaders (i.e. con ông cháu cha của các lãnh đạo) and children of wealthy people in the locality are highly likely to have very good positions of employment despite their actual professional competence in English.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18, interview on 28 September 2012)

Extract 20: We study to become TEYL teachers but we are not sure whether we can find a teaching job in public primary schools or not. Despite our real effort in reaching the international standard of English language proficiency, we might not find a job at the locality if we do not have a large sum of money to bribe local leaders into persuading them to give us a teaching job (i.e. chạy việc). This issue makes us unmotivated in learning English because we cannot see a great future ahead of us.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #11, interview on 1 October 2012)

When asked about the influence of social inequalities in recruitment and finding employment on low TEYL teacher trainee motivation, primary EFL teacher participants in group three and most of primary EFL teacher trainer participants in group one (e.g. #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8) did not report anything about this sub-theme. However, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #9 stated that the issue of social inequalities in recruitment and finding employment was a very “delicate and ticklish subject matter” in the particular context of education in Vietnam including the issue of English language teacher education (i.e. the Vietnamese words adopted by this participant were “đây là vấn đề tế nhị và nhạy cảm”). According to this participant’s viewpoint, the issue was directly related, more or less, to local Communist Party leaders. This participant stated that this issue of social inequalities in recruitment and finding employment came into existence not only in Vietnam but also in

many countries in the world. For this reason, this participant permitted the present researcher not to provide any individual opinions about the so-called “delicate and ticklish” problem.

What was reported by participants in this study was consistent with a number of online newspaper articles in Vietnamese (e.g. Dao, 2016 & Nguyen, 2012). It is acknowledged by many people in Vietnam that “Chạy hợp đồng, biên chế trong ngành giáo dục là phổ biến” (Bribery and corruption for a teaching job is common in Vietnam education) (Dao, 2016, p.1) and that “Chạy công chức đầu tiên còn sơ sơ, bây giờ đã trơ trơ” (Bribery and corruption in civil service examinations for a teaching job reach the peak and become widespread throughout the nation) (Nguyen, 2012, p.1). General Secretary of the current Vietnam Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong also acknowledges that “Cái gì cũng tiền, không tiền không trôi” (Bribery is used as a very common manner of solving every issue in current Vietnam. Without bribery, nothing runs smoothly according to plan) (H, Minh, 2013, p.1).

The category “Social inequalities of recruitment and finding employment” provides us with some insight that TEYL teacher trainers are facing contextual challenges to increase TEYL student teacher motivation in learning English towards the attainment of the desired B2-level international standard of ELP. To meet the requirement of the government policy in Decree 1400/QĐ-TTg about the compulsory B2 level of TEYL student teachers’ ELP, attempts should be made to resolve the problem of unequal recruitment and employment for TEYL teachers.

#### **6.4.4. Lack of prioritisation for developing ELP in teacher preparation programs.**

The category, “lack of prioritisation for developing ELP in teacher preparation programs” refers to a low priority for developing teachers’ ELP in TEYL teacher education. As the direct implementers of the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher training and education, all nine TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one (i.e. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6,

#7, #8 & #9) reported that the lack of prioritisation for developing ELP in the current teacher preparation program led to an inappropriate allotment of time for interactive communication skills. As stated in section 2.7 of chapter two, 50% of time in curriculum policy in theory is allocated for developing EFL for TEYL teacher trainees. The problem is not linguistic knowledge or grammatical knowledge in English rather actual oral communication that is taught. This is recognized as a major hindrance to the development of higher English language competence for primary EFL teachers. The teacher trainer participants in group one reported that there seemed to be an inaccurate perception that the improvements in raising TEYL teachers' ELP was the individual responsibility of primary EFL teacher trainers at the local college (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) rather than the result of several groups including the MOET (Ministry of Education and Training), the policy makers, the curriculum developers, the local college management, the department management, TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teacher trainees not working towards the same goal. To prioritize the improvement of TEYL student teachers' ELP, one solution might be to minimize the modules of general knowledge about Communist Party politics (known as “môn chung”) and to maximize the modules of particular pedagogical knowledge and communication in English in the current TEYL teacher training programs. The following extracts exemplify the participants' viewpoint in group one about time limitations given in the current curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education.

Extract 21: I think that the distribution of time in key modules for the development of higher levels of English language competence needs to be given top priority rather than less important modules of general knowledge about Communist Party politics (i.e. môn chung).

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, interview on 4 October 2012)

Extract 22: We are acutely aware that the development of higher ELP for TEYL teachers is not given the top priority in the current TEYL teacher training program. We have suggested many times but the college management tells us that they are waiting for the formal decision from the MOET (Ministry of Education and Training).

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #9, interview on 15 October 2012)

Extract 23: In my opinion, the distribution of time (i.e. 50% of time) in key modules in the teacher training program is inadequate for the development of higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees in our locality. The problem here is that both the allocation of time for teaching English knowledge and the allotment of time for developing oral communication skills for our student teachers needs to be reviewed.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8, interview on 19 October 2012)

Seven out of ten participants in group two had the same opinion as the participants in group one. They reported that both the amount of time and what is being taught for developing ELP for TEYL student teachers, particularly in the area of oral skills need to be reviewed to ensure that the teacher training program is appropriate for helping TEYL teacher trainees reach level B2 of the CEFR as required by the MOET. The following extracts explain the issue:

Extract 24: I think the primary modules in the program for the development of higher ELP need to be given a high priority. Without revisions to the current curriculum policy involving the development of higher levels of ELP for TEYL teacher trainees, very few of us are able to reach the required international ELP standard.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participants #15, interview on 27 September 2012)

Extract 25: Very few students in our class are competent enough to reach level B2 of the CEFR as required by the MOET. Partly, we depend on the time allocated for the teacher training program. 50% of time in the program devoted to developing ELP is inadequate in the particular context of our locality. Moreover, IELTS/TOEFL seem alien and innovative to us. We need some more time to gradually get familiar with such forms of ELP testing.

(Primary EFL teacher trainee participants #13, interview on 3 October 2012)

When asked about challenges the TEYL teacher participants are facing to meet the required B2-level international standard, six out of ten participants in this group (e.g. Primary EFL teacher participants: #20, #22, #23, #26, #27 & # 28) reported that the amount of time allocated in the teacher training program was not enough for them to develop a high level of TEYL teachers' English language competence including oral English. The following excerpt from participant #22, who had been one of the top students at the local college of the teacher

training course 1997-2000 and was currently working as a primary EFL teacher at school C, discussed her past learning experience as follows:

Extract 26: I graduated from the local college in 2000 (i.e. the teacher training course 1997-2000). Five years later, I took a crash course to take a BA degree in TESOL. I was lucky enough to pass the B2 exam at the second attempt. Admittedly, my success comes from my grim determination and self-study. Pre-service teacher training programs at the local college and university seem unable to help us attain a required CEFR level of B2. I mean that such local teacher training programs may be only appropriate for us to achieve a local college certificate in English language education rather than an international ELP standard. The amount of time allocated in the teacher training course is insufficient for learners to achieve a high level of ELP.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #22, Interview on 4 October, 2012)

The data from the departmental documents about the basic framework for training TEYL student teachers in 2012 at the local college also showed that the structure of the TEYL teacher education program was lacking in prioritisation for the development of higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees. There existed a roughly equal proportion of key modules to develop teachers' ELP and subordinate modules to develop basic knowledge of teaching known as "môn chung" (Communist Party knowledge modules) (section 2.7). The findings of this study are consistent with the investigation conducted by Nunan (2003) in seven countries in the Asian-Pacific region including Vietnam where "policies and practice issues relating to English is of particular interest" (p.604), where "teacher education and the English language skills of teacher in public-sector institutions are inadequate" (p.606), and where "the English language proficiency of many teachers is not sufficient to provide learners with the rich input needed for successful foreign language acquisition" (p.607). There is a close relationship between TEYL teachers' ELP and time constraints in the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and what is being taught for developing higher ELP for student teachers at local college. To help TEYL teachers have a desired level of English language competence to provide rich English language input for primary school children, the current curriculum

policy on TEYL teacher education with low priority for developing TEYL teacher trainees' ELP needs to be critically reviewed to ensure that TEYL student teachers are appropriately trained.

#### **6.4.5 Resources for training TEYL teachers.**

The category, "resources for training TEYL teachers" refers to the shortage of resource books for TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL teacher training materials, teaching aids such as computer laboratories, projectors, cassette players, computers and Internet access. It also refers to the issue of the resources that are not used properly due to ill management.

All 29 participants in this study reported that the resource restrictions for teacher training were a major obstacle to the development of higher levels of TEYL teachers' ELP. The Vietnamese terms that the participants in this study tended to adopt were 'không có' / 'không đủ' / 'hạn chế' / 'khó khăn/ thiếu hụt - về cơ sở vật chất/ trang thiết bị dạy học/ phương tiện dạy học'' (i.e. paucity of, insufficiency of, deficiency in, limitation on, have difficulty in EFL teaching and learning resources). Nine teacher trainer participants in group one reported that the issue of poor resourcing and ill management of available resources at the local college was one of the contributing factors to challenges in the improvement of the current level of TEYL teacher trainees' ELP. The following extracts shed light on this issue:

Extract 27: I cannot find relevant and updated teaching materials at the local college to help improve my teacher trainees' ELP. I think that if our students have the opportunity to get familiar with international tests such as IELTS/TOEFL, they could pass the B2 exam. That is because there is a connection between international tests and the required B2 exam in terms of difficulty level, language use and forms of testing.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4, interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 28: The challenge facing us as TEYL teacher trainers is to find appropriate teacher training materials that help enhance the current level of teacher trainees' ELP. Although there are many kinds of valuable books on the market, we can ill-afford to buy such high-priced books with our modest state salary.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #5, interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 29: Because I cannot find appropriate resource books for training TEYL teacher trainees in the college library, I endeavour to buy a number of books on the market that I think can be helpful to my teacher trainees. With my small state salary, I cannot afford to buy a complete set of books including students' book, teachers' book, teachers' resources, tests, accompanying CD and iTools. In my case, I only buy the students' book and use it as a teaching material at the local college.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #6, interview on 11 October 2012)

Extract 30: Regarding the issue of resourcing, I would like to say 'cực kỳ thiếu thốn' (extremely poor resourcing for TEYL teacher education). Regarding technical resources, the lab does not work and it has not been repaired up to now. The projector is not available and is not installed. We are provided with only one projector for all the staff and two hundred students in the department. If I need the projector for my teaching, I have to install it by myself. Generally speaking, installation of the ICT system takes a lot of time. I have two 45-minute periods of teaching; it takes me half an hour to install the projector. Sometimes, it does not work at the first attempt. Then I miss one 45-minute period.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, interview on 4 October 2012)

Primary EFL teacher trainer participants # 1 and #2 reported that although they had a strong desire to use the projector and the internet in their teacher training lectures, they could not afford the time to do it. They said that their English language teaching might be more effective if they adopted ICT and were able to show some useful websites to students in lectures or to let students listen to foreigners' voices instead of theirs. Below one teacher trainer reports a number of difficulties teacher trainers are facing due to the shortage of resources for teaching and learning:

Extract 31: Like other TEYL teacher trainers in the department, I am required to use my own laptop. However, one laptop is not enough to teach effectively because the class is over-crowded. Thus, I need two accompanying loudspeakers and two thick books. It is inconvenient for me to bring the laptop and accompanying stuff with me from one classroom to another one during the morning though I do not use them at times. For safety and security, I do not want to leave the laptop and accompanying stuff in the staffroom unattended.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #2, interview on 8 October 2012)

Participants in groups two and three also had the same opinions as group one. Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #13 reported that her local college had two computer laboratories



shared by many departments with over 1,000 students. She said that she and her classmates had never had the opportunity to use one of the two computer laboratories for studying English. She explained that such rooms were used to teach other subjects rather than English. Moreover, this participant stated that her college library had over 20 computers but only six or seven computers worked well servicing over one thousand students in different departments. For this reason, she had difficulty in using one of the computers at college.

Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #10 said that the college library did not provide appropriate books for her and her classmates during the three-year teacher training course. Like other classmates, she had difficulty in finding appropriate learning materials in the library to enhance her current level of ELP despite being acutely aware of her deficiency in her English skills. What some participants in this ethnographic study (i.e. Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #10, #13; Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #6, #5 & #4) reported was consistent with what I saw in the local college library during the four-month period of fieldwork in Vietnam. The local college library covered an area of about four hundred square meters. It contained more than 20 desktop computers, some of which did not work well and had not been repaired. The local online college library was not set up yet. Numerous books were kept on the shelves and categorized deliberately according to subject topics taught at the local college (i.e. English, Vietnamese, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Marxist doctrine, HoChiMinhism ideology...). English books were arranged according to English language subjects taught in the English department (i.e. English grammar, English listening, English speaking, English reading, English writing and English testing practice). Most of the English books available at the local college library were very common and these books could be easily found at the bookshops in the locality. Library opening and closing times did not vary during the academic year. The library only opened on weekdays and

closed on the weekends. In the morning, the library opened at 7 am and closed at 11 am. It reopened after 1 pm and closed at 5pm. The library did not open in the evening.

As an ethnographic researcher, I sat observing hours and hours in the different corners of the local college library at different periods of library opening hours. The data from my library observations showed that very few student teachers from different departments at the local college including TEYL student teachers in the English department came to the local library to borrow English books or to study English. Very few TEYL student teachers used the library desktop computers or brought their laptops to the college library to study individually or in groups. Some student teachers including TEYL teacher trainees came to the library to borrow Vietnamese novels instead of English books. These TEYL student teachers read these kinds of book just for pleasure instead of reading English books to improve their current levels of ELP.

Primary EFL teacher trainee participant #16 reported that there were a lot of interesting books of English on the market to help enhance her ELP but such books were very expensive and she could not afford the money to buy those books. She said that she went to the college library many times in order to borrow some but she did not find any appropriate books in English. She could only find Vietnamese books of English grammar. She added that she wanted to have access to the internet at college but this was not possible. This participant reported that she neither had a desktop at home nor a laptop. She said that she only learnt from the handouts and materials distributed by her TEYL teacher trainers in class.

The data from classroom observations and field notes showed that resources for training TEYL teachers were limited (i.e. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #4, #5, #6 & #8 used available blackboard and white chalk as the main facilities for training TEYL teacher trainees at local college). Others (i.e. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #3

& #9) had to bring their own laptops to their TEYL teacher trainee classes. These participants reported that they infrequently used their laptops to teach at local college except for a few special occasions when class observations were required. That was because it was inconvenient for them to bring their own laptops and accompanying stuff (i.e. loudspeakers, a coil of ten-metre electric wire and even a fuse in case the fuse of the classroom had gone or blown...) to make their technical resources work well during the lecture.

Apart from the insufficiency of resources for training TEYL teacher trainees, ill management of resourcing was an important factor contributing to the challenge in the improvement of TEYL teacher trainees' ELP. The data from my observational field notes at the location of the English department during the fieldwork suggested that technical resourcing management was ineffective. Each department was provided with a projector handy for every TEYL teacher trainer in the English department but this technical resource was used infrequently because it was fastened with a lock. The assistant Dean was in charge of looking after the projector. She kept the key to the projector and those who needed to use the projector had to contact her to borrow the key and give it back to her after use. However, TEYL teacher trainers could only see her to get the key a couple of times during the week, particularly when she had a lecture herself. The following extract exemplifies this issue:

Extract 32: I think that poor management of resourcing is a significant factor that hinders the development of higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees. Our English department needs to have a private room well-equipped with full technical resourcing: a projector, a computer desktop, a computer screen and loudspeakers... This room should be easily accessible for every TEYL teacher trainer. Security guards at the local college should look after the projector instead of the assistant Dean because they are always available when TEYL teacher trainers need their help. The management of technical resourcing at the local college is not as good as expected and this is likely to upset a lot of TEYL teacher trainers. For example, next week, I need a projector for my lecture. I have to tell the assistant Dean in advance that I need it and borrow the key to the projector from her. Then I have to bring my individual laptop with me together with accompanying stuff such as two loudspeakers, a coil of electronic wire and even a fuse to change if the fuse has blown or gone... It takes me lots of time to prepare for a forty-five-minute lecture. The troubles

related to the insufficiency of technical resourcing and ill resourcing management at the local college sometimes make me lose my aspirations for teacher training.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8, interview on 19 October 2012)

In sum, the participants considered the lack of resources and ill management of resourcing for TEYL teacher education a major factor in limiting the effectiveness of their English language teaching. Thus, it is necessary for the related parties involving TEYL teacher education to be aware of this issue and review the current resourcing policy (details in section 6.6.3 below). The findings of this study are consistent with the investigation conducted by Nunan (2003) in seven countries in the Asian-Pacific region including Vietnam, a poor country “with extremely limited resources available for all forms of education” (p.604) including TEYL teacher education. According to Nunan (2003), Asian countries including Vietnam should invest heavily, in the long term, in “programs to enhance the proficiency and professional skills of local teachers” (p.608) because “technology and rich, input-based programs can do a great deal to support teachers who do not have high levels of fluency in the target language (Anderson & Nunan, 2003) if they have access to appropriate materials and education about how to use them” (p.608).

#### **6.4.6 TEYL teacher trainers without high enough ELP themselves**

The category, “TEYL teacher trainers without high enough ELP themselves” refers to the issue of the insufficiency of TEYL teacher trainers with appropriate levels of ELP at local teacher training colleges. Ten out of 29 participants reported that the problem of TEYL teacher trainers without advanced levels of ELP was a major hindrance to the enhancement of TEYL teacher trainees’ ELP. The Vietnamese terms that the participants in this study tended to adopt were “không đủ năng lực chuyên môn” “thiếu năng lực chuyên môn” (not competent enough, not capable enough, not qualified enough). The remaining 19 participants did not directly discuss this issue.

In interviews, when asked about the role of TEYL teacher trainers in training TEYL teacher trainees with an extensive English knowledge, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7 said that if TEYL teacher trainers did not have an advanced level of ELP as required by the MOET, they would not be competent enough to train English-proficient TEYL teachers for public primary schools. This was in concord with TEYL teacher trainer participant #8 who claimed that the issue of TEYL teacher trainers without high enough ELP themselves was a major disadvantage for developing higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees, particularly in the area of oral English.

Three out of ten primary EFL teacher trainee participants in group two (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #10, #12 & #15) reported that they would like to be trained by TEYL teacher trainers who had a very good command of English, particularly teacher trainers who had had the opportunity to study in English-speaking countries. Others in this group did not state their opinion about this sub-theme. According to primary EFL teacher trainee participants #10, #12 and #15, overseas-trained TEYL teacher trainers might gain valuable experience and they could help teacher trainees improve the current level of the latter's ELP. Participant #15 said that she felt bored studying English with teacher trainers with a limited level of ELP who tended to like explaining grammatical points in Vietnamese rather than creating every opportunity for teacher trainees to practice using English as a means for real-life communication. Participant #10 stated that she and other teacher trainees became motivated when studying English with Vietnamese overseas-trained TEYL teacher trainers or TEYL teacher trainers who used English as their mother tongue. She said that such TEYL teacher trainers' enthusiasm helped inspire her to gradually improve her limited ELP.

Five out of ten primary EFL teachers (e.g. Participants: #22, #27, #26, #28 & #20) in group three had the same opinion that the challenge facing local educational institutions was the lack of TEYL teacher trainers who were trained appropriately to have extensive knowledge

of English. These participants stated that the deficiency of TEYL teacher trainers with high enough ELP themselves at local teacher training colleges resulted in the shortage of primary EFL teachers with extensive knowledge of English in public primary schools.

The data from classroom observations and field notes indicate that TEYL teacher trainers might not have an advanced enough level of ELP. Classroom observations from TEYL teacher trainer participants # 3, #5, #6 & #9 show that these participants employed the Vietnamese language as the main tool for classroom communication instead of teaching English through English to help enhance the current levels of TEYL teacher trainees' ELP. As I have noted previously in section 6.4.2, here I would like to restate that I am not totally opposed to the use of L1 to facilitate students' understanding in class (see Garcia & Kleyn, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) to base a one-sided argument, rather than supporting the view of maximizing possible opportunities for target language use in class to develop EFL learners' ELP, particularly the area of oral English language skills in teaching English as an international language, a matter of concern for Vietnam (see Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg signed on 30/9/2008) and many non-Anglo countries. I am in favour of the view that the issue of not using English in class may not be an indication of EFL teacher low proficiency. There is the matter of teacher ELP versus EFL teachers' actual use of English in class. However, the contesting literature reviewed in section 3.4 shows that the EFL teacher's teaching practices in class are significantly influenced by his/her English language competence.

The data from teacher training classroom observations and field notes at the research site also indicate that most of the TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #9) had difficulty in expressing long and complicated utterances in English in the observed TEYL teacher training classes. Below is an example from the observed class of the teacher trainer participant #5 (Table 21).

Table 21: TEYL teacher training class observation

**Classroom observation (23/11/ 2012) Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #5**

**1. Physical description:**

- A medium-sized classroom with a teacher desk and a chair.
- 12 wooded tables (1.80mx40cm) & 12 benches (1.80mx25cm) arranged in rows for 30 third-year TEYL student teachers. Four of the student teachers shared one table and one bench.
- TEYL student teachers sat in a row facing a blackboard (3mx2m).
- There were no posters, pictures, wall visuals or visual aids apparent in the classroom.

**2. Resources used:**

- An English teaching textbook, *Teaching English: A training course for teachers* by Adrian Doff (1998). Unit 4, Using the blackboard, p.43.
- The aim of this lesson is to help student teachers improve teachers' basic techniques in using the blackboard.

**3. Chronological description of classroom teaching activities**

- Using English to greet the student teachers, 'Good afternoon, class'.
- Using a mixture of English and Vietnamese to introduce the lesson. Vietnamese was used when expressing complicated sentences and long utterances to ensure the student teachers' understanding of what was required. (I am referring to using these to introduce English in class).
- "Như 1 số các bạn đã trình bày các em biết cách trình bày bảng như thế nào cho hợp lý. Chúng ta chia bảng ra làm 2 hay làm 3 tùy theo cái phần mình muốn trình bày. Có bạn không biết cách phân chia bảng đen nên viết từ bên này sang bên kia, và như thế là không có khoa học, đúng không? Như vậy, phần này người ta giúp cho các em biết cách làm thế nào để trình bày bảng 1 cách rõ ràng, gọn gàng để học sinh dễ thấy. Những phần nào ít quan trọng thì mình xóa đi, còn những phần nào mà quan trọng và cần thiết như công thức căn bản, phần lưu ý thì mình phải giữ lại cho đến cuối vvv... đó là những cách các em cần lưu ý..." (As some of you have presented, you know how to write appropriately on the board. We can divide the board into two or three parts according to our individual presentations. Some teachers write from the left hand to the right hand of the board without dividing it clearly and such a presentation is not proper, isn't it? In this lesson, you are taught to present clearly what is written on the board so that your students can see and read it obviously and coherently. You can elaborate what part is less important and keep the most significant part on the board. For example, the basic formula or important notes need to be carefully kept on the board until the end of the lesson. These are important things you need to pay attention to).
- Asking students to look at 2 pictures available in the textbook at page 44 and translating the page into Vietnamese (individually).
- Asking students to compare teacher A and teacher B and discussing the differences between them in Vietnamese.
- Checking student teachers' understanding by calling one of them, in turn, to read out his/her translation.
- Student A stated, "Cách sử dụng bảng của giáo viên B thì hiệu quả hơn giáo viên A, bởi vì giáo viên đứng xoay mặt vào bảng, không quan tâm đến gì đến học sinh cả. Cái lưng của giáo viên xoay vào lớp và không thể quán xuyên lớp được" (The technique adopted by teacher B is more effective than that of teacher A. That is because teacher is hiding the board and he seems not to involve the students in class. He cannot control what the

students are doing in class because he is standing with his back to the class).

Student B stated, “Cách sử dụng bảng của giáo viên A thì không hiệu quả bằng giáo viên B. Bởi vì giáo viên B theo dõi lớp khi cô ấy viết. Cô ấy cho phép lớp có thể thấy được những gì cô ấy viết. Cô ấy vừa nói vừa viết ra trên bảng nên học sinh dễ theo dõi hơn” (The technique adopted by teacher A is not as effective as teacher B. That is because teacher B is keeping an eye on the class when she writes. She lets the students see what she is writing and she is keeping students’ attention by saying the words as she writes them).

-Correcting the incorrect version of the Vietnamese language to confirm students’ comprehension.

-Moving to another task in the textbook at page 45 and again asking students to discuss the layout of a teacher’s board at the end of a lesson.

-Reading and translating the content of page 45 into Vietnamese (individually)

-Student C stated, “Bảng chỉ ra cuộc mua bán ở chợ, từ mới được cung cấp như giỏ, bình, vại, đĩa...” (The board shows the act of buying and selling something at the market. A number of new English words for goods are introduced, for example baskets, pots, bowls and plates.)

-Student D stated, “Bảng chỉ ra giáo viên đã giới thiệu thì quá khứ hoàn thành và học sinh thực hành cấu trúc này” (The board shows that the teacher had introduced the past perfect tense and the students practised this structure).

-Giving feedback in Vietnamese and continuing to call other students to read out their translation on pages 45 and 46.

-Asking students to give their remarks on the organization of the board in Vietnamese.

- Student E stated, “ Bảng viết rất lộn xộn, phần thì hiện tại hoàn thành có thể nên đặt ngay trung tâm giữa bảng, còn phần từ vựng thì nên viết 2 bên bảng như phần trình bày trong trang 46” (In my opinion, the board is too crowded. It would be clearer if the presentation of the past perfect tense were written in the centre of the board. Key vocabulary could be written down the two sides of the board as presented at page 46).

-Summarising a number of key points of the lesson in Vietnamese.

#### **4. Observation comments:**

It should be noted that no additional authentic teaching materials were exploited from the Internet or magazines to supplement the textbook, *Teaching English: A training course for teachers* by Adrian Doff (1988). Also, no additional pictures were used except the ones available in the textbook at pages 44-46.

The teacher trainer asked student teachers to read and translate the lesson, *Using the blackboard*. The intention of the teacher is to help students understand basic techniques of using the blackboard, rather than *practicing these techniques*. It should be noted that the teacher trainer might have a high level of competence in English but poor performance. She might think that her students did not understand what she said in English. Thus, she used Vietnamese all the time. The teacher trainer provided many opportunities for the student teachers to develop reading comprehension skills and how to translate from the English version into the Vietnamese one.

Analysing the observed class against the classroom observation protocol (Appendix H), the Vietnamese primary EFL student teachers were rarely able to use English in authentic communication. There seemed to be hardly any opportunity for the trainees to improve their oral English because they had little time for oral production. For example, student teachers had no opportunities to reflect their own using the blackboard during their teaching practice at public primary schools.



The participants considered the shortage of TEYL teacher trainers (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #3, #5, #6, #8, #10, #15, #17, #20, #25) for effective TEYL teacher education, a major factor in limiting the effectiveness of their English language teaching. It should be noted that there is evidence for a link between low teacher trainer proficiency and low teacher trainee proficiency in English (sections 6.4.2 & 6.4.6). The implication underpinning under this section of the thesis is that lower TEYL teacher training outcomes at the local college is a direct consequence of lower English language proficiency of TEYL teacher trainees. Consequently, these TEYL teachers with limited knowledge of ELP result in lower English language learning outcomes in the children at public primary schools. Thus, it is necessary for the related parties involving TEYL teacher education to be aware of this shortage and review opportunities for improving teacher trainers' ELP through in-service teacher education programs (INSTEP) (details in chapter seven). Surely also there is an urgent need to up-skill TEYL teacher trainers in English including the up-skilling of their ability to design ELP tests equivalent to the level B2 of the CEFR as required by the Vietnamese government (section 6.4.7 below).

#### **6.4.7 ELP test design.**

The category, "ELP test design", describes the lack of primary EFL teacher trainers who are able to design ELP tests equivalent to the level B2 of the CEFR to measure local TEYL teachers' English language competence. As stated in section 2.7 of chapter two, there is an urgent need to upgrade the ability of TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges and universities in designing ELP tests for TEYL teacher trainees because it is too expensive for TEYL teacher trainees to sit an actual international exam of ELP.

There is a shared responsibility between TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges and EFL teacher trainers at state universities to "design" ELP tests as required by the MOET to

accurately measure levels of proficiency for TEYL teacher trainees and practicing TEYL teachers. It should be noted that these two groups of EFL teacher trainers currently work independently. The job of TEYL teacher trainers is to prepare seven exams of ELP for TEYL teacher trainees during the three-year TEYL teacher training course to ensure that TEYL teacher trainees can reach the B2 level of the CEFR after graduation. The job of EFL teacher trainers at top state universities mandated by the MOET (such as Thai Nguyen University, Hue University, Da Nang University, Can Tho University, Vietnam national University of Hanoi and of HCMC) is to design ELP tests to check if TEYL teacher trainees at local colleges can reach the international standard of B2 level as required by the MOET. (It should be noted that at the end of their teacher training course, TEYL teacher trainees often participate in the seventh exam of ELP designed by local TEYL teacher trainers. After that, these students are required to sit an ELP test designed by EFL teacher trainers at top state universities mandated by the MOET, if necessary).

Moreover, the responsibility of EFL teacher trainers at state universities is to design ELP tests to check if TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges and EFL teacher trainers at other universities all over the country can attain the required C1 level of the CEFR. This is the first time the Vietnamese government has launched the campaign for a greater focus on the international standard of English language competence of Vietnamese EFL teacher trainers.

In interviews, the participants in group one (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #4, #7, #8 & #9) reported that they found it difficult to design English language proficiency tests equivalent to the required international standard. These participants stated that they attempted to design a number of IELTS-adapted tests and/or TOEFL-adapted tests equivalent to B2 on the CEFR to help the third-year TEYL teacher trainees have access to ELP tests equivalent to the international standard as required. However, they did not make sure that their adapted tests “designed” by them were actually equivalent to the required B2 level

international standard in terms of (i) satisfying the criteria of validity and reliability (e.g. reported by participants #1 & #8), (ii) testing content (e.g. stated by participants #1, #4, #7, #8 & #9), and (iii) level of difficulty (e.g. informed by participants #1, #4, #7, #8 & #9).

The interview data from TEYL teacher trainer participant group and field notes indicate that TEYL teacher trainers at local college were concerned to accurately measure the current level of TEYL student teachers' ELP so that they could adapt their teaching strategies. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8 reported that she really wanted to know what level of ELP her students could reach in an international-standardized exam as required by the MOET. She said that she attempted to design an IELTS-adapted test equivalent to the B2 level in an attempt to measure her students' English language competence including oral English. This teacher trainer participant explained that she adopted the technique *cut and paste* from a selection of IELTS practice tests rather than *designing a test herself* because she was not professionally trained to be able to design ELP tests. She also said that she had no idea about the so-called *characteristics of an international ELP standard* in the IELTS-adapted test designed by her. Despite this, only 10% of her students could pass the ELP test she designed.

Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7 also said that it was challenging for TEYL teacher trainers to design appropriate ELP tests to assess students' English including oral English. According to participant #7, the results of IELTS/ TOEFL- adapted tests designed by teacher trainers at local colleges or universities could be used to anticipate the scores achieved by teacher trainees in an international B2 exam. (As stated above, a test for this does not exist. There are only proxies via IELTS/ TOEFL or similar international tests of ELP).

Only three primary EFL teachers in group three: participants #22, #27 and #28 discussed the category, "ELP test design". These three participants reported that they were unsure that TEYL teacher trainers were competent enough to design exams equivalent to the B2

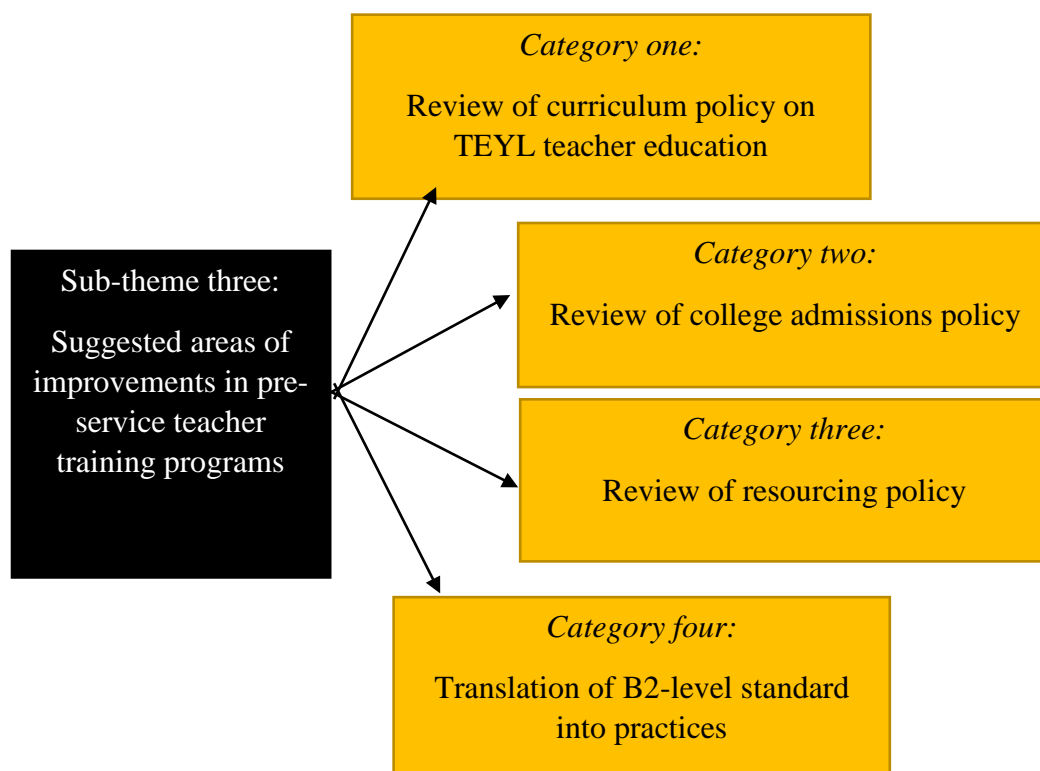
proficiency level. Primary EFL teacher participant #22 reported that she sat a B2-level ELP local equivalence test twice, achieving level B1 of the CEFR at the first attempt and level B2 of the CEFR at the second attempt. According to this participant, there seemed no equivalence between the first B2-level ELP local test and the second one. She said that the second one seemed to be less demanding than the first one in terms of (i) level of difficulty and (ii) testing contents. She also reported that other primary EFL teachers had the same opinion as hers and she wished to sit an actual IELTS/TOEFL exam to measure her proficiency in English. She said that she was unable to do this because the international ELP exam fee was too expensive in comparison with her modest state salary.

The data from classroom observations and field notes of group one indicate that TEYL teacher trainers had limited ability in designing English language proficiency tests. What I looked at and saw of IELTS/TOEFL- adapted tests “designed” by local TEYL teacher trainers during the four-month period of fieldwork at local college in Vietnam suggested that local TEYL teacher trainers were not appropriately trained to undertake this challenging task.

### **6.5 Suggested areas of pre-service TEYL teacher education programs**

The sub-theme, “suggested areas of TEYL teacher preparation programs” for developing higher ELP describes suggestions made by the participants and the literature for the improvements in raising higher levels of ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. The four categories of this sub-theme which come from the data include (i) curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education, (ii) college admissions policy, (iii) resourcing policy and (iv) the translation of B2-level standard in assessing TEYL student teachers’ ELP. The four categories are interconnected and detailed below (Figure 4.3):

Figure 4.3 Sub-theme three of the major theme one and its underpinning categories



#### 6.5.1 Review of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education.

The category, “review of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education” refers to the need and the participants’ recommendations for the re-consideration of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher training. The aim of a curriculum policy review is to help develop higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English. As stated in the literature, the teacher training program TALK evaluated by Finsterwald (2013) highlights the concept of student-centeredness. To ensure that students’ learning needs are fully met, the program TALK encourages students to reflect on their learning so as to recognize particular areas that need to be improved. Also, in the teacher training program TALK, student motivation for learning is greatly encouraged and supported. Students have the right to select their favourite subjects and training forms in the teacher training program. The aim of the program TALK is to nurture and develop student life-long learning (LLL) competences, an

exceedingly important factor in knowledge-based societies and economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (OECD/CERI International Conference, 2008).

In addition, the model of Teacher Professional Development in Languages (TPDL) with the objective of constructing greater teacher capacity in language teaching evaluated by Harvey et al. (2010) is of great value to Vietnam where there is a critical need for the enhancement of pre-service and in-service EFL teacher training for public primary schools (Moon, 2005, 2009; Nguyen, 2011). Unlike the TEYL teacher training program in Vietnam where there is a paucity of priority over the development of English language proficiency and professional skills, the model TPDL in New Zealand focuses on three major components to help language teachers develop their language knowledge and professional skills namely (i) the study of language teaching pedagogy, (ii) language acquisition and (iii) in-school support. The TPDL program is evaluated to be effective because 100% of language teachers sitting and passing internationally recognized language examinations.

The TEYL teacher trainer participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that few or no TEYL teacher trainees in the teacher training course (2010-2013) were able to sit and pass an internationally-recognized B2-level exam of English language competence. As stated above, graduating TEYL student teachers are required to reach the B2 standard at the graduation and there are publicly available records on the proportions of trainees who attain the standard and those that do not (see Hoang, 2016; Huong, 2013; Huong & Giang, 2012; Minh, 2012; Thu & Le, 2014; Thuy, 2012, 2014a & 2014b). However, few of them can attain this international standard. This was confirmed by the TEYL teacher trainee participants (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, & #19) and the TEYL teacher participants (e.g. Participants: # 20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29) who reported that they had the difficulty in reaching level B2 of the CEFR.

As I stated in previous chapters, 50% of the curriculum is spent on ELP development. This is shown in the curriculum policy (see “Chương trình đào tạo Cử nhân Cao Đẳng Sư Phạm ngành tiếng Anh, 2010”. Curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and training adopted for the TEYL teacher training course 2010-2013). However, the data from the observational field-notes indicated that the reality was completely different. Only about 25% of the curriculum was devoted to the development of ELP for primary EFL teachers because of the particular context of the locality. TEYL student teachers had a limited level of ELP as a result of the college admission policy (also sections 2.7 & 6.5.1). This was acknowledged by many participants in this study (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8; Primary EFL teachers: #17, #18, #24, #25 & #29).

The link between getting the B2 standard and the curriculum is confirmed by the participants of this study who reported that the structure of the TEYL teacher training program was one factor contributing to challenges they were facing. The TEYL teacher trainee participants in group two reported that they had a low level of motivation and negative attitudes towards their studies partly due to the structure of the TEYL teacher training program (see section 6.4.2). Their needs of teaching and learning English as well as their interests in developing higher levels of English language proficiency seem not to be fully met. The distribution of modules in the teacher training curriculum do not prioritise English language proficiency enough (i.e. 50% of the curriculum is devoted to the development of ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers but this is not sufficient in the particular Vietnamese context. Moreover, the quality of training TEYL teacher trainees was a matter of concern. Student teachers did not have the opportunity to select their favourite subjects rather they were forced to study *uninteresting and dry* modules as reported by primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18 (Interview on 28 September 2012, in the word of participant #18 “khô khan và không thú vị”) or *less beneficial* modules stated by primary EFL teacher trainer participant

#1, (Interview on 14 October, 2012, in the word of participant #1 “ít thấy lợi ích”). *Uninteresting and dry* modules stated participant #18 or *less beneficial* modules stated by participant #1 referred to were “môn chung” (i.e. basic knowledge involving Communist Party politics stated in section 2.6). These modules were compulsory for graduating TEYL student teachers. However, the participants of this study found these modules unnecessary and they suggested they could be optional subjects instead of compulsory ones.

The findings of the study are consistent with previous studies (i.e. Moon, 2009; Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Nunan, 2003) in the context of English language education at the primary school level in Vietnam. Nguyen (2011) reported that “the findings reveal discrepancies between [Vietnamese] government policies and what happens in practice...the responsibility of teaching is perceived as a school responsibility rather than as a problem to be solved by the system” (pp. 245 - 246). Moon (2009) showed that Vietnamese “policy, in particular, was seen as a multi-faceted influence on teachers and other aspects of implementation, make it difficult for teachers to be fully effective in the current situation” (p.330). The results of the investigation carried out by Nunan (2003) in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region including China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam show that Vietnamese “policy and practice issues relating to English (in Vietnam) was of particular interest” (p.604). Developing from the work of Moon (2009) and of Nunan (2003), here I want to claim that the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and training contribute to challenges that TEYL teachers and TEYL teacher trainees are facing to reach the required international standard of English language competence. The current curriculum policy also burdens TEYL teacher trainers with a very challenging task, training competent TEYL teacher trainees who are required to sit and pass an internationally recognized exam of English. To build high-quality primary English language teacher capacity with a desired level of ELP, the structure of the present curriculum policy on TEYL teacher



education needs to be critically reviewed to ensure that TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency in English is improved. In the current situation, Vietnam has the great need to develop competent primary EFL teachers with an advanced level of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English. The TEYL teacher training program needs to be tailored in a relevant way so that TEYL teacher trainees are competent enough to sit and pass an internationally recognized exam of English language competence.

### **6.5.2 Review of college admissions policy.**

The category, "review of college admissions policy", refers to the need and the participants' recommendations for the re-evaluation of the current college admissions policy in order to improve levels of ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. The findings have indicated that the college admissions policy was a factor contributing to challenges in the development of higher levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English for Vietnamese primary EFL teacher trainees. This was reported by the participants in group one (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9). Why and what was wrong with it was mentioned in sections 2.3 and 2.6, sections 6.4 and 6.5. According to the participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9), the college admissions policy was difficult to change because of the traditional system of English language education at lower levels of the education system. With this policy, students who passed the college entrance exam had a very low level of English language proficiency, equivalent to an IELTS score of 1.0. This was reported by participant #4 and was confirmed by many participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9). The data was being stored at the local college and the data should be available in the website of the MOET.

The college admissions policy is a challenge to TEYL teacher trainers who are required to train competent primary EFL teachers with a limited amount of time given in the curriculum policy. While 50% might not be considered to be a limited amount of time, given the particular context of TEYL teacher training in a remote area of Vietnam, it is not enough to make a difference to ELP levels (section 2.7). The curriculum policy is at least partly to blame for the low quality of training. However, TEYL teacher trainers are also responsible for this issue.

The participants' recommendation is for a change in the college admissions policy (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #5, #7 & #8). It can be adjusted by selecting candidates with the highest score of English (e.g. Participants: #1 & #8). They apply with a high standard of English and rejected. That is because English is not given a top priority in the current college admissions policy.

### **6.5.3 Review of resourcing policy.**

Resourcing policy refers to the budgetary allocation and provision of financial resources for English language education programs i.e. resourcing policy for (i) developing pre-service and in-service teacher training programs for public primary schools targeted at enhancing current English language teacher proficiency levels, (ii) developing adequate TEYL materials, (iii) designing a nationwide curriculum in a particular context, (iv) supplying adequate teaching facilities (i.e. Information and Communications Technology (ICT), internet access) for educational institutions and public primary schools, (v) critically evaluating the educational programs and (vi) reviewing resourcing policy and language-in-education implementation in both national setting and local contexts. Resourcing policy is a significant factor contributing to the quality of primary EFL teacher education (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Nguyen, 2011).

The suggested areas are interrelated and they need to be improved increasingly and synchronously. Thus, together with a review of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education and of college admissions policy, the resourcing policy needs to be critically reviewed to ensure that TEYL teacher trainers are provided with relevant teacher teaching facilities to meet their expectations.

Research shows that there is persuasive evidence of a close association between effective teacher adoption of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and student achievement (Hall, 2010; Nunan, 2013; OECD/ CERI, 2008; Rose, 2008). Rose (2008) argues that ICT has “the unique capacity and potential for developing and enlivening all domains of learning” (p. 43). Developing from Rose’s (2008) argument, I argue that the resourcing policy has a close connection with the developing of higher ELP for Vietnamese TEYL student teachers at local colleges.

However, the participants in this study reported that the adoption of ICT in English language teaching and learning at the local teacher training college and public primary schools was limited (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9; Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19; Primary EFL teacher participants: #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29). The TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one reported that they had the need for adopting ICT to motivate TEYL teacher trainees who were unmotivated and uninterested in their studies (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9) but they failed to do it because they were not provided with adequate teaching resources. Participant #2 reported that she wanted to have access to the internet to show useful websites to her students but she was not successful. Participants #1 and #8 reported that the unavailability and inaccessibility of ICT made their motivation and dedication to their teacher training profession wither away. The TEYL teacher trainee participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16,

#17, #18 & #19) reported that they had difficulty in finding relevant updated materials at the local college. Participants felt this was one of the factors contributing to the failure of TEYL student teachers in the B2 international standard. In the particular context of TEYL teacher education, Vietnamese TEYL student teachers are given hand-outs and teaching materials delivered by TEYL teacher trainers as stated in section 6.4.1. The participants in groups two (e.g. Participants: #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 & #19) also reported that the unavailability and inaccessibility of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) contributed to their lack of motivation. Nine out of ten participants in group three (e.g. Participants: #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29) reported that the adoption of ICT was very limited.

What the participants in this study reported is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Nunan (2003) in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region including China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. Nunan (2003) shows that “economically, Vietnam was the poorest of the countries surveyed, with extremely limited resources available for all forms of education” (p.604). While many challenges are facing the Vietnamese government in the implementation of developing higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools, the current resourcing policy is one of the most important, particularly in respect of digital resources.

To avoid the wasteful and inefficient use of resources for TEYL and TEYL teacher education and training, there needs to have more additional initiatives to adjust the ways of financial management from the national level to the local level. It is strongly recommended that the college library should have additional resource books for TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teacher trainees and these books ought to be relevant, adequate and updated all the time. It is also suggested that the college should have a comprehensive online library and it can be used as a teaching resource at college. Each department at college needs to get access to the

internet for the facilitation of teaching and learning and for the development of learning-to-learn skills, a basis for the development of lifelong learning competences for both TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teacher trainees (section 6.4.5). Moreover, administrative formalities at college should be simpler, less demanding and less time-consuming. It is strongly recommended that the unnecessary bureaucracy should be minimized so as to facilitate teaching and learning English at college and to help TEYL teacher trainees reach level B2 of the CEFR. The following reflection by participant # 4 shows the connection between unnecessary bureaucracy and teacher ELP.

Extract 33: Administrative formalities at college are very complicated and challenging. Generally speaking, the availability of updated and relevant teaching materials for teaching and training TEYL teacher trainees who are required to reach the B2 international standard is a very difficult and time-consuming process. Every year, we recommend what kinds of English books on the market are relevant for TEYL teacher education and ask the college librarians to supplement such books. Despite our recommendations, the English books we actually need are not on hand. The college librarians do not have experience to make a purchase of English books instead of Vietnamese ones. Because we are not satisfied with the purchase of English books at the local college, we have to work as an amateur librarian so as to have English books we need in a short period of time. We have to complete all kinds of necessary documentation with plenty of complex administrative formalities...

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4, Interview on 10 October 2012)

#### **6.5.4. Translation of B2-level standard into practices.**

The category, “translation of assessing TEYL student teachers’ ELP at level B2 of the CEFR into practices” describes the need and the participants’ recommendations for the translation of evaluating TEYL student teachers’ ELP into practices, aimed at the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers.

As stated in section 2.3, although Vietnam adopts the CEFR in FL policies at the national level, there is no evidence of the translation of the CEFR into TEYL teacher trainees’ proficiency assessment at the local level. That is, Vietnamese TEYL student teachers have

been training to meet a locally-recognized standard of English language competence. For example, local curriculum documents do not have reference to CEFR. Moreover, the CEFR has not been translated into the seven exams of ELP including the graduation exam during the teacher training course.

It should be noted that there is a general public perception in Vietnamese culture that teaching children including TEYL is simple and undemanding. Vietnamese people often use the phrase “*dạy tiếng Anh cho mấy đứa con nít*” (teaching to “con nít”) to show contempt for those who teach English to children. There is not an English word that is an exact equivalent of the Vietnamese word “con nít”. Thus, some people use the word, “children” to refer to “con nít” but this is not appropriate. The word “con nít” in Vietnamese has a negative and pejorative connotation whereas the word “children” in English is neutral. In other words, the contempt in the Vietnamese meaning of the word “con nít” is lost in translation from Vietnamese into English.

As stated in section 2.6 there are seven exams of ELP including one graduation exam and six end-of-term exams of English during the three-year teacher training course. It is strongly recommended that each exam of English language competence should attach to a particular international standard of ELP for primary EFL student teachers. To help translate the B2-level of the CEFR into the assessment of TEYL student teachers’ English language competence, many steps need to be taken concurrently.

Firstly, in terms of student motivation in learning English, an issue of the first importance is that TEYL teacher trainees need to be helped to be more motivated and more interested in their studies towards the nurturing and development of learning-to-learn skills. In parallel with reviewing the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher training education as stated in section 6.5.1, the college admissions policy and the resourcing policy in section 6.5.2, TEYL teacher

trainees should be supported to organize extra-curricular programs. Such programs need to be well prepared to maximize TEYL teacher trainees' learning potential. I agree with the view of primary EFL teacher trainee participant #18 who argued that if TEYL teacher trainees were helped to orientate their goals of learning explicitly towards the international standard of English language competence as soon as they began college, they might be able to sit and pass an internationally-recognized B2-level exam of English successfully.

Secondly, in terms of changes in student teachers' assessment, an important issue is that TEYL teacher trainers need to be helped to design relevant ELP tests to exactly measure the level of TEYL teacher trainees in each semester. The data from interviews and field notes indicate that TEYL teacher trainers ran into difficulty with student teachers' assessment based on the required international standard of ELP. The TEYL teacher trainer participants in this study (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that they faced many major challenges in making changes in TEYL teacher trainees' assessment according to the required international standard. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants #1, #4, #7, #8 & #9 reported that the required international standard for training TEYL teacher trainees could be achievable if they were helped to do this through appropriate language teacher professional development (LTPD) programs. The two major challenges that the participants in this group faced were (i) to design English language proficiency tests equivalent to the required B2 international standard (Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) and (ii) to develop relevant and updated TEYL teacher training materials to increasingly improve the current level of TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency in English towards the required B2 international standard (Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9). Thus, LTPD programs should give top priority to tackle with these two major challenges together with the enhancement of teacher trainers' ELP particularly oral English.

## 6.6 Summary

This chapter has described and discussed the findings in relation to the increase in teachers' ELP through pre-service teacher training programs. It has been structured around one major theme, *Developing higher ELP through pre-service teacher training programs*. It has made a contribution to answering the overall research question of the thesis and its two sub-research questions (i.e. RQ1 & RQ2) posed in chapter one.

It has answered these questions in the following way:

The findings have indicated that potential opportunities to develop TEYL teachers' ELP were limited in the Vietnamese context of pre-service EFL teacher education at the primary school level. Teaching materials that a majority of the TEYL teacher trainers adopted in eight observed teacher training classes have shown their heavy reliance on prescribed textbooks for their primary EFL teacher training work. The teacher trainer participants of this study tended to focus on English knowledge transmission-orientated instruction rather than develop English skills and use English in authentic contexts. It should be noted that although the TEYL teacher trainers were aware of the need to develop higher English language competence for primary EFL teachers, they seemed to hold a traditional view of teaching English. They tended to put the student teachers in controlled speaking and listening practice with a requirement for only right or wrong answers rather than moving them gradually towards less-controlled practice. Thus, TEYL teacher trainer participants were highly likely to miss many opportunities to develop higher English language proficiency for the TEYL student teachers, particularly oral English. A number of potential opportunities to raise student teachers' ELP such as (i) promoting oral English presentation in class; (ii) encouraging reflective journal writing; (iii) sharing portfolios; and (iv) developing a learning-



to-learn competency have been reported to receive little attention in pre-service teacher training programs.

In adopting the CEFR framework to measure the level of TEYL teachers' English language competence under Project 2020 of the Vietnamese government, most of the participants reported that they faced many challenges. They are: (i) physical settings for training TEYL teacher trainees have provided us with some insight that teacher trainers are teaching in difficult conditions with multiple pressures to develop higher ELP for primary EFL teacher trainees; (ii) graduating student teachers had limited proficiency in English, particularly oral English compared to what is required by the Vietnamese government; (iii) student teachers tended to be poorly motivated to improve their English language proficiency; (iv) there was a lack of prioritisation for the development of English language proficiency in teacher preparation programs; (v) there was a shortage of resources for TEYL teacher training; (vi) there was a lack of TEYL teacher trainers with high enough ELP themselves (vii) there was a paucity of TEYL teacher trainers with professional expertise in designing ELP tests equivalent to B2-level international standard.

Section 6.5 has suggested four areas that need to be improved in TEYL teacher preparation programs for developing higher ELP namely (i) review of curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education; (ii) review of college admissions policy; (iii) review of resourcing policy; (iv) translation of B2-level standard into practices.

There need to be many concerted efforts and changes in TEYL teacher education programs so that primary EFL teachers can gain higher levels of ELP. One of these is TEYL teacher professional development (TPD) that will be detailed in chapter seven below.

## **Chapter 7. Developing higher ELP through In-Service Teacher Education Programs (INSTEP)**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapter six has contributed to addressing a number of issues based on multiple sources of data including: (i) physical settings for training TEYL teacher trainees; (ii) potential opportunities to develop teacher trainees' ELP; (iii) contextual challenges in adopting the CEFR framework and (iv) suggested areas of improvements in pre-service teacher training programs. Chapter six has contributed to answer the overarching research question of the thesis and two out of three sub-research questions.

The present chapter describes and discusses the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers through In-service Teacher Education Programs (INSTEP) courses. It is examined through the reflections of two groups of participants: (i) teacher trainers and (ii) practicing primary teachers. This chapter examines the following issues (i) TEYL teachers INSTEP courses and INSTEP courses for TEYL teacher trainers. This chapter is structured around one major theme, "Developing higher ELP through INSTEP" which emerged from analysis of various sources of data including the different perspectives of the participants, analysis of relevant policy, media and curriculum documents, and field-notes. It is intended that this chapter will make an additional contribution to answering the overarching research question (RQ) of the thesis and the remaining sub-question (i.e. RQ3) posed in chapter one,

Overarching RQ:

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

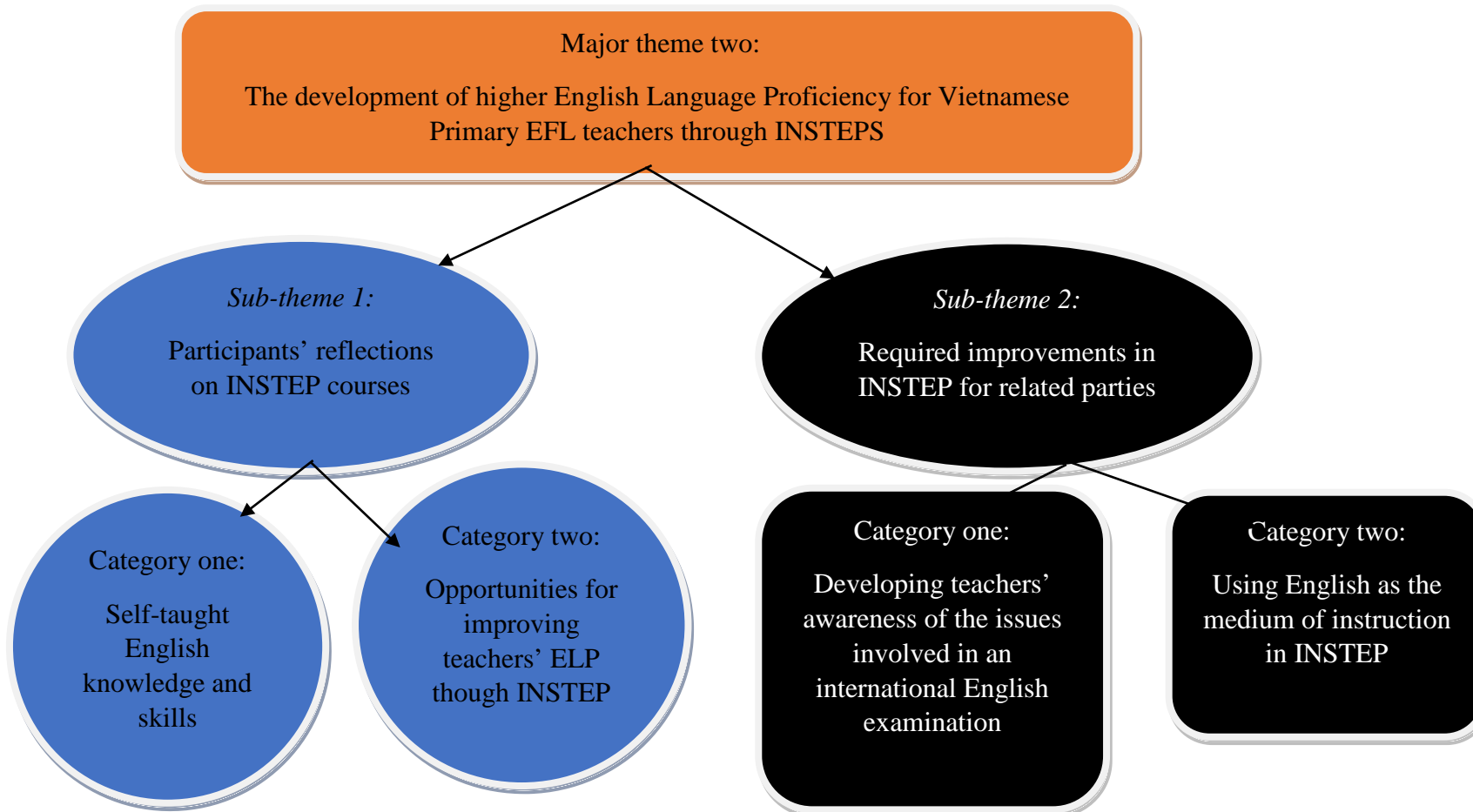
RQ3: How could higher levels of English language proficiency be developed through in-service teacher education programs (INSTEPs)?

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of the data relating to developing higher ELP through in-service teacher programs with a diagram (Figure 6). In describing this diagram, I will discuss two sub-themes involving the development of higher ELP through INSTEP (i.e. sub-theme one: section 7.3 and sub-theme two: section 7.4). The first sub-theme (section 7.3.) relates to the participants' reflections on INSTEP courses involving the improvement of higher ELP through INSTEP courses. Two categories of this sub-theme are (i) "self-taught English knowledge and skills" (section 7.3.1) and (ii) "opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through INSTEP courses" (section 7.3.2). Then, I examine and discuss the second sub-theme, "required improvements in INSTEP courses to raise higher ELP for related parties". Two categories of this sub-theme namely (i) "developing teachers' awareness of an international English examination" (section 7.4.1) and (ii) "using English as the medium of instruction in INSTEP courses" (section 7.4.2) are described and discussed.

## **7.2 An overview of developing higher ELP through INSTEP**

As stated in section 7.1 from the data analysis, two sub-themes relating to TPD and English language proficiency emerged namely (i) "the participants' perceptions about INSTEP courses" and (ii) "required improvements in INSTEP to raise higher ELP".

Figure 5: The integration of raising TEYL teachers' ELP into in-service teacher education programs



A summary of the integration of developing higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers into INSTEP courses is presented in Figure 5. As can be seen from Figure 5, this section describes and explains the TEYL teacher trainer participants' report and feedback on the issues of their professional development through INSTEP courses and their need for further improvements to develop higher levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. Overall, the participants of the study offered their individual opinions that the current INSTEP courses were not appropriate and they needed to improve in some areas to meet the learning needs of the INSTEP teacher participants. All the participants of this study shared the common perception that the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers through INSTEP courses required close cooperation in which primary EFL teacher trainers were one factor influencing practicing primary EFL teachers' ELP level within a tangled web of many interacting influences. The participants' opinions will be described and discussed in more detail in the next two sections 7.3 and 7.4.

### **7.3 Reflections on INSTEP**

The first sub-theme, "reflections on INSTEP" refers to the participants' perceptions about their professional development in relation to the enhancement of higher levels of English language competence for primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English proficiency at the in-service level. Two categories of the first sub-theme namely (i) "self-taught English knowledge and skills" and (ii) "opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through INSTEP courses" are detailed below.

#### **7.3.1 Self-taught English knowledge and skills.**

The category, "self-taught English knowledge and skills" describes the participants' belief that any of their English language competence as well as their expertise in the teaching of

English has been developed through their self-teaching over a long period of time rather than through the current INSTEP courses. In interviews, 18 TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one (i.e. Participants: # 1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8) and practicing TEYL teachers in group three (i.e. Participants: #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29) reported that any additional English knowledge and skills gained after college and/or university graduation were supplemented by learning English on their own.

The teacher trainer participants in group one and the graduating primary teachers in group three reported that they increasingly developed their English knowledge and skills through:

- (1) \* Carefully preparing lessons and practicing many times before presenting them in class;
- (2) \* Doing on-line tests of English;
- (3) \* Practicing tests from published English books;
- (4) \* Contacting and communicating with English speakers whenever they could;
- (5) \* Reading different published teaching materials in English when they had time;
- (6) \* Listening to VOA (Voice of America) to improve listening skills;
- (7) \* Watching films in English with sub-titles.

Table 22 below reports the seven main ways in which the participants improved their own English knowledge and skills once they become teachers of English.

Table 22: Participants' ways of developing higher ELP once they become teachers of English

Participant Group	Participant pseudonym	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*	7*
<b>Group 1:</b>								
<i>Primary EFL teacher trainer participants</i>	#1	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	#2	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	#3	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	#4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	#5	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	#6	✓		✓		✓		
	#7			✓		✓	✓	✓
	#8	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	#9		✓				✓	✓
<b>Group 3:</b>								
<i>Practicing Primary EFL teacher participants</i>	#20	✓		✓				
	#21	✓						
	#22		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	#23	✓						
	#24	✓						
	#25		✓			✓		✓
	#26		✓		✓	✓		
	#27	✓						
	#28	✓		✓				
	#29			✓		✓		
<b>Total: 29</b>		<b>13/29</b>	<b>9/29</b>	<b>12/29</b>	<b>4/29</b>	<b>12/29</b>	<b>3/29</b>	<b>4/29</b>

Notes: 1\* Carefully preparing lessons and practicing many times before presenting them in class; 2\* Doing on-line tests of English; 3\* Practicing tests from published English books; 4\* Contacting and communicating with English speakers whenever they could; 5\* Reading different published teaching materials in English when they had time; 6\* Listening to VOA (Voice of America) to improve listening skills; 7\* Watching films in English with sub-titles.

As can be seen from Table 22, 13 out of 29 participants (e.g. TEYL teacher trainer participants: # 1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 & #8 in group one; TEYL teacher participants: #20, #21, #23, #24, #27, #28 in group three) reported that they tended to develop their English language competence through carefully preparing lessons and practicing many times before presenting them in class. Unfortunately, what these participants reported is in contradiction to what they did at the research site. It should be noted that the interview data on this issue is not consistent with the fieldnote data and classroom observation data. The two latter indicate that very little time went into lesson preparation because EFL teachers were busy with their

private teaching at home or at the Foreign Language Centres in the particular context of Vietnam.

Nine out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants: # 1, #2, #3, #4; #5 & #9 in group one; Participants: #22, #25 & #26 in group three) said that they were likely to do on-line tests as their personal way to develop their ELP. Twelve out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants: # 1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8 in group one; Participants: #20, #22, #28, #29 in group three) stated that they improved their English language competence by practicing tests in published English books.

Only four out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants #4 & #8 in group one; Participants #22 & #26 in group three) reported that their English language competence was developed by contacting and communicating with English speakers whenever they could. Twelve out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7 & #8 in group one; Participants : #22, #25, #26 & #29 in group three) said that reading different published teaching materials in English when they had time was one possible way to enhance their English language proficiency. Only three out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants: #7, #8 & #9 in group one) reported that they improved their listening skills by listening to VOA (Voice of America) programs. Four out of 29 participants (e.g. Participants # 4, #7 & #9 in group one, Participant #25 in group three) said that they frequently watched films in English with sub-titles because it was a positive way of developing their listening skills in English.

It should be noted that the participants of this study were unlikely to develop higher levels of oral English language proficiency due to a number of challenges arising from their particular context. As stated by these informants, practice speaking English to foreigners seemed to be a thing of the past. That is because very few participants of this study had the opportunity to meet native speakers of English locally to communicate with them in English. Over the past



several years, no volunteer English teachers had been sent to the local college since the new policy of the locality was adopted. According to this new local policy, both EFL teacher trainers and EFL teacher trainees at the local college were not permitted to have private conversations with foreigners in English except for a number of lectures in teacher training classes. Any private meetings with English-speaking foreigners were required to be reported to the local leaders as well as the Rector of the local college and Dean of the English department. Currently, no volunteer English teachers are teaching at the local college. They have been sent to other provinces of Vietnam since 2003.

The following extracts exemplify the view of participants about INSTEP:

Extract 34: I am aware that teacher trainers have very few opportunities to learn through INSTEP courses. Teaching English to student teachers is also a way of on-the-job learning. Before delivering a lecture to student teachers, I often prepare my lesson very carefully. That is because I think that through my careful preparations of class activities, I have the opportunity to use English to interact with my student teachers. Practice frequently helps improve my English skills gradually.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 35: We don't have many occasions to improve our English through INSTEPS. We have to improve ourselves in English day by day by daily practicing using English to interact with my students in class. Personally, I think that teaching English is a good opportunity for me to develop my individual English language competence. I often prepare my English lessons carefully. Then I practice it many times before presenting them in class.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #3, Interview on 9 October 2012)

Extract 36: We are conscious that we do not many prospects to improve our English language competence through INSTEP courses. Thus, we improve ourselves by putting more effort into careful preparation of their lessons prior to an English class. I sometimes listen to VOA (Voice of America) to improve my listening skill, my poorest English skill.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8, Interview on 19 October 2012)

Extract 37: It comes as no surprise to learn that many primary EFL teachers are not able to reach the international standard as required by the government policy and I am no exception. We do not have many opportunities to enhance our English language proficiency through INSTEP courses. I have failed the exam of ELP at my first attempt. My English language competence skills gradually become rusty after my graduation from college and university, particularly in the area

of listening and speaking skills. Recently, I have attempted to improve my English pronunciation and listening skills, my worst English skill, by watching English films with sub-titles in my free time.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #25, Interview on 6 October 2012)

Extract 38: I have not learnt much from current INSTEP courses, except a number of theoretical techniques of TEYL. I often improve my English language proficiency by doing a number of practice tests from published English books available...

(Primary EFL teacher participant #29, Interview on 3 November 2012)

### **7.3.2 Opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through INSTEP.**

It should be noted that the most common form of INSTEP in Vietnam is that some selected teachers from different provinces of Vietnam are sometimes invited to participate in a professional workshop in big cities such as Hanoi or HCMC. In attending such INSTEP courses, INSTEP teacher participants have the opportunity to listen to new theories of EFL teaching and learning presented by some Vietnamese lecturers who use Vietnamese as the medium of instruction and class communication. INSTEP teacher participants are not provided with the opportunity to share their challenges in teaching or contribute their practical experience of teaching in their particular geographical context. Neither do INSTEP participants have the opportunity to learn initiatives from other colleagues in different provinces.

The second category, “opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through INSTEP” refers to the participants' reflections on accessible opportunities for the development of higher English language competence through in-service TPD programs, particularly in the area of oral English proficiency for both Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainers and primary teachers as well. These reflections are documented under two headings namely (i) primary teacher INSTEP courses; (ii) teacher trainers talking about (ii.1) primary teacher INSTEP courses and about (ii.2) INSTEP courses for teacher trainers. These reflections are detailed below:

- **Primary teacher INSTEP courses**

The data collected from interviews and field notes in group three (i.e. practicing TEYL teachers in public primary schools) indicate that opportunities for improving TEYL teachers' ELP through INSTEP were not particularly effective. All the practicing primary EFL teacher participants in group three (i.e. #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29) reported that there were very few available opportunities for the improvement of practicing TEYL teachers' ELP through the current in-service TPD programs particularly in the area of oral English. They also reported that they were interested in immersion programs in an English speaking country so as to enhance their current level of English language proficiency (i.e. #22, #24, #26, #28 & #29). They had heard about these from the internet. The participants in this group felt that short-term workshops organized for TEYL teachers seemed to be theoretical rather than giving them the opportunities to apply these new theories of teaching to their actual teaching practices in public primary schools (i.e. #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 & #29). The following extracts show their opinions:

Extract 39: Accessible workshops are often theoretical and they are assumed as the opportunities for advertising foreign books rather than providing opportunities for TEYL teachers to practice updated knowledge and teaching professional skills. In my opinion, such "one-off" workshops are opportunities for me to meet and chat with my ex-colleagues and new friends (smile).

(Primary EFL teacher participant #22, Interview on 4 October 2012)

Extract 40: Available workshops are held annually in summer when all TEYL teachers are off from their teaching work. At times, such workshops are held every two or three years. Over 100 TEYL teachers participate in such workshops but there are only four or five TEYL teacher trainers at local college and university work as helpers. These workshops often last one or two days and seem to be theoretical, providing a number of teaching techniques for young English language learners or theories of teaching English to children. We do not have much time to apply new techniques of teaching children to our actual teaching practices.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #20, Interview on 3 October 2012)

Extract 41: I don't like to participate in workshops because I don't think that they will be of benefit to me. Workshop lecturers often use Vietnamese as the main

language to transmit a number of theories of teaching rather than practical techniques. After the workshop, everything seems unchangeable.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #23, Interview on 5 October 2012)

Extract 42: I am really interested in workshops because I have the opportunity to meet other colleagues to chat and to cope with stress from work rather than learning something new and useful from lecturers. After workshops, we do not receive any evaluation forms to give our comments. In short, many of us attend the workshops as the duty as required by the local authority.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #29, Interview on 3 November 2012)

Extract 43: In my opinion, workshops should create as many opportunities as possible for participants to share their real-life ideas of teaching and their current challenges in English instead of letting participants sit and listen to lecturers passively. New theoretical techniques of TEYL need a little refining and more practical applications. Participants need to be given more opportunities to attempt new initiatives in their teaching practices. I think that the current organization of workshops is wasteful and ineffective because we as TEYL teachers are not helped to improve their communication skills in English (i.e. oral and aural skills in English) as well as professional skills to young learners.

(Primary EFL teacher participant #26, Interview on 7 October 2012)

- **Teacher trainers talking about primary teacher INSTEP courses and INSTEP courses for teacher trainers**

The interview data and field notes collected from the research site in relation to group one (i.e. TEYL teacher trainer participants at local college) indicate that the government policy-makers seemed to pay insufficient attention to primary teacher INSTEP courses and INSTEP courses for teacher trainers who are responsible for the high quality of training TEYL teachers for public primary schools in Vietnam.

It is strongly recommended by Harmer (2007) that attendance and the delivery of oral presentations at international/ domestic English language conferences or symposia is a positive way of improving oral skills in English. That is because such opportunities help language teachers become more confident in using English to communicate with other communicators. TEYL teacher trainers (Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 & #9) reported that they lacked available opportunities to participate in in-service TPD workshops or to have presentations in national/ international conferences or

symposia and so did TEYL teachers. Additionally, these participants stated that management seemed to pay insufficient attention to the content and the high quality of INSTEP courses. INSTEP participants rarely had the opportunities to share their opinions/ initiatives and teaching practices with other colleagues (as evidenced by # 1, #4, #6, #8, #22, #25, #28 & #29).

Classroom peer observations seemed to be the only TEYL teacher trainer professional development activity as reported by participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 and #9. However, they (participants #3, #5, #6, #7 & #9) said that they did not reap many benefits from such peer observations. The reasons why will be clarified below. Classroom observations can be powerful opportunities for upskilling EFL teachers' ELP from the perspective of both being observed and observing. However, the reality of the particular teaching context for Vietnamese teachers was completely different. The following extracts exemplify their viewpoint:

Extract 44: I have been observed by my colleagues and observed my colleagues' English classes many times. However, I find that I reap very few benefits from the activity of peer classroom observation. I get the feeling that my colleagues do not like being observed and they often avoid registering to be observed in each semester. Those who are required to observe his/her class have the feeling that they are being criticized rather than being helped to improve their teaching strategies.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #3, Interview on 9 October 2012)

Extract 45: After class observations, we often have formal meetings in the departmental office to make comments on the work of class observation. Frankly, I feel extremely suffocated by the atmosphere of such meetings in the department. Those who observe a class are required to give feedback. However, I do not like the way that my colleagues make comments on my class observation. They ask me to do this or for me to do that in my particular way of organizing learning activities for my students instead of asking me the reasons why or why not. I feel uncomfortable with the way that my colleagues give feedback. In my opinion, the way of making comments on the work of class observations is of great importance to help improve the teaching strategies. The atmosphere of giving feedback needs to be considerably changed so that teachers in the department like being observed their class to listen to constructive comments from their colleagues.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7, Interview on 16 October 2012)

Participants #1, #5, #6 and #7 also reported that the Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) was the most useful workshop for their teacher training profession they had ever participated in 1998, helping them become more confident and creative in their teacher training work but that was a very long time ago. These participants believed that such an in-service workshop helped improve ELP significantly for teacher participants. The helpfulness that these teacher trainer participants at local college mentioned was that they had a three-month immersion course in English. Vietnamese was prohibited to be used during the INSTEP course. The teacher participants had the opportunities to use English as the medium for communication, not only in class but also outside class. They said that they also had the opportunity to share their learning experiences as well as difficulties they had during the in-service INSTEP course through their journal and compiling a portfolio. They also reported that they had the opportunity to attempt new ideas and initiatives by designing classroom activities to enhance ELP for students.

The TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one (e.g. Participants: #1, #3, #7, #8 & #9) also reported that they wanted to have more available opportunities for enhancing their teacher trainer professional development in in-country teacher development programs and overseas immersion programs. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants in this study confirmed that apart from the Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) they attended in 1998, most current INSTEP courses were unsuitable due to their structure and organization.

The following extracts exemplify the view of teacher trainer participants about opportunities for improvements in INSTEP courses in Vietnam.

Extract 46: Very few available opportunities of INSTEP courses are given to us as TEYL teacher trainers. Most of the one-day or two-day workshops I have attended are less beneficial. Knowledge delivered in INSTEP workshops often focuses on the transmission of some modern theories of teaching English in the world rather than providing INSTEP participants with available opportunities to attempt new ideas of teaching English in their daily teaching practices. Thus, everything seemed unchanged after INSTEP workshops.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #5, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 47: We hardly have handy opportunities to attempt applying new ideas from INSTEP programs into our daily teaching practices. We desire to have within-reach opportunities to contact TEYL experts in the world to learn initiatives as well as helpful experience from them targeted at helping gradually improve the current levels of TEYL teacher trainees in the locality.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #1, Interview on 4 October 2012)

Extract 48: We are not given opportunities to improve our ELP for ourselves through INSTEP programs. The Vietnamese language is used as the main medium of instruction. Some INSTEP presenters use English to make a speech but this is not common and less frequent. In my own part, I have no difficulty in understanding the content of the speech in English. I am able to catch main ideas from the talks of the INSTEP presenters. However, I am not sure that other colleagues can understand the speech in English or not. Moreover, we are not given the opportunity to share challenges confronting us in our particular context of teaching to co-operate with each other in finding possible solutions to the problems. After the INSTEP courses, everything remains unchanged.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #4, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 49: The reality is that very few opportunities are offered to help improve our current levels of ELP. We have no opportunities to present our individual opinions in English in national conferences as well as international ones. Neither have we had accessible opportunities to meet TEYL experts in the world with the level of expertise to help improve higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #8, Interview on 10 October 2012)

Extract 50: Although very few opportunities are given to EFL teacher trainers in the department, some enthusiastic INSTEP participants have attempted adopting new ideas in their teaching practices. However, these teacher trainers are not strongly supported by other departmental colleagues as well as local superior leaders. Paradoxically, current TEYL policies do not support teacher trainers with the adoption of new ideas/ initiatives in their daily teaching practices to improve teacher trainees' ELP. Some busy teacher trainers tend to like adopting traditional teaching methods because they are not time-consuming. As a result, teacher trainers' teaching practices at local college seem unchanged after attending some INSTEP programs.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7, Interview on 16 October 2012)

It should be noted that the notion of in-service teaching professional development (TPD) for EFL teachers including both TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teachers despite being much discussed in the English language teaching (ELT) literature, has received little attention in developing countries including Vietnam (Le Van Canh, 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Peng and Zhang, 2009; Pham, 2001; Zhu, 2003). What the primary EFL teacher participants and primary EFL teacher trainer participants in this study reported in relation to the development of higher ELP through the current INSTEP in Vietnam is consistent with the literature. Below are two examples to illustrate this point. These illustrations also show that the findings of this study are in concordance with the results of prior studies conducted by Pham (2001) and by LeVan Canh (2011) in the Vietnamese context of EFL teacher education:

The concept of teacher development is quite new in Vietnam. Many teachers express their wish to go abroad to study for a degree or attend training workshops organized by foreign aid agencies. Not many mention the possibility of autonomous learning or learning from their own colleagues. The notion of organizing in-service development in the form of class observations, seminars, workshops or even in formal talks that give colleagues from the same working context the opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences and innovations, seems uncommon in Vietnam. One teacher commented, 'The staff of our English department meets a couple of times a semester. We just meet for administrative work but rarely for professional development purposes' (Pham, 2000).

(Pham, 2001, p.2)

In spite of the recognised inadequacy and irrelevance of pre-service training (Kennett & Knight, 1999), after graduation, Vietnamese teachers do not have easy access to professional development (Le, 2002; Pham, 2007) on account of both cultural and technical factors. Culturally, they are not accustomed to dialogue, and hence, they "are unaware of how to exchange their ideas in a democratic and dialogical manner with their colleagues" (Saito et al., 2008, p.100) in professional teacher meetings. Technically, access to academic and professional resources which help them to broaden their knowledge is quite limited while they have to suffer the burden of paperwork, which is really stressful to them.

(Le, V. C, 2011, p.40)



The descriptions of the participants' beliefs in the development of higher ELP through the TPD programs, the findings from the participants' reports on involving TEYL teacher training and teacher professional development (TPD) as well as the literature review provide the foundation for suggested areas of In-service Teacher Education Program (INSTEP) (section 7.4).

#### **7.4 Suggested improvements in INSTEP for related parties**

The second sub-theme, “suggested improvements in INSTEP for related parties” describes the need and the participants' recommendations for developing higher levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English through the current in-service TPD programs.

Two categories of this sub-theme namely (i) “developing teachers' awareness of the issues involved in an international English exam” and (ii) “using English as the medium of instruction in INSTEP courses” are examined in this section.

##### **7.4.1 Developing teachers' awareness of the issues involved in an international English exam.**

The category, “Developing teachers' awareness of the issues involved in an international English examination” refers to the need and the participants' suggestions for the increase in teachers' consciousness of developing English language skills for learners to meet an international English exam equivalent to B2 level of the CEFR. This category also refers to the modification of TEYL teacher trainees' assessment through both pre-service teacher training programs and INSTEP courses towards the entire eradication of locally-standardized exams of ELP at the current local college.

As stated in chapter six, a majority of the participants were aware of the influences of EFL teachers' English language competence on their teaching practices, particularly in the area of oral English. However, they seemed unaware that their relatively low ELP could be affecting their students' quality of English learning and English language acquisition (Borg, 2001; Crichton, 2009; Edge & Garton, 2009; Ellis, 2005; Farrell & Richards, 2007; Hope, 2002; Kim & Elder, 2008; Naserdeen, 2001; Richards et al., 2013; Samadi & Ah-Ghazo, 2013; Scrivener, 2005; Tsui, 2003). Both TEYL teacher trainer participants and practicing TEYL teachers displayed their limited use of English in many aspects of teaching, particularly the deficiency of EFL teachers' improvisation skills in the observed classes (i.e. the limitations in the ability of producing English sentences instantaneously in the particular context of real communication without prior preparation).

The participants in group one and three tended to use Vietnamese to teach English rather than using English to teach English (i.e. English as the medium of instruction). As I stated in previous sections, I am not totally opposed to the use of L1 to facilitate students' understanding in class (see Garcia & Kleyn, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) to mount a one-sided argument, rather than supporting the view of maximizing possible opportunities for target language use in class to develop EFL learners' ELP, particularly oral English language skills in TEYL, a matter of concern for Vietnam and many non-Anglo countries.

It should be noted that the analysis of the observation and interview data indicated that participants were highly likely to focus on teaching English grammatical points and vocabulary based on the published teaching materials to meet a locally-standardized exam of English. That is because English grammar and vocabulary were particularly highlighted in locally-standardized exams of ELP. The emphasis of such English exams was very much on the successful completion of English grammar and vocabulary exercises. Oral English

language skills in locally-standardized exams were ignored despite the prevailing claim on the TEYL teacher training curriculum policy that students' assessment focussed on both English oral and written skills. Consequently, TEYL student teachers had difficulty in meeting internationally-standardized B2 exams required by the government because the claim on the curriculum policy was not consistent with the reality of students' assessment in the locality.

It should be noted that although Vietnam began to adopt the six-level CEFR framework for English teaching and as a guideline for measuring the level of primary EFL teachers' ELP at the national level (see Government of Vietnam, 2008), many participants in this study still were not clear of the reforms in English language education including TEYL teacher education when they were interviewed about this topic in 2012. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #6 of this study reported that she had only a very vague idea about the requirements of level B2 of the CEFR. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #2 of this study also reported that what she knew about level B2 of the CEFR and its requirements came from the information posted on the internet. However, she did not say what websites she was looking at. She also reported that she was not sure whether such information was accurate or not. It seems then that the communication flow between the policy-makers and the policy-implementers needs to be more explicit so that policy implementation can happen in a more streamlined and informed way.

Despite the fact that the participants in this study were aware of the limited level of TEYL teachers' English language competence, particularly in the area of spoken English, the B2-level of the CEFR was not translated into TEYL teachers' assessment at the local level. A large number of primary EFL teachers with a limited level of ELP including oral English were continuing to be employed to work in public primary schools in Vietnam due to the shortage of primary EFL teachers. There is a major contextual issue that I would like to

clarify here. Despite the lack of TEYL teachers in the locality, graduates from poor families were having trouble with getting teaching jobs because of Communist Party favouritism and Communist Party corruption in the particular context of Vietnam. The top priority for the recruitment of new primary EFL teachers at local primary public schools was children/close-and-distant relatives of local Communist leaders (in the Vietnamese words of the participants, “Con Ông Cháu Cha”) despite their working incompetence. Also, rich graduates who had money to bribe the local top Communist leaders were recruited to work as TEYL teachers in the locality. Graduates from poor families did not have as equal opportunities for getting teaching jobs as rich graduates and related-Communist leader members. This issue was reported by a number of participants in this study. Also, this major contextual challenge is recognized by a number of online newspaper articles such as Dao, 2016; Nguyen, 2012; Vietnam Times, 2015. Associate Professor Van Nhu Cuong acknowledges that “*Chạy hợp đồng, biên chế trong ngành giáo dục là phổ biến*” bribery and corruption for a teaching job is common in Vietnam education (Dao, 2016, p.1). This is consistent with Nguyen (2012) who confirms that “*Chạy công chức đầu tiên còn sơ sơ, bây giờ đã trơ trơ*” bribery and corruption in civil service examinations for a teaching job has reached its peak and become widespread throughout the nation (p.1). General Secretary of the Vietnam Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong acknowledges that “*cái gì cũng tiền, không tiền không trôi*” bribery is used as a very common manner of solving every issue in current Vietnam. Without bribery, nothing runs smoothly according to plan (H, Minh 2013, p.1).

In-service teacher training programs for both primary EFL teachers and primary EFL teacher trainers in place to assist in improving the situation appeared ineffective in providing a large quantity of primary EFL teachers with an appropriate level of ELP for public primary schools. This was confirmed by many participants in this study (e.g. #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8 #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #18, #19, #20, #22, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29). A

majority of the practicing primary EFL teacher participants in group three (i.e. #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28 & #29) acknowledged that even though they hold English degrees in TESOL, they had difficulty in sitting and passing an internationally-standardized exam equivalent to B2 such as IELTS/ TOEFL. Most of them got the opportunity to do this in 2012. My participants told me about this issue when I came back to Vietnam for data collection (also section 2.6).

Participants #1 and #7 argued that the development of EFL teachers' awareness of meeting an international standard of ELP including oral English is the first crucial step leading to significant changes in teachers' daily teaching practices. The following extract exemplifies the view of the participants:

Extract 51: Personally, the most important thing in the development of higher ELP for primary EFL teacher trainees is to increase their awareness of meeting an internationally-standardized exam of ELP equivalent to B2 level of the CEFR as required by the government. This needs to be done through the improvement of the seven exams of ELP teacher trainees sit at local colleges. Moreover, it is strongly advised that INSTEP courses should create opportunities for TEYL teacher trainees to sit an actual international exam of ELP to measure their level of ELP.

(Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #7, Interview on 16 October 2012)

According to the participants of this study, to help raise teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching English in pursuit of an international standard of ELP, a number of measures could be taken as follows:

**(i) For primary EFL teachers:**

Firstly, the existing INSTEP programs need to help TEYL teachers become aware of the recent requirements of the Vietnamese government in TEYL teacher education policy as suggested by participants #1, #7, #25 & #27. Secondly, Vietnamese primary EFL teachers should be helped to understand the significance of the CEFR framework in the particular context of Vietnam and how this framework has modified FL teaching and learning strategies

in other FL teaching contexts in the world as recommended by participants #2, #5, #6, #21 & #23.

**(ii) For primary EFL teacher trainers:**

First, primary EFL teachers should be provided with many opportunities through INSTEP courses to discuss changes in their teaching practices as suggested by participants #1, #24, #26 & #29. Second, careful preparation for the INSTEP courses is critical in terms of the effectiveness and the content of the course. This should be developed based on the actual needs of teacher participants as recommended by a number of participants of this study (e.g. Participants # 4, #8 & #9 in group one and participants #21, #24, #27 & #29).

**7.4.2 Using English as the medium of instruction in INSTEP courses.**

The second category, “using English as a tool for INSTEP courses” refers to the need and the participants’ recommendations for the adoption of English as a means of communication in workshops to develop higher English language competence, particularly in the area of spoken English for EFL teachers.

Many participants in this study reported that Vietnamese was adopted as the main language in TPD workshops for EFL teachers (including TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teachers) to introduce some new knowledge about TEYL and age-specific teaching techniques (i.e. how to use games and songs in TEYL class) (e.g. #1, #4, #5, #7, #8, # 24, #27 & #28). At the time of this study, Vietnamese rather than the use of English as the medium of instruction for:

(i) Teaching English in public primary schools (i.e. The data from eight TEYL classroom observations in five public schools: #21 at school C; #23 & # 27 at school E; #24 at school F; #20 & #29 at school J; #25 & #28 at school O)

(ii) Training primary EFL teachers in TEYL teacher preparation programs at local colleges (i.e. Teacher training classroom observation data: #3 & #5)

(iii) Providing in-service teacher education programs (INSTEP) for TEYL teacher trainers (Interview data: #1, #4, #7) and practicing TEYL teachers (Interview data: # 22, #25, #28).

However, it should be noted that among the participants there was some disagreement over whether English or Vietnamese should be used as the medium of instruction in INSTEP courses for TEYL teacher participants. Some participants (i.e. #3, #4 & #9) argued that if English had been adopted in the current TPD workshops, very few primary EFL teachers would have understood all the content of theory and practice of TEYL. By contrast, participants #1, #7 & #8 stated that English was needed in the TPD workshops to help the practicing primary EFL teachers have opportunities to frequently practice their spoken English with their colleagues and other TEYL teacher educators. According to these participants, the overuse of Vietnamese rather than English in the particular context of teaching and learning English in Vietnam is likely to result in low levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English of many primary EFL teachers.

## **7.5 Summary**

Chapter seven has described and discussed TEYL teacher professional development (TPD) for higher levels of ELP in Vietnam. The main findings of this chapter are summarized as follows:

Many participants reported that their extra English knowledge and skills after college and/or university graduation were frequently supplemented by them via teaching and upskilling themselves. This suggests that they should have learning-to-learn skills. In expressing various ways of EFL teachers' self-teaching opportunities, the teacher participants in group one (i.e. teacher trainers) and group three (i.e. primary teachers) stated that they increasingly

developed their English knowledge and skills via (i) thoroughly preparing lessons and practicing several times before presenting them in class; (ii) doing on-line tests of English; (iii) practicing tests on published English books; (iv) contacting and speaking with English speakers whenever they could; (v) reading different published teaching materials when they had time; (vi) listening to VOA (Voice of America) to improve their listening skills; or (vii) watching films in English with sub-titles.

Some teacher participants also reported that few opportunities were provided for them to help develop higher levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English through the current TPD programs. The TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one said that they were short of accessible opportunities to participate in in-service workshops or to have presentations in national and international conferences (section 7.3.2). The participants in this group said that peer classroom observations were the single activity for improving their TEYL teacher trainer professional development. However, they reported that they did not find classroom observations beneficial in their individual teaching context. That was because they did not learn anything new from their classroom peer observations. The participants in this group wanted to have many useful opportunities as the Vietnam-Australia English Language Technical Training Project (VAT) Teacher In-service Education Programs (TIE) that they had participated in 1998 to help them become more confident and creative in their TEYL teacher training work. During the 1998 programs, all the teacher trainer participants were required to use English all the time, which was useful to help them enhance their English language competence. Both the participants in group one and three said that they wanted to have more available opportunities for enhancing their teacher professional development in in-country teacher development programs and overseas immersion programs (IPs).



TPD is needed for EFL teachers to develop higher English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English for primary EFL teachers. Thus, local colleges need strong support from the current TPD programs in two major areas: Firstly, the development of teachers' awareness of meeting an international standard of English language competence. Many participants in this study seemed unaware that Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainees' ELP needed to be trained appropriately to reach an international standard of ELP instead of a local standard of English. The classroom observation data of this study indicated that both TEYL teacher trainer participants and practicing TEYL teacher participants displayed their limited use of English in many aspects of teaching, particularly in the area of developing oral English skills for English language learners.

Both the teacher trainer participants and the practising TEYL teachers tended to use Vietnamese to teach English rather than using English to teach English. Firstly, they were likely to focus on teaching English grammatical points and vocabulary in the set teaching materials to meet a locally-standardized exam of English, rather than helping EFL learners develop an adequate level of English language competence including oral English to satisfy an international standard of ELP. Secondly, ideally English could be used as the main tool for providing post-courses. Many participants in this study reported that Vietnamese was adopted as the main language in TPD workshops for EFL teachers to introduce some new knowledge about TEYL and specific-age teaching techniques. It was argued by some participants that if English had been adopted in the current TPD workshops, very few primary EFL teachers could have understood all the contents of theory and practice of TEYL. However, some other participants disagreed with this opinion. The overuse of Vietnamese in the current EFL teaching context and even TPD programs potentially results in the low level of TEYL teachers' ELP particularly in the area of oral English language competence.

## **Chapter 8. Implications and conclusions**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The quality of English language input by primary EFL teachers into TEYL class for primary school children, particularly in the area of oral English is very important in primary English language classrooms (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2009 & 2011). Thus, in the Vietnamese context, the level of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency has been specified in government policy since 2008. Since then graduating TEYL teachers have been required to meet the B2 level of English as described on the Council of Europe Framework of Reference (see Government of Vietnam, 2008). However, this policy has not been translated for and incorporated into TEYL teacher training programs and student assessment. Through this thesis, it is argued that it is necessary that English language teacher proficiency should be integrated into TEYL teacher preparation programs and INSTEP programs in order to help improve gradually the current limited levels of Vietnamese TEYL teacher trainees' ELP.

In order to ascertain what is currently happening in Vietnamese EFL teacher training and primary English classes this thesis has examined the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in TEYL teacher training context of Vietnam. The point of the research has been to address the overarching research question:

How might the English language proficiency (ELP) of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools be improved as required by the government policy in Decree No.1400/QD-Ttg?

Social constructionism combined with interpretivism is my theoretical framing for this study. As a 'research insider', I conducted an investigation into TEYL and TEYL teacher education in a province of Vietnam where the issues were examined through critical ethnography (Kawamura, 2011). The 29 participants in this study were directly involved in English

language education at the primary school level. Data were gathered through (i) 29 semi-structured interviews (section 5.4.7.1); (ii) 16 classroom observations (section 5.4.7.2); (iii) relevant documents from the field (section 5.4.7.3). Field work was conducted in the Vietnamese language. Data were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated and provided a rich field for thick descriptive analysis (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Neuman, 2011).

The participants in this study were those who were directly involved in English language education at the primary school level. They were (i) nine primary EFL teacher trainers at a local teacher training college in a small province of Vietnam, (ii) ten primary EFL teacher trainees and (iii) ten primary EFL teachers in five public primary schools. The findings indicated that Vietnam is facing challenges in developing high quality, relevant, primary level EFL training including both pre- and in-service education. The challenges were documented as follows: (i) graduating TEYL teacher trainees had limited proficiency in English, particularly oral English compared to what is required by the Vietnamese government in Decree 1400/QD-Ttg; (ii) student teachers tend to be poorly motivated to improve their current English language proficiency, (iii) there is a lack of prioritisation for the improvement of English language proficiency, particularly oral ELP in teacher preparation programs; (iv) there is difficulty in designing and developing relevant teacher training materials to move student teachers' proficiency in English to the required B2 level of English; (v) there is a shortage of primary EFL teacher trainers with high enough ELP themselves; (vi) there is difficulty in designing English language proficiency tests equivalent to the internationally-recognized B2-level standard and (vi) few available opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through TPD programs, particularly in the area of oral English because current exams of ELP focused on the successful completion of English grammar and vocabulary exercises.

This chapter begins by summarizing the findings of the study (section 8.2.) presented in two chapters: six and seven. Section 8.3 of this chapter clarifies interrelationships among the

findings. The subsequent section is devoted to the clarification of implications (i) for primary EFL teacher education policy makers and (ii) for primary EFL teacher trainers. A suggested collaborative model of developing primary EFL teachers for public primary schools in the context of English language education in Vietnam is also given in section 8.5. In this model, I demonstrate how EFL teachers in Vietnam are greatly influenced by their particular context of EFL teaching. Furthermore, this model explains how EFL teachers can be connected to their institution, national and international contexts. A blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam is also provided in section 8.6. Section 8.7 of this chapter makes some recommendations for further research and overall conclusions of the entire study are provided in section 8.8.

## **8.2 Summary of findings**

This section summarizes key findings, providing insights into the development of higher levels of English language competence for primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English. This section not only describes the teaching practices of the participants but also presents a number of recommendations about how TEYL teachers' English language proficiency could be improved in the context of EFL teaching in Vietnam. This section is summarized in two major themes namely (i) the integration of developing English language proficiency into TEYL teacher training programs and (ii) TPD programs involving the improvement of English language teacher proficiency for both TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teachers.

### **(i) The integration of developing English language proficiency into TEYL teacher training programs**

As presented above, the participants reported many challenges in adopting the CEFR to measure the TEYL teachers' English language proficiency. These challenges appeared to be

factors contributing to the limited success in developing higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers. Below is a summary of the findings and discussions in chapter six.

Firstly, the physical settings of training TEYL students had a number of difficulties including (i) class size; (ii) student management; (iii) teaching facilities and (iv) teaching materials. The TEYL teacher trainer participants reported that TEYL teacher training class size was from 35 to 45 students in medium-sized classrooms. Although mobile tables and chairs could be flexibly arranged according to the intention of the TEYL teacher trainers in organizing learning activities, the TEYL teacher trainer participants reported that they made it difficult to effectively organize pair work or group work in crowded classes. It should be noted that competent TEYL teacher trainees tended to dominate incompetent ones who had few opportunities to show their views in learning activities. The data from TEYL teacher training classroom observations showed that the teaching facilities provided in the four rooms of the observed classes were nothing except a desk and a chair for the TEYL teacher trainer and a chalkboard (3m x 1.6m). With mixed levels of student English language proficiency in a large class, the TEYL teacher trainers reported that they were in need of developing relevant teaching materials for each group of primary EFL student teacher with different levels of English language proficiency in class.

Secondly, the TEYL teacher trainers' teaching practices saw them relying heavily on set teaching materials. The TEYL teacher trainers organized and planned their teaching activities basically following the procedure of textbooks. A few TEYL teacher trainer participants supplemented some activities but they seemed to focus on precisely defined written tasks rather than freely interacting oral ones. The participants reported that TEYL student teachers' English knowledge and skills could be developed through published teaching materials. However, to what extent TEYL student teachers' English knowledge and skills were

developed via such teaching materials depended on many contributing factors including (i) topics and lesson content; (ii) the degree and type of lesson preparation by TEYL teacher trainers; (iii) TEYL teacher trainers' teaching strategies and methods; (iv) TEYL teacher trainers' enthusiasm; (v) TEYL student teachers' learning motivation and attitudes; (vi) additional teaching facilities (i.e. appropriate pictures, internet access, cassette players, laptops, projectors and language laboratories); (vii) TEYL student teacher/TEYL teacher trainer relationships, and (viii) expectations of TEYL student teachers in completion of the particular set teaching materials (i.e. required tasks at home and assessment tasks and frequency). In the observed eight TEYL teacher training classes, the ways in which the TEYL teacher trainer participants developed TEYL teachers' English knowledge and skills exhibited the following three characteristics: (i) focussing on English knowledge transmission-orientated instruction rather than developing English skills and using English in authentic contexts, (ii) giving an emphasis to interpretation-orientated instruction and (iii) stressing eclecticism-orientated instruction through a published teaching materials. As stated in section 6.3.1, eclecticism-orientated instruction is the mixture of grammar translation with other favourite teaching methods in the particular training context of the TEYL teacher trainer participants (e.g. Participants: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 & #9). All TEYL teacher trainers in this study thought that the eclectic approach was a good thing in the particular context of TEYL teacher training in Vietnam. Most practicing TEYL teachers in the locality was adopting this kind of instruction.

Thirdly, lack of confidence in using English might be one of many important factors contributing to the limited levels of ELP in all groups of participants, particularly in the area of oral English. The findings have shown that very few TEYL teacher trainer participants in this study tended (i) to promote oral presentation in English, (ii) to encourage student teachers' reflective journal writing or (iii) to share portfolios although these teaching

strategies possibly developed higher levels of English language competence for primary EFL teachers. It should be noted that these might not particularly lead to greater oral communicative competence. However, these activities were missing from the teaching of participants who were comfortable teaching from textbooks. As reported by the TEYL teacher trainer participants, they did not feel confident enough to implement these teaching techniques although they had been trained in a previous TPD program.

Fourthly, there were a number of opportunities in the TEYL teacher training classes where the TEYL teacher trainer participants missed opportunities to help develop the TEYL student teachers' ELP, particularly in the area of oral English. A majority of the TEYL teacher trainers failed to provide the TEYL student teachers with adequate opportunities in class to practice authentic communication in English.

Fifthly, the critical point is that a number of TEYL teacher trainees and teacher trainers did not really know about the international standard of English required by the government policy. As a result of this, many graduating student teachers had limited proficiency in English, particularly in the area of oral English compared to what is required by the Vietnamese government. That was because the gap between the local standard of English and the international criterion is substantial and many primary EFL teachers after they graduated needed some time to improve their current levels of English language competence.

Additionally, student teachers tended to be poorly motivated to improve their English language proficiency due to factors such as (i) financial and/or family circumstances; (ii) the structure of the TEYL teacher training course; (iii) the unavailability of relevant books in the library; (iv) the unavailability and inaccessibility of information and communications technology (ICT); (v) the tediousness and boredom of the traditional methods of training; (vi) the lack of extra-curricular programs and (vii) social inequalities of recruitment and finding

employment. Most importantly, Communist Party power and corruption, along with concomitant social injustice is a major hindrance to the increase in teacher trainee motivation. Children and relatives of Communist Party leaders are given the top priority in recruitment and employment. This is reported by a number of participants in this study. What is more, teaching and learning English in the current EFL context tended to satisfy a local standard (see section 2.7 of chapter two), rather than meeting B2-level standard of the CEFR framework. The limitations of time focussing on the development of ELP given in the current TEYL teacher training programs were also one factor contributing to the low levels of TEYL teachers' ELP, particularly oral English. Communist Party propaganda policy is a major impediment to the curriculum policy revision. It should be noted that Vietnam is a Communist country and many modules in the TEYL teacher training curriculum are used for a Communist propaganda campaign. Also, the lack of resources for teaching and learning impacted on the quality of TEYL teachers' English language proficiency. Moreover, primary EFL teacher trainers had difficulty in designing English language proficiency tests equivalent to the B2-level international standard to measure TEYL teachers' English language competence.

Finally, the participants reported that there were four areas of TEYL teacher preparation programs where improvements could be made to develop higher English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English. They were (i) a review of curriculum policy in TEYL teacher education, (ii) a review of college admission policy, (iii) a review of resourcing policy and (iv) the translation of B2-level standard into practices (section 6.6.4). The four areas are interconnected and they need to be improved gradually and synchronously.

**(ii) INSTEP involving the improvement of English language teacher proficiency for both TEYL teachers and teacher trainers**



The participants in group one (i.e. TEYL teacher trainers) and group three (i.e. TEYL teachers) reported that there were few available opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through TPD programs in the form of workshops and longer term courses. They stated that they were instead provided with theoretical knowledge of TEYL and teaching strategies for children through such opportunities. The TEYL teacher trainer participants in group one also said that they wanted to have more opportunities for enhancing their teacher trainer professional development in in-country teacher development programs and overseas immersion programs.

In interviews, the teacher participants in group one and group three reported that their additional English knowledge and skills after college and/or university graduation were frequently supplemented by their self-teaching. They said that they tried to improve their English reading, listening and writing skills but not oral skills. As can be seen from Table 21, the participants stated that they increasingly developed their English knowledge and skills in the following way: (i) carefully preparing lessons and practicing many times before presenting them in class; (ii) doing on-line tests of English; (iii) practicing tests in published English books; (iv) contacting and communicating with English speakers whenever they could; (v) reading different published teaching materials in English when they had time; (vi) listening to VOA (Voice of America) to improve listening skills; and (vii) watching films in English with sub-titles.

To raise English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English, the in-service TPD programs are needed to develop EFL teachers' awareness of meeting an internationally-standardized exam of English as suggested in section 7.4.1.

### 8.3 Interrelationships among findings

The findings in this study have significant interconnections showing the participants' beliefs and teaching practices in the cultural patterning of teaching and learning English in Vietnam. Figure 7 (in section 8.5 below) describes these interrelationships and provides an understanding of the required improvements in raising higher levels of English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools.

The low quality of EFL teacher training has been blamed on the poor work of EFL teacher trainers at local colleges (see Le, 2012). However, the development of competent primary EFL teachers with proficiency equivalent to level B2 of the CEFR, seen from the light of holistic education requires much more than the individual work of local primary EFL teacher trainers who might make enormous endeavours in their TEYL teacher training classes. As can be seen from Figure 7, there are three major factors that hinder the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers including (i) the context of TEYL teacher training, (ii) the current pre-service teacher training program and (iii) the in-service teacher education program (INSTEP) for TEYL teachers and TEYL teacher trainers. Each factor has different sub-factors and they are detailed in Figure 6. These factors and sub-factors have interrelationships and they are detailed below.

Firstly, the particular context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam significantly contributes to hinder the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese TEYL teachers. As stated in section 6.4 there exist many contextual challenges in adopting the CEFR framework as required by government policy. Among these challenges, the role of the Vietnamese Communist Party seemed not to be questioned. Communist Party power corruption is a major hindrance to the increase in TEYL teacher trainee motivation. That is because Vietnam is a Communist country with the top priority of recruiting children and close-and-distant relatives of

Communist leaders in State employment. Thus, poor TEYL teacher students from ordinary families in Vietnam have difficulty in finding a teaching job after graduation (section 6.4.3).

Secondly, the lack of opportunities to develop teachers' ELP particularly in the area of oral English is partly due to the view of English knowledge transmission. Very few teacher participants in this study used the following measures to enhance the current level of ELP for TEYL teacher trainees: (i) promoting oral presentation in English, (ii) encouraging reflective journal writing and (iii) sharing portfolios. Most importantly, the lack of support from policies is an important factor contributing to the limited level of TEYL teachers' ELP. This issue comes from the view that TEYL teacher trainers are to blame for TEYL teacher trainees' limited ELP level rather than a poor collaboration among related parties.

Thirdly, inappropriate curriculum policy on training TEYL is a factor contributing to the limited level of TEYL teachers' ELP as evidenced by the participants of this study. That was because there was an improper distribution between modules in the current curriculum policy leading to the low level of student motivation and negative attitudes towards TEYL teacher trainee' studies (sections: 2.6 & 6.5.1).

Fourthly, the current college admission policy is a hindrance to the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. The TEYL teacher trainer participants reported that they were facing many challenges for training TEYL teacher trainees with a limited level of English language proficiency, particularly in the area of oral English, as a by-product of the college admissions policy. The level of proficiency required to get into training college is about the IELTS score of one (as stated by TEYL teacher trainer participant #4). It should be noted that they do not have intention of selecting people with low English language proficiency. Surely these are the only people that apply at the local college. Students who have higher ELP levels tend to apply for universities in big cities of Vietnam.

Fifthly, the low status of TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency in English is partly due to the current resourcing policy. As reported by the study participants, the resourcing shortage and the ineffective management of the resources resulted in the unavailability of relevant and updated English books in the library as well as the unavailability and inaccessibility of the Internet at college. The participants stated that the inadequacy of the current resourcing policy was one of the contributing factors to low student teacher motivation and negative attitudes towards their studies (sections 6.4.3 & 6.5.3). Participant #8 reported that a paucity of teaching resources "*killed TEYL teacher trainers*" enthusiasm for their TEYL teacher training profession' (in the words of participant #8, "*giết chết lòng đam mê nhiệt tình với nghề nghiệp*", Interview 19 November 2012). The TEYL teacher training classroom observation data showed that TEYL teacher training facilities were only a chalkboard, a mandated textbook and pictures available in the textbook. The TEYL teacher trainers were required to bring their own laptops and cassette players because of the shortage of resources (sections 6.4 & 6.5.3).

Sixthly, the lack of translation of the B2-level standard into teacher trainer practices potentially leads to the limited level of TEYL teachers' ELP (i.e. below B2-level international standard of English as required by the government in the current policy). As stated in section 2.6 and section 6.5.4, there is no evidence of using the B2-level international standard to assess TEYL student teachers' ELP. The communication between the TEYL policies at the national level and TEYL teacher trainers at the local level were ineffective. In 2012, some participants of this study reported that they had only a very vague idea about the B2-level international standard that TEYL teacher trainees are required to reach after college graduation. According to the participants, the poor understanding of the Decree No. 1400/QĐ-TTg issued by the government resulted in a gap that needed to be filled between

TEYL policy-makers at the national level and the TEYL policy-implementers at the local level. Another obstacle to the development of higher ELP for TEYL teacher trainees is the lack of the TEYL teacher trainers with professional expertise in designing English language proficiency tests equivalent to the B2-level international standard to measure the primary EFL student teachers' English language competence level.

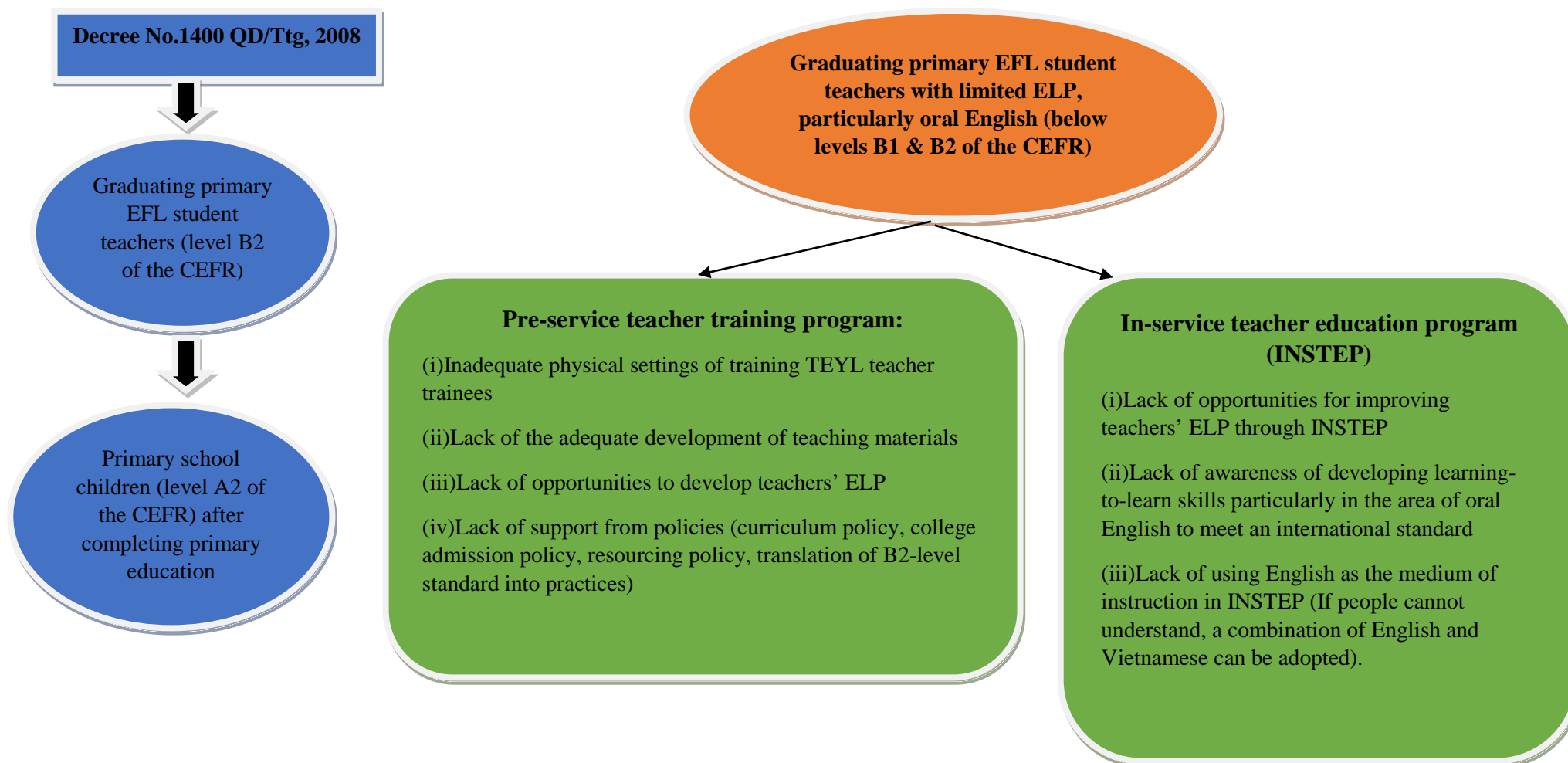
Seventhly, the low awareness of student teachers about the B2-level international standard of English language proficiency is also an obstacle that needs to be overcome. This is recognized by the primary EFL teacher trainers who stated that a majority of graduating primary EFL student teachers lacked an awareness of developing learning-to-learn competency and heavily relied on the teacher trainers as experts (section 6.3.5). It should be noted that lack of an awareness of developing learning-to-learn competency might come from the Vietnamese culture of education. Vietnamese learners tend to completely depend on teachers who are assumed as knowing-gurus and who are totally responsible of all learning activities in terms of (i) what to learn and (ii) how to learn.

Finally, the current in-service teacher education program (INSTEP) courses did not emphasise the development of higher English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers and TEYL teacher trainers, particularly oral English. The participants in this study reported that Vietnamese was adopted as the key medium of instruction for English language workshops in which some theories of TEYL and teaching strategies for young English language learners were provided. Some participants argued that if the English language was used in such workshops, very few primary EFL teachers could understand and apply these techniques into their teaching practices. The participants also reflected that there were very few available opportunities for improving EFL teachers' English language competence, particularly in the area of spoken English.

## 8.4 Implications

A critical analysis of developing higher English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam has indicated that English language teacher proficiency, particularly in the area of oral English has not yet been given a top priority in the current TEYL teacher preparation programs and INSTEP courses. Concerted action needs to be taken among those involved in TEYL teacher education to create changes in (i) the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education, in (ii) the college admissions policy, in (iii) the resourcing policy, in (iv) the translation of assessing TEYL student teachers' English language proficiency into practices and in (v) TPD programs. The findings of this present study have several implications for close collaboration among those involved in TEYL teacher education. Collaboration may be the most significant factor in the improvement of higher English language proficiency in the context of TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. The implications are presented in two interconnected categories including (i) TEYL teacher education policy makers and (ii) primary EFL teacher trainers. These implications contribute to the construction of a collaborative model of developing higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in Vietnam and perhaps other countries (section 8.5 below).

Figure 6: Critical factors that hinder the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers



#### **8.4.1 Implications for primary EFL teacher education policy makers.**

The early introduction of English to young English language learners in public primary schools has impacted significantly on language-in-education policies of countries where English is not the first language, such as Vietnam (Nguyen, 2011), Taiwan (Chern, 2010), Korea (Lee, 2009) and China (Hu, 2007). However, the policy-making at the national level and the policy-implementation at the local level in the context of Asian countries including Vietnam reveal many problems. One of these comprises inappropriately-trained teachers who have limited proficiency in English particularly oral English and professional language pedagogical skills (Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003). This section provides a number of implications for TEYL teacher education policy-makers in relation to possible improvements in (i) the current curriculum policy, (ii) the college admission policy, (iii) the resourcing policy, (iv) the translation of assessing primary EFL teachers' English language competence (i.e. B2-level international standard at the national level) into particular teaching practices at the local level and (v) the TPD programs.

Firstly, there needs to be an awareness of the importance of primary EFL student teachers' English language proficiency, particularly the quality of oral English language input (Cameron, 2003). That is because primary EFL teachers are those who will provide (sometimes the only) opportunities for primary school children to learn to be increasingly proficient in English (Pinter, 2009). Models of pronunciation, type and level of classroom language input, the design of language learning activities and many other matters depend on the quality of the English language proficiency of primary EFL teachers.

Secondly, TEYL teacher education policy-makers need to be conscious of the current limited levels of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers' English language proficiency (i.e. lower than the required B2-level), particularly in the area of oral English. It is strongly recommended that



TEYL policies should be reviewed to ensure that current English language teacher proficiency and professional skills of local TEYL teachers are improved.

Thirdly, there needs to be an awareness of the inconsistencies among policies. One of these inconsistencies is that the translation of B2-level standard into teacher trainer practices has not been made despite the government policy being issued on 30/9/2008. There is an urgent need for the collaboration between policy-makers with TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges to help to promptly translate a progression to the B2-level into TEYL student teachers' assessment. The change in TEYL teachers' assessment of English language proficiency using the B2-level international standard would potentially help TEYL teacher trainers aim their teaching strategies more specifically towards that standard.

Fourthly, there are a number of models internationally of INSTEP for language teachers. Vietnamese TEYL policy-makers could refer to these in working to improve teachers' ELP in Vietnam. As stated in section 4.3.2, the model of teacher professional development (TPD) with the purpose of building high quality language teacher capacity in New Zealand evaluated by Harvey et al. (2010) is possibly relevant to Vietnam where there is an urgent need to enhance in-service TEYL teacher capacity. English language authorities, TEYL teacher education policy makers in Vietnam should consider adopting this model because it supports New Zealand language teachers to sit and pass internationally- recognized language examinations. Teachers sit these at a range of proficiency levels, providing a relatively accurate measure of their teaching language proficiency. If this model were adopted in the TEYL teacher education program in Vietnam with a few adjustments to the Vietnamese context, it could help Vietnam address the shortage of competent primary EFL teachers in the long term.

Fifthly, also required is an adequate channel of communication about reforms in TEYL teacher education between all the stakeholders (e.g. the college management, TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL trainees and TEYL teachers). Although Decree No.1400/ QD-Ttg was issued in 2008, many participants in this study still had an unclear understanding of reforms in English language education (e.g. Primary EFL teacher trainer participants: #2, #5, #6 & #9; Primary EFL teacher trainee participants: #12, #13, #15, #18& #19; Primary EFL teacher participants: #20, #22, #25 & #27) including TEYL teacher education when they were interviewed about this topic in 2012. As stated in section 7.4.1, primary EFL teacher trainer participant #6 of this study reported that she had only a very vague idea about the requirements of level B2 of the CEFR. Thus, it was difficult for her to adjust teaching materials in a more relevant way. Primary EFL teacher trainer participant #2 reported that what she knew about level B2 of the CEFR and its requirements came from the information posted on the internet but she was not sure whether such information was accurate or not. She would doubt what was on the MOET site because what she needed was the MOET's written notification to show clearly what needed to be changed. TEYL teacher trainers are the direct implementers of government reforms, thus they must be informed of and be aware of the changes so as to change their TEYL teacher teaching practices. To produce an adequate channel of communication, the MOET should have an official website posting formal documents and guidelines on reforms. The guidelines could include information such as: (i) how to assess TEYL teacher trainees according to the required B2 international standard, (ii) how to develop TEYL teacher training materials to enhance TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency in English to a required level and (iii) how to design English language proficiency tests equivalent to the required international standard.

Finally, it should be noted that in the context of English language education in Vietnam, TEYL teacher trainers at college are not fully and adequately trained to work as actual TEYL

teacher trainers (section 2.6). That is, any university graduates in all different forms of EFL teacher training in Vietnam majoring in English are eligible to work as a TEYL teacher trainer at college in Vietnam. Thus, it is strongly recommended that TEYL policy-makers develop supportive policies for the successful implementation of In-Service Teacher Education Programs (INSTEPs), an important area for nurturing and developing learning-to-learn skills for TEYL teacher trainers, for TEYL teacher trainees and for TEYL teachers as well. The findings have indicated that TEYL teacher trainers seem to be facing two major challenges including (i) developing relevant TEYL teacher training materials to enhance TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency in English to a required level and (ii) designing English language proficiency tests equivalent to the required international standard. These challenges might be solved through INSTEPs and related policies (e.g. curriculum policy, college admission policy and resourcing policy).

In parallel with the improvement of these two areas, TEYL teacher trainers' English proficiency levels need to pay much attention through INSTEPs such as (i) oral presentation in English in international conferences or national symposia or (ii) sharing difficulties in teacher training across all provinces of the country. Furthermore, INSTEPs can help TEYL teacher trainers at college have the opportunity to study and work with experts in TEYL and TEYL teacher education and training in all English-speaking countries through immersion programs (IPs) in Great Britain, USA, Australia and New Zealand. This IPs should be held annually and should last from three to six months so as to reap benefits for the increasing improvement of TEYL and TEYL teacher education and training in Vietnam. To effectively use the resources for these IPs and to maximize the effectiveness of overseas IPs in terms of enhancing IP teacher trainer participants' experiences in their sojourn and potential gains for language students from the IPs, IP teacher trainer participants need to be provided with

adequate support and preparation for their (i) pre-departure, (ii) on-site and (iii) post-sojourn phases.

Also, the model of language and culture immersion experiences (LCIE) for teacher programmes evaluated by Harvey et al. (2011) might be of great importance to Vietnam in terms of IPs need to be critically reflected on and evaluated to modify less-effective or ineffective areas of organization and preparation. TEYL teacher trainers need to be provided with available opportunities to share initiatives and difficulties in their TEYL teacher training profession in consultation with experts in TEYL and TEYL teacher education.

Moreover, the model of online in-service teacher professional development INSTEPs with the initiative of creating opportunities for the enhancement of teachers' lifelong learning (LLL) competences proposed by Signer (2008) might be of great value to Vietnam. INSTEPs should exploit this model to help TEYL teacher trainers update their English knowledge and professional skills all the time.

Additionally, INSTEPs need to assist TEYL teacher trainers all over the nation to have the opportunity to sit and pass an internationally recognized exam rather than doing an IELTS/TOEFL-adapted tests designed by a local university so as to have practical experiences to help TEYL teacher trainees. A paucity of practical experiences in preparation for sitting and passing an internationally-standardized exam is a disadvantage to TEYL teacher trainers in helping TEYL teacher trainees achieve level B2 of the CEFR.

Also required are supportive policies for TEYL teacher trainees who need to be motivated by additional extra-curricular programs, English speaking clubs as well as with formal talks with experts in TEYL in English speaking countries. Like TEYL teacher trainers, TEYL teachers also need to foster and develop their learning-to-learn competency through INSTEPs and immersion programs (IPs).

#### **8.4.2 Implications for primary EFL teacher trainers.**

As stated above, many concerted actions need to be taken among those involved in TEYL and TEYL teacher education so as to create changes in (i) the curriculum policy on TEYL teacher education, in (ii) the college admissions policy, in (iii) the resourcing policy and in (iv) assessing the TEYL student teachers according to the CEFR framework.

Primary EFL teacher trainers need to develop a negotiated curriculum between TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teacher trainees for primary EFL teacher education. This should embrace the principle of learner-centeredness in teacher training practices. According to Nunan (2013), such a negotiated curriculum is developed from the ideas of Bartlett and Butler (1985) and it entails negotiation between teachers and students. That is the negotiation of (i) the desired teaching methods, of (ii) teaching materials, of (iii) teaching activities and of (iv) assessments.

The TEYL teacher trainee participants in this study reported that they were not taught to have learning-to-learn skills to compensate for their limited level of English language proficiency. TEYL teacher trainers should be aware of this difficulty and guide TEYL teacher trainees to construct and develop an adequate strategy for themselves towards the attainment of level-B2 international standard as required by the government policy.

In preparation for the graduating TEYL student teachers who can teach and assess primary school children according to the CEFR framework, the TEYL teacher trainers need to have professional expertise in teaching and assessing the graduating TEYL student teachers with this international standard of English language competence. As stated in section 8.4.1 INSTEPs need to help the TEYL teacher trainers the ability to develop relevant teaching materials and the ability to design tests of English language proficiency equivalent to the B2-level international standard so that these teacher trainers can help the TEYL student teachers

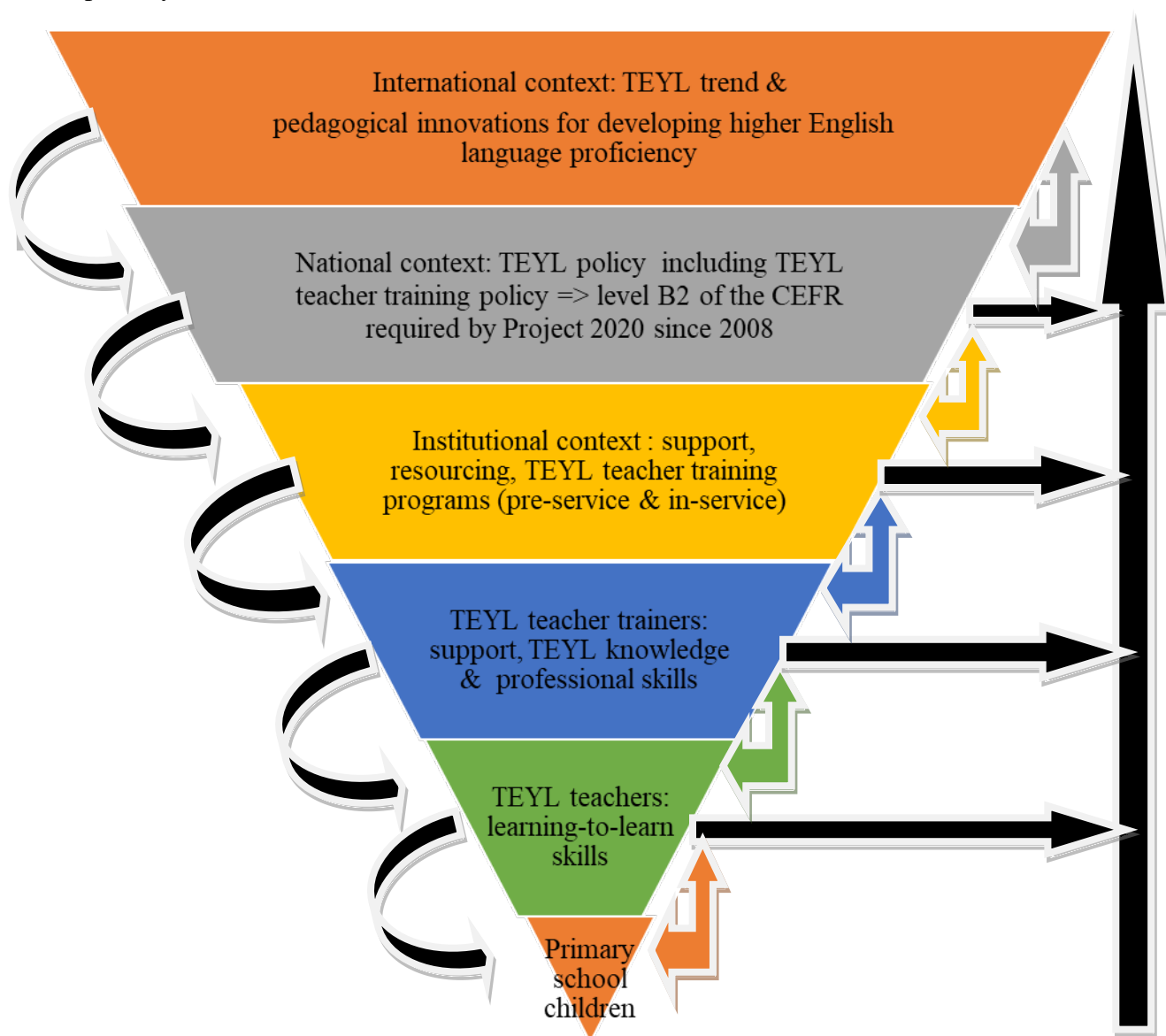
develop English language proficiency for primary school children in public schools. To facilitate learning for the TEYL student teachers to achieve level B2 of the CEFR, the current INSTEP designers need to closely cooperate with the TEYL teacher trainers at local colleges to implement the following:

- Developing the TEYL student teachers' awareness of needing to study towards the B2-level international standard;
- Introducing updated global trends in TEYL and TEYL teacher education (i.e. pedagogical innovations, models of TEYL and TEYL teacher education, teaching strategies for developing higher English language proficiency for learners particularly in the area of oral English, and improvisation skills to make language pedagogy in class become more meaningful);
- Creating opportunities for TEYL student teachers to share their individual learning strategies and difficulties they face in improving their current English language proficiency level, particularly in the area of oral English;

### **8.5 A suggested collaborative model of developing higher ELP for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers**

As a result of an examination of the research context (i.e. chapter two), the literature concerning the topic of this study (i.e. chapter three), the findings of this study (i.e. chapters six and seven) and the implications (section 8.4) a collaborative model of developing higher English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in public primary schools is being proposed here (Figure7).

Figure 7: A suggested collaborative model of developing higher English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers in Vietnamese context of TEYL teacher education



Parties involved in the collaborative model include:

- (i) Primary school principals and Head of English group in collaboration with TEYL teachers at public primary schools.
- (ii) The Rector at local Colleges/Universities and Dean of the English Department in collaboration with TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teacher trainees.
- (iii) Communist Party leaders, MOET, policy-makers, curriculum developers in collaboration with TEYL teacher trainers and practicing TEYL teachers in public primary schools. (It

should be noted that the role of the Communist Party is important as it is the dominant political party in Vietnam).

As seen in Figure 7, a six-component inverted pyramid is used to show interconnected relationships among these different groups with the largest one on the top (i.e. international context: TEYL trend & pedagogical innovations) and narrowing down. The smallest component at the bottom of the inverted pyramid as shown in Figure 7 is the micro context of locality in terms of all TEYL classrooms with primary school children in public primary schools in Vietnam. Here, let me explain (i) why the international context is the largest on the top and the most dominant of the pyramid and (ii) why Vietnamese children in public primary schools is the smallest at the bottom of the pyramid.

- **Why is the international context the largest on the top and the most dominant of the pyramid?**

As stated in chapter one and two, the history of TEYL in Vietnam has been significantly influenced by historical events internationally. Since the early 1990s Vietnam has witnessed a considerable increase in the number of English learners at all ages including primary school children. This is because English is employed in current Vietnam for access to well-paid employment in many different fields in big cities in Vietnam and for the opportunity of winning scholarships to study in industrially developed countries sponsored by the Vietnamese government and by other developed countries' governments. In other words, the international context of TEYL impacts greatly on the signature of Decree No.1400/QĐ-TTg on 30/9/2008 with a focus on the development of higher ELP for Vietnamese TEYL teachers, particularly oral English language skills. Thus, the international context is the largest on the top of the pyramid and it is the most significant factor contributing to the governmental requirement of the B2-level international standard for TEYL teachers in current Vietnam.



- **Why is Vietnamese children the smallest component at the bottom of the pyramid?**

There is a general public perception in Vietnam that English is a knowledge subject and it is taught as a sciences subject (for example, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry...). According to the view of many Vietnamese people, TEYL is easy and simple. That is because English knowledge for children is not demanding. Children are like empty vessels to be filled by teachers' knowledge. This seems to be in direct contradiction to the view of TEYL found in the literature. For example, Cameron (2003) argues that "it is not easy to teach children effectively, the reliance on oral language means that teaching children a foreign language may, in some way, be more demanding at primary level than at higher levels" (p.111).

As a result of the traditional pointview of TEYL in current Vietnam, primary EFL teachers may receive inappropriate training in TEYL knowledge and professional skills, particularly the area of oral skills at local college/university. Due to this traditional view, TEYL teacher education may be not given priority in the domain of EFL teacher training and TEYL teacher professional development. That is the reason why Vietnamese children is assumed to be the smallest component at the bottom of the pyramid and they are assumed to be the least important component according to the traditional view of many Vietnamese people including policy-makers, TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL teachers. Figure 7 describes the reality of TEYL and TEYL teacher education in Vietnam. It is implied that Vietnamese children, the smallest component at the bottom of the inverted pyramid but they are the most important factor of the pyramid. Figure 7 launches an appeal for an important change to TEYL and TEYL teacher education in Vietnam.

As seen in Figure 7, on the left side of the pyramid, one-directional arrows are used to show the current state of the operation of TEYL policy including TEYL teacher education policy in the context of English language education in Vietnam. A critical analysis of developing

higher English language proficiency in Vietnam has shown that there is a need for meeting a number of major challenges in raising English language proficiency levels for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English. As stated above, a lack of a flow of adequate communication among all parties involved in primary EFL teacher education may result in the inconsistency between the desired national objectives and teaching practices in local contexts.

To address the issue of TEYL teacher development for higher English language proficiency, this critical ethnographic study suggests a model of strong collaboration among all parties concerning TEYL and TEYL teacher education in the Vietnamese context. As seen in Figure 8 bi-directional arrows on the right side of the inverted pyramid are used to show that the communication process among all parties involved in TEYL and TEYL teacher education should be to streamline. This suggested process of bi-directional communication is described and explained below.

First, primary school children in public schools are the ultimate target of this model. Thus, primary school children's age specific English language learning requirements need for developing higher English language proficiency need to be met (i.e. level A2 of the CEFR). That is, the English language learning needs of primary school children for the attainment of the A2-level international standard should be taken into careful consideration when TEYL policy, including TEYL teacher education policy, is formally adopted. It is necessary for TEYL policy-makers including TEYL teacher education policy-makers to carefully consider the influences of TEYL teachers' English language competence on their TEYL practices (sections 3.4, 4.2 & 4.3 correspondingly). These policies need to ensure that primary school children in public primary schools are taught by primary EFL teachers who have a high level of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English so as to help primary school children attain the required level of English language proficiency.

Second, a bi-directional flow of communication among all parties involved in primary EFL teacher education should be prompt, direct and efficient. For example, Rectors at local colleges and universities and primary EFL teacher trainers need to be notified of TEYL teacher education policy with level B2 of the CEFR framework in an explicit way. According to the participants of this study, there was a lack of detailed written notification of changes by TEYL teacher education policy makers. The inappropriate (or even non) implementation of TEYL teacher education policies is a major obstacle to the development of higher levels of English language competence, particularly in the area of oral English for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers.

Third, effective TEYL requires more than the work of primary EFL teachers in public primary schools. Thus, in terms of the local level, principals in public primary schools need to be well-informed of TEYL policy and its implementation. It is important for primary school principals to support primary EFL teachers with appropriate TEYL instruction facilities and support for their professional activities and innovative teaching practices. Primary EFL teacher participant #20 reported that when she tried to introduce language learning games that she had learned about in INSTEP workshops she was stopped because the noise from her class apparently prevented students in other classes from studying. The principal in her primary school did not support noisy activities in the TEYL classes.

Fourth, given the importance of primary EFL teacher trainee proficiency in effective TEYL and the fact that a majority of primary EFL teacher trainees in the teacher training course (2010-2013) have been unable to reach level B2 of the CEFR as required by the Vietnamese government, it is critical that the current primary EFL teacher training programs be fully re-examined to ensure they prioritise the development of higher English language proficiency. To ensure that TEYL teachers have a high level of English language competence particularly in the area of oral English so as to provide primary school children with rich input in the

English language, it is advisable that primary EFL teacher trainees be given enough time in current TEYL teacher education programs for the improvement of their English language proficiency level and professional skills. Thus, it is necessary for TEYL teacher training curriculum policy-makers to reconsider the amount of time dedicated to the core modules in the current TEYL teacher training program. Moreover, Communist Party propaganda policy in the current TEYL teacher training program should be taken into account because it is a major impediment to the curriculum policy revision.

Finally, as shown in Figure 7, it is necessary for all parties involved in TEYL and TEYL teacher development to be given plenty of available and accessible opportunities to update their TEYL knowledge and professional skills through in-service teacher training workshops, international conferences, national or local symposia sponsored by the home government or by the collaboration between the home government and the foreign governments. Primary EFL teachers in public primary schools need to be provided with a diversity of opportunities to share their TEYL teaching practices, initiatives, practical experiences and even unsolved TEYL problems in local contexts. Such opportunities can help primary EFL teachers learn from each other to find better solutions to their TEYL practices and problems. It is advisable that primary EFL teacher trainers at local college and university be given more opportunities to get access to world-wide TEYL trends and pedagogical innovations to enrich and improve their current TEYL and TEYL teacher.

It would be beneficial for primary EFL teacher trainers in Vietnam to be given more opportunities to collaboratively work with world-wide experts in the field of TEYL and TEYL teacher education to seek useful expert advice and opinions to gradually enhance the effectiveness of TEYL teacher training in Vietnam including the development of higher levels of English language competence for primary EFL teachers.

## **8.6 A blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam**

Future policy on TEYL teacher education in the Vietnamese context is proposed as follows:

(i) review of current TEYL teacher training program policy; (ii) review College Admissions policy; (iii) review resourcing policy and (iv) translation of B2-level standard into practices.

It should be noted that these four areas need to be improved increasingly and synchronously (also see section 6.5).

### **(i) Review of current TEYL teacher training program policy**

Firstly, the MOET should evaluate current TEYL teacher training program policy in terms of (i) how current teacher training programs support Vietnamese TEYL teachers to achieve the desired level of ELP as required by the MOET (i.e. B2 level of the CEFR); (ii) whether Communist Party propaganda in the TEYL teacher education program impacts on curriculum policy. For such an evaluation MOET can consult with local and international experts in TEYL teacher education.

The evaluation should include three groups of participants: (i) TEYL teacher trainers; (ii) TEYL student teachers and (iii) TEYL teachers. Participants throughout the country (64 provinces of Vietnam) could be required to comment on the current TEYL teacher training program by anonymously completing a semi-structured questionnaire online. The Vietnamese language should be used in the questionnaire so that participants can express their ideas unreservedly. The questionnaire should be designed by the TEYL teacher training program developers in the MOET in cooperation with experienced teacher trainers at National universities/ colleges as well as support/assistance from aid agencies in the field of TEYL teacher education. Apart from the questionnaire, TEYL teacher trainers and TEYL practicing teachers could have their classes observed and lessons audio-recorded for later analysis.

Secondly, TEYL teacher trainers in each province could be given the opportunity to discuss the content of TEYL teacher education courses. Recently, some modules have been added in the training course such as (i) knowledge of child development; (ii) psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics; (iii) music and (iv) art. However, these modules have been delivered through the Vietnamese language. To help student teachers all modules of the TEYL teacher training programs should be instructed in English.

Thirdly, curriculum policy, implementation and policy evaluation should be frequently undertaken (e.g. every 5 years) to ensure that the TEYL teacher education policy is effectively implemented in the particular context of Vietnam in terms of regularly improving negative aspects of the policy.

## **(ii) Review College Admissions policy**

Firstly, in parallel with the reconsideration TEYL teacher education program policy, the MOET needs to re-evaluate the current College Admissions policy. It should be noted that College Admissions policy is stipulated by the MOET. The MOET mandates an entry level of English language proficiency (ELP) according to the particular context of Vietnam and it may change a little bit in accordance with the current situation. Entry levels of English language proficiency for TEYL teacher education programs in other regions of the country are similar to those mentioned in this thesis (i.e. an entry level of IELTS 1.0 is acceptable). Paradoxically, the duration of three years training at local college together with the inadequate TEYL teacher training program policy to raise a level of ELP from IELTS 1.0 to 6.5 (approximately B2 level) is very challenging. Moreover, students are unable to achieve a high level of English language proficiency prior to applying for College entry due to the particular context of teaching and learning English in lower grades in Vietnam (i.e. junior

secondary school level and senior secondary school level). Thus, the provision of pre-sectional courses prior to the formal TEYL teacher training course is really necessary.

Secondly, to improve IELTS score of 1.0 (overall or each individual skill), students need at least 2 pre-sectional 12-week courses to raise IELTS 1.0 to 3.0 prior to the formal TEYL teacher training course (see details in vi. below). These courses should be designed extensively to help students improve their current English language skills. It is strongly advised that the MOET should help TEYL teacher trainers at local College/ University have adequate skills of designing tests of ELP through In-service Teacher Education Programs (INSTEPs) with the support of aid agencies in the field of TEYL teacher education. That is because it is very expensive for TEYL student teachers at local colleges to sit an actual IELTS to measure their ELP level.

### **(iii) Review resourcing policy**

As stated in section 6.5.3. resourcing policy refers to the budgetary allocation and provision of financial resources for English language education programs (i.e. resourcing policy for (i) developing pre-service and in-service teacher training programs for public primary schools targeted at enhancing current English language teacher proficiency levels, (ii) developing adequate TEYL materials, (iii) designing a nationwide curriculum in a particular context, (iv) supplying adequate teaching facilities (i.e. Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Internet access...) for educational institutions and public primary schools, (v) critically evaluating the educational programs and (vi) reviewing resourcing policy and language-in-education implementation in both national setting and local contexts). Resourcing policy is a significant factor contributing to raise the quality of primary EFL teacher education (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Nguyen, 2011). Thus, the MOET should re-consider the resourcing policy for TEYL and TEYL teacher education to ensure that TEYL teacher trainees are

appropriately trained with a desired level of ELP and professional skills. Then, these TEYL student teachers will help young English language learners in public primary schools achieve A2-level of the CEFR as required by the MOET.

#### **(iv) Translation of B2-level standard into practices**

As stated in section 2.3 of the thesis, although Vietnam adopts the CEFR in FL policies at the national level, there is no evidence of the translation of the CEFR into TEYL teacher trainees' proficiency assessment at the local level. That is, Vietnamese TEYL student teachers have been training to meet a locally-recognized standard of English language competence. For example, local curriculum documents do not have reference to CEFR. Moreover, the CEFR has not been translated into seven exams of ELP including the graduation exam during the teacher training course.

It is necessary that the MOET promptly deploys international standard of ELP into the current TEYL teacher training courses, particularly seven end-of-term exams of ELP including the graduation exam. To do this effectively, the MOET can act in consultation with top experts in TEYL teacher education together with experienced TEYL teacher trainers at local Colleges and University. As stated above, TEYL teacher trainers need to be appropriately trained to be able to design English language proficiency tests that are equivalent to B2-level of the CEFR. Moreover, they also need to be trained to exploit the materials effectively to meet the needs of their learners.

Below is a suggested translation of B2-level standard into practices:

#### **College Admission policy:**

##### **Entry level of IELTS 1.0 (accepted by the MOET)**

(1) Pre-sectional 12 week course A: IELTS 1.0-> 2.0

(2) Pre-sectional 12 week course B: IELTS 2.0->3.0

##### **TEYL teacher training program (7 end-of-term exams of ELP) within 3 years**



(It should be noted that inappropriate modules in the current TEYL teacher education need to be cut off, for example:

- (i) Marxism and Leninism;
- (ii) HoChiMinhism;
- (iii) The Vietnamese Communist Party;
- (iv) State administration and educational management...

Moreover, English is used as the main medium of instruction of all modules. 90% plus of the English language is highly encouraged as suggested by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2012).

The content of TEYL teacher training courses need to add important modules and these modules need to be instructed in English instead of the Vietnamese language as previous courses:

- (i) Knowledge about child development
  - (ii) How young English language learners learn English as a foreign language
  - (iii) Knowledge of psycholinguistics & sociolinguistics
  - (iv) Teaching methodology for young English language learners as an additional language
- (A) Exam1: IELTS 3.0-> 3.5
- (B) Exam 2: IELTS 3.5->4.0
- (C) Exam 3: IELTS 4.0-> 4.5
- (D) Exam 4: IELTS 4.5-> 5.0
- (E) Exam 5: IELTS 5.0-> 5.5
- (F) Exam 6: IELTS 5.5->6.0
- (G) Exam 7/Graduation exam: IELTS 6.0-> 6.5 (B2-level of the CEFR as required by the MOET)

### **8.7Areas for further research**

This critical ethnographic study has contributed to the construction of knowledge about the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in the Vietnamese context. The knowledge constructed through this study is critical to give an insight into the participants' view of contextual realities and challenges required to be met for developing higher levels of English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. However, this study has its limitations as shown in section 5.6. Thus, this study merits further investigation.

First, as stated in section 5.6, this study investigated a small number of participants (N=29) in a small and poor province in Vietnam, so the issue of generalization may be restricted. To

solve the problem of generalization, a larger sample of participants could be adopted. For example, two or more than two researchers (i.e. both insider and outsider researchers) who are interested in this topic could collaboratively conduct a critical ethnographic study in two or more than two different provinces in Vietnam. Triangulation of different researchers with different backgrounds, with different groups of participants in different provinces in Vietnam could help generalize the issue under investigation.

Second, a fuller picture of primary EFL teacher education for higher English language proficiency in Vietnam may be shown by longitudinal classroom observations for one academic year or more than one academic year. In this study, each primary EFL teacher trainer participant was only observed his/her teacher training class once and each primary EFL teacher participant in five public schools was observed his/her TEYL class once. The increase in the amount of time dedicated to classroom observations (i.e. two or more than two instead of once each semester) during the whole academic year or more than one academic year may give a more insightful understanding of the topic.

## **8.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this critical ethnographic study has contributed to the construction of knowledge about the development of higher English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in the Vietnamese context of English language education at the primary school level. Through thick descriptive analysis (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Neuman, 2011) of the three main sources of data, the study has aimed to embrace four specific objectives. First, it has critically analyzed the contextual challenges in raising English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers, particularly in the area of oral English language proficiency. Second, it has examined the better integration of developing English language teacher proficiency into current TEYL

teacher training programmes. Third, it has suggested improvements in pre-and in-service primary EFL teacher education programs for higher levels of English language proficiency for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. Based on the findings, this study has suggested areas of improvements that potentially help develop higher levels of English language competence particularly in the area of oral English for Vietnamese primary EFL teachers in public primary schools in Vietnam and other countries. It has done this through enumerating implications (i) for TEYL teacher education policy-makers and (ii) for TEYL teacher trainers by developing a collaborative model of developing higher English language proficiency in Vietnam. Moreover, it proposes a blueprint for future policy on TEYL teacher education in Vietnam and other countries in the same context can perhaps benefit from this as well.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Ethics approval



# MEMORANDUM

## *Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)*

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To: SharonHarvey  
From: Rosemary Godbold, Executive Secretary, AUTEC  
Date: 7 August 2012  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 12/146: Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study.

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Dear Sharon

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 25 June 2012 and I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement by AUTEC at its meeting on 27 August 2012.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 7 August 2015.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 7 August 2015;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 7 August 2015 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, if your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 6902. Alternatively you may contact your AUTECH Faculty Representative (a list with contact details may be found in the Ethics Knowledge Base at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>).

On behalf of AUTECH and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Godbold

Executive Secretary

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: Vu Thi Thu Trinhannvutrinh65@yahoo.com

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## Appendix B:

English version (Group 1: Primary EFL teacher trainer participants)

# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 23 April 2012

**Project title:** Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study.

### **An Invitation**

I am Vu Thi Thu Trinh. Now I am working towards a PhD at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. The overall objective of this research is to construct knowledge about developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam. Participation in the research is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the research project at any time. If you withdraw, there will be no bad consequences for you and for your participation in any other professional development.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of the research is to enhance the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam in terms of (i) adjusting the current primary EFL teacher training strategies, (ii) modifying the current curriculum, (iii) organizing and adapting professional workshops for local primary language teachers in the upcoming years.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are chosen to participate in the research project because you are directly involved in the development of EFL teacher training in Vietnam. Your contribution will help improve the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam.

### **What will happen in this research?**

I would like to interview you and observe your classes once from September to December, 2012 at a mutually convenient time. The interview and class observation will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

I hope there is a low risk of you feeling embarrassed, but there is a possibility that you may feel uncomfortable about being interviewed and classroom observed. You may be concerned that you might be identifiable from information gained.

### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

I will be writing up reports from the data collected from your interview and classroom observation but I would like to assure that I will protect your identity and your local college at all times. I would like to gain a detailed picture of how to develop EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam rather than in you particularly.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits are that I will be able to present to local leaders a detailed picture of the development of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam. This information will be very useful to local teacher training colleges in terms of (i) improving pre-service primary EFL teacher education strategies; of (ii) adjusting curriculum designs and of (iii) planning in-service primary EFL teacher education workshops. You may also find that when completing the interviews and classroom observations, your reflections on effective EFLT for primary school children are beneficial in terms of your primary EFL teacher training practices later. Additionally, this research will benefit primary EFL teacher trainees and it will benefit primary school children who will be taught by these students. Last but not least, this research will benefit TEYL policy makers who are expected to review the current TEYL policies to ensure that (i) primary EFL teachers will be trained more efficiently and professionally with appropriately-aged methodology of teaching and that (ii) primary school children will be taught in a more professional environment of language learning with more sufficient exposure to English in authentic situations to be inter-culturally competent.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality will be my major concern and responsibility. All the information collected will be confidential to the research project and will not be used in any way where you could be identified at any time. Your name will not be identified in any research project, presentation or publication and I will also disguise any other identifying details in writing up the reports.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

Your time will be your main cost.

(i) I will contact you to mutually agree about the time and contents of the interview and class observation

(ii) I will need to interview you once from 40 to 60 minutes and the interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. Also, I will need to contact you shortly to clarify details from the interview, but this will be kept to a minimum.

(iii) I will need to observe your class and the classroom observation will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. In addition, I will need to collect all the documents in relation to your professional practices.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I would like to give you a week to consider my invitation to participate in the interview and classroom observation and then I will contact you by phone to see if you are interested in taking part in.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in the interview and in the classroom observation for the part of research project, please phone me or email me to indicate your readiness. In addition, please complete the “Consent Form” and I will pick it up when I come to interview you.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes. I will send you the transcriptions of the interview and of the classroom observation to confirm accuracy. If you are interested in the findings of this study and want to be informed of the results of this research, please email me and I will send you a summary of the research results of this study when this project is completed.

### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr. Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 8860.

### **Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher Contact Details:

Vu Thi Thu Trinh, [hs3216@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hs3216@aut.ac.nz) or [annvutrinh65@yahoo.com](mailto:annvutrinh65@yahoo.com)

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.ac.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.ac.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 August, 2012, AUTECH Reference number 12/146.

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## Appendix C:

Vietnamese version (Group 1: Primary EFL teacher trainer participants)

# THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU



**Thông tin ghi ngày:** 23/4/ 2012

**Tên đề tài:**

Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN

**Lời mời tham gia:**

Tôi tên là Vũ Thi Thu Trinh. Tôi đang làm nghiên cứu sinh tại đại học AUT, New Zealand. Tôi mời quý vị tham gia vào đề tài của tôi, ‘Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN’. Mục tiêu của đề tài là xây dựng kiến thức về việc phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh dạy tiểu học ở các trường tiểu học công lập ở Việt Nam. Tham gia đóng góp cho đề tài nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và quý vị có thể rút lui bất cứ khi nào nếu muốn. Nếu quý vị rút lui, sẽ không ảnh hưởng gì đến công việc của quý vị

**Mục đích của nghiên cứu?**

Nhằm nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học tại các trường công lập. Cụ thể nghiên cứu này giúp(i) điều chỉnh chiến lược đào tạo sinh viên, (ii) cải tiến chương trình đào tạo, (iii) tổ chức và điều chỉnh hội thảo cho giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học địa phương trong thời gian tới.

**Tại sao quý vị được mời tham gia vào chương trình này?**

Bởi vì quý vị liên quan trực tiếp đến công tác đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học địa phương và sự đóng góp của quý vị là rất lớn cho sự thành công của đề tài.

**Quý vị đóng góp như thế nào vào nghiên cứu này?**

Quý vị sẽ được mời tham gia phỏng vấn và dự giờ một lần từ tháng 9 đến tháng 12 / 2012 vào 1 thời gian thuận tiện cho cả đôi bên. Cuộc phỏng vấn và dự giờ sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh.

**Những bất lợi và cạm bẫy?**

Có thể quý vị cảm thấy lúng túng và không thoải mái khi trả lời phỏng vấn và dự giờ và lo lắng vì thông tin cung cấp sẽ làm lộ ra danh tính.

## **Giảm bất lợi và cạm bẫy bằng cách nào?**

Những thông tin quý vị cung cấp sẽ được dùng để viết báo cáo, nhưng tôi xin bảo đảm để danh tính, và nơi làm việc của quý vị sẽ không bị lộ ra. Điều mà đề tài này muốn đạt đến là về 1 bức tranh chi tiết về việc làm thế nào để việc phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học tại VN hiệu quả, chứ không phải là cá nhân của quý vị.

## **Lợi ích nào đạt được khi đề tài thành công?**

Một bức tranh chi tiết về thực trạng việc dạy và đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học VN sẽ được trình bày cho quý lãnh đạo liên quan. Thông tin chi tiết này rất có lợi để giúp (i) cải tiến chiến lược đào tạo giáo viên, (ii) điều chỉnh thiết kế chương trình đào tạo & (iii) lên kế hoạch cho các hội thảo đào tạo giáo viên. Sự phản ánh của quý vị về việc dạy tiếng Anh hiệu quả bậc tiểu học sẽ rất có lợi cho công việc của quý vị sau này. Ngoài ra, sinh viên được đào tạo làm giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học và các em học sinh trường tiểu học công lập do những sinh viên này giảng dạy sẽ rất có lợi. Cuối cùng nhưng không kém phần quan trọng, nghiên cứu này có lợi cho những người làm chính sách dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em bậc tiểu học giúp góp phần cải tiến bảo đảm (i) sinh viên được đào tạo hiệu quả và chuyên nghiệp hơn với phương pháp dạy thích hợp với độ tuổi trẻ em bậc tiểu học và (ii) trẻ em tiểu học được học trong 1 môi trường chuyên nghiệp hơn, có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc hơn với những tình huống đòi thực để khả năng tiếng Anh của các em tốt hơn.

## **Sự riêng tư và bí mật được bảo vệ như thế nào?**

Bảo vệ sự riêng tư và bí mật là mối quan tâm lớn và là trách nhiệm của tôi trong vai trò là nghiên cứu sinh. Tất cả thông tin thu thập sẽ được bảo mật và không sử dụng vào mục đích nào khác để lộ ra danh tính quý vị. Tên thật của quý vị sẽ không được phép dùng trong đề tài này, trong phần trình bày cũng như xuất bản.

## **Chi phí cho việc tham gia vào đề tài?**

Thời gian là chi phí chính cho đề tài này

- (i) Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị để thống nhất về thời gian và nội dung của phỏng vấn và dự giờ
- (ii) Quý vị sẽ được phỏng vấn 1 lần khoảng 40-60 phút và cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, tôi xin phép gặp quý vị 1 khoảng thời gian ngắn để làm rõ những thông tin mà quý vị cung cấp trong cuộc phỏng vấn nhưng chưa rõ ràng.
- (iii) Quý vị sẽ được dự giờ 1 lần và giờ dự sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, tôi xin phép thu thập những tài liệu liên quan đến việc giảng dạy của quý vị.

## **Cần nhắc lời mời như thế nào?**

Quý vị có 1 tuần để suy nghĩ, cân nhắc lời mời. Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị qua điện thoại để hỏi ý kiến đã cân nhắc kỹ càng chưa.

## **Bằng cách nào để nhận ra là quý vị đã cân nhắc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này?**

Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, xin gọi điện thoại cho tôi để chứng minh là quý vị đã sẵn sàng. Ngoài ra, xin quý vị điền thông tin vào giấy “Xác nhận đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu” khi quý vị tham gia phỏng vấn.

### **Nhận phản hồi kết quả nghiên cứu như thế nào?**

Quý vị sẽ nhận được nội dung đã được thu âm phỏng vấn và dự giờ để xác nhận độ chính xác của văn bản. Nếu quý vị quan tâm đến kết quả nghiên cứu, xin email cho tôi và quý vị sẽ nhận được bảng tóm tắt khi nghiên cứu này hoàn tất.

### **Thông tin liên lạc:**

Về nội dung đề tài, xin quý vị liên lạc với người hướng dẫn đề tài, Phó GSTS Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), (+64) 921 9659, phân khoa Nhân Văn ứng dụng, đại học AUT, New Zealand.

Về phương thức tiến hành nghiên cứu, xin quý vị liên lạc với thư ký điều hành, T.S Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9999 ext 8860.

Được sự đồng ý của Ủy ban đạo đức, trường Đại học Công nghệ AUT, NewZealand ký ngày 7/8/2012, số 12/146.

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## Appendix D:

English version (Group 2: Primary EFL teacher trainee participants)

# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 23 April 2012

**Project title:** Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study.

### **An Invitation**

I am Vu Thi Thu Trinh. Now I am working towards a PhD at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. The overall objective of this research is to construct knowledge about developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam. Participation in the research is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the research project at any time. If you withdraw, there will be no bad consequences for you and for your participation in any other professional development.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of the research is to enhance the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam in terms of (i) adjusting the current primary EFL teacher training strategies, (ii) modifying the current curriculum, (iii) organizing and adapting professional workshops for local primary language teachers in the upcoming years.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are chosen to participate in the research project because you are directly involved in the development of EFL teacher training in Vietnam. Your contribution will help improve the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam.

### **What will happen in this research?**

I would like to interview you once from September to December, 2012 at a mutually convenient time. The interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

I hope there is a low risk of you feeling embarrassed, but there is a possibility that you may feel uncomfortable about being interviewed. You may be concerned that you might be identifiable from information gained.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

I will be writing up reports from the data collected from your interview but I would like to assure that I will protect your identity and your local college at all times. I would like to gain a detailed picture of how to develop EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam rather than in you particularly.

**What are the benefits?**

The benefits are that I will be able to present to local leaders a detailed picture of the development of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam. This information will be very useful to local teacher training colleges in terms of (i) improving pre-service primary EFL teacher education strategies; of (ii) adjusting curriculum designs and of (iii) planning in-service primary EFL teacher education workshops. You may also find that when completing the interviews and classroom observations, your reflections on effective EFLT for primary school children are beneficial in terms of your primary EFL teacher training practices later. Additionally, this research will benefit primary EFL teacher trainees and it will benefit primary school children who will be taught by these students. Last but not least, this research will benefit TEYL policy makers who are expected to review the current TEYL policies to ensure that (i) primary EFL teachers will be trained more efficiently and professionally with appropriately-aged methodology of teaching and that (ii) primary school children will be taught in a more professional environment of language learning with more sufficient exposure to English in authentic situations to be inter-culturally competent.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality will be my major concern and responsibility. All the information collected will be confidential to the research project and will not be used in any way where you could be identified at any time. Your name will not be identified in any research project, presentation or publication and I will also disguise any other identifying details in writing up the reports.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

Your time will be your main cost.

- (i) I will contact you to mutually agree about the time and contents of the interview
- (ii) I will need to interview you once from 40 to 60 minutes and the interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. Also, I will need to contact you shortly to clarify details from the interview, but this will be kept to a minimum.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I would like to give you a week to consider my invitation to participate in the interview and then I will contact you by phone to see if you are interested in taking part in.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in the interview for the part of research project, please phone me or email me to indicate your readiness. In addition, please complete the “Consent Form” and I will pick it up when I come to interview you.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes. I will send you the transcriptions of the interview to confirm accuracy. If you are interested in the findings of this study and want to be informed of the results of this research, please email me and I will send you a summary of the research results of this study when this project is completed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr. Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 8860.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher Contact Details:

Vu Thi Thu Trinh, [hsw3216@aut.au.nz](mailto:hsw3216@aut.au.nz) or [annvutrinh65@yahoo.com](mailto:annvutrinh65@yahoo.com)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 August, 2012, AUTECH Reference number 12/146.

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## Appendix E:

Vietnamese version (Group 2: Primary EFL teacher trainee participants)

# THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU



**Thông tin ghi ngày:** 23/4/ 2012

**Tên đề tài:**

Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN

**Lời mời tham gia:**

Tôi tên là Vũ Thi Thu Trinh. Tôi đang làm nghiên cứu sinh tại đại học AUT, New Zealand. Tôi mời quý vị tham gia vào đề tài của tôi, ‘Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN’. Mục tiêu của đề tài là xây dựng kiến thức về việc phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh dạy tiểu học ở các trường tiểu học công lập ở Việt Nam. Tham gia đóng góp cho đề tài nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và quý vị có thể rút lui bất cứ khi nào nếu muốn. Nếu quý vị rút lui, sẽ không ảnh hưởng gì đến công việc của quý vị.

**Mục đích của nghiên cứu?**

Nhằm nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học tại các trường công lập. Cụ thể nghiên cứu này giúp(i) điều chỉnh chiến lược đào tạo sinh viên, (ii) cải tiến chương trình đào tạo, (iii) tổ chức và điều chỉnh hội thảo cho giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học địa phương trong thời gian tới.

**Tại sao quý vị được mời tham gia vào chương trình này?**

Bởi vì quý vị liên quan trực tiếp đến công tác đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học địa phương và sự đóng góp của quý vị là rất lớn cho sự thành công của đề tài.

**Quý vị đóng góp như thế nào vào nghiên cứu này?**

Quý vị sẽ được mời tham gia phỏng vấn một lần từ tháng 9 đến tháng 12 / 2012 vào 1 thời gian thuận tiện cho cả đôi bên. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh.

**Những bất lợi và cạm bẫy?**

Có thể quý vị cảm thấy lúng túng và không thoải mái khi trả lời phỏng vấn và lo lắng vì thông tin cung cấp sẽ làm lộ ra danh tính.

## **Giảm bất lợi và cạm bẫy bằng cách nào?**

Những thông tin quý vị cung cấp sẽ được dùng để viết báo cáo, nhưng tôi xin bảo đảm để danh tính, và nơi làm việc của quý vị sẽ không bị lộ ra. Điều mà đề tài này muốn đạt đến là vẽ 1 bức tranh chi tiết về việc làm thế nào để phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học hiệu quả, chứ không phải là cá nhân của quý vị.

## **Lợi ích nào đạt được khi đề tài thành công?**

Một bức tranh chi tiết về thực trạng việc dạy và đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học VN sẽ được trình bày cho quý lãnh đạo liên quan. Thông tin chi tiết này rất có lợi để giúp (i) cải tiến chiến lược đào tạo giáo viên, (ii) điều chỉnh thiết kế chương trình đào tạo & (iii) lên kế hoạch cho các hội thảo đào tạo giáo viên. Sự phản ánh của quý vị về việc dạy tiếng Anh hiệu quả bậc tiểu học sẽ rất có lợi cho công việc của quý vị sau này. Ngoài ra, sinh viên được đào tạo làm giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học và các em học sinh trường tiểu học công lập do những sinh viên này giảng dạy sẽ rất có lợi. Cuối cùng nhưng không kém phần quan trọng, nghiên cứu này có lợi cho những người làm chính sách dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em bậc tiểu học giúp góp phần cải tiến bảo đảm (i) sinh viên được đào tạo hiệu quả và chuyên nghiệp hơn với phương pháp dạy thích hợp với độ tuổi trẻ em bậc tiểu học và (ii) trẻ em tiểu học được học trong 1 môi trường chuyên nghiệp hơn, có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc hơn với những tình huống đòi thực để khả năng tiếng Anh của các em tốt hơn.

## **Sự riêng tư và bí mật được bảo vệ như thế nào?**

Bảo vệ sự riêng tư và bí mật là mối quan tâm lớn và là trách nhiệm của tôi trong vai trò là nghiên cứu sinh. Tất cả thông tin thu thập sẽ được bảo mật và không sử dụng vào mục đích nào khác để lộ ra danh tính quý vị. Tên thật của quý vị sẽ không được phép dùng trong đề tài này, trong phần trình bày cũng như xuất bản.

## **Chi phí cho việc tham gia vào đề tài?**

Thời gian là chi phí chính cho đề tài này

(i) Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị để thống nhất về thời gian và nội dung của phỏng vấn

(ii) Quý vị sẽ được phỏng vấn 1 lần khoảng 40-60 phút và cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, tôi xin phép gặp quý vị 1 khoảng thời gian ngắn để làm rõ những thông tin mà quý vị cung cấp nhưng chưa rõ ràng.

## **Cần nhắc lời mời như thế nào?**

Quý vị có 1 tuần để suy nghĩ, cân nhắc lời mời. Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị qua điện thoại để hỏi ý kiến đã cân nhắc kỹ càng chưa.

## **Bằng cách nào để nhận ra là quý vị đã cân nhắc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này?**

Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, xin gọi điện thoại cho tôi để chứng minh là quý vị đã sẵn sàng. Ngoài ra, xin quý vị điền thông tin vào giấy “Xác nhận đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu” khi quý vị tham gia phỏng vấn.



### **Nhận phản hồi kết quả nghiên cứu như thế nào?**

Quý vị sẽ nhận được nội dung đã được thu âm phỏng vấn để xác nhận độ chính xác của văn bản. Nếu quý vị quan tâm đến kết quả nghiên cứu, xin email cho tôi và quý vị sẽ nhận được bảng tóm tắt khi nghiên cứu này hoàn tất.

### **Thông tin liên lạc:**

Về nội dung đề tài, xin quý vị liên lạc với người hướng dẫn đề tài, Phó GSTS Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9659, phân khoa Nhân Văn ứng dụng, đại học AUT, New Zealand.

Về phương thức tiến hành nghiên cứu, xin quý vị liên lạc với thư ký điều hành, T.S Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9999 ext 8860.

Được sự đồng ý của Ủy ban đạo đức, trường Đại học Công nghệ AUT, NewZealand ký ngày 7/8/2012, số 12/146.

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## Appendix F:

English version (Group 3: Primary EFL teacher participants)

# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 23 April 2012

**Project title:** Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study.

### **An Invitation**

I am Vu Thi Thu Trinh. Now I am working towards a PhD at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. The overall objective of this research is to construct knowledge about developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam. Participation in the research is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the research project at any time. If you withdraw, there will be no bad consequences for you and for your participation in any other professional development.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of the research is to enhance the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam in terms of (i) adjusting the current primary EFL teacher training strategies, (ii) modifying the current curriculum, (iii) organizing and adapting professional workshops for local primary language teachers in the upcoming years.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are chosen to participate in the research project because you are directly involved in the development of EFL teacher training in Vietnam. Your contribution will help improve the quality of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam.

### **What will happen in this research?**

I would like to interview you and observe your classes once from September to December, 2012 at a mutually convenient time. The interview and class observation will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

I hope there is a low risk of you feeling embarrassed, but there is a possibility that you may feel uncomfortable about being interviewed and classroom observed. You may be concerned that you might be identifiable from information gained.

### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

I will be writing up reports from the data collected from your interview and classroom observation but I would like to assure that I will protect your identity and your local college at all times. I would like to gain a detailed picture of how to develop EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam rather than in you particularly.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits are that I will be able to present to local leaders a detailed picture of the development of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam. This information will be very useful to local teacher training colleges in terms of (i) improving pre-service primary EFL teacher education strategies; of (ii) adjusting curriculum designs and of (iii) planning in-service primary EFL teacher education workshops. You may also find that when completing the interviews and classroom observations, your reflections on effective EFLT for primary school children are beneficial in terms of your primary EFL teacher training practices later. Additionally, this research will benefit primary EFL teacher trainees and it will benefit primary school children who will be taught by these students. Last but not least, this research will benefit TEYL policy makers who are expected to review the current TEYL policies to ensure that (i) primary EFL teachers will be trained more efficiently and professionally with appropriately-aged methodology of teaching and that (ii) primary school children will be taught in a more professional environment of language learning with more sufficient exposure to English in authentic situations to be inter-culturally competent.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality will be my major concern and responsibility. All the information collected will be confidential to the research project and will not be used in any way where you could be identified at any time. Your name will not be identified in any research project, presentation or publication and I will also disguise any other identifying details in writing up the reports.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

Your time will be your main cost.

- (i) I will contact you to mutually agree about the time and contents of the interview and class observation
- (ii) I will need to interview you once from 40 to 60 minutes and the interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. Also, I will need to contact you shortly to clarify details from the interview, but this will be kept to a minimum.
- (iii) I will need to observe your class and the classroom observation will be audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. In addition, I will need to collect all the documents in relation to your professional practices.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I would like to give you a week to consider my invitation to participate in the interview and classroom observation and then I will contact you by phone to see if you are interested in taking part in.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in the interview and in the classroom observation for the part of research project, please phone me or email me to indicate your readiness. In addition, please complete the “Consent Form” and I will pick it up when I come to interview you.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes. I will send you the transcriptions of the interview and of the classroom observation to confirm accuracy. If you are interested in the findings of this study and want to be informed of the results of this research, please email me and I will send you a summary of the research results of this study when this project is completed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr. Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 8860.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?****Researcher Contact Details:**

Vu Thi Thu Trinh, [hsw3216@aut.au.nz](mailto:hsw3216@aut.au.nz) or [annvutrinh65@yahoo.com](mailto:annvutrinh65@yahoo.com)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 August, 2012, AUTECH Reference number 12/146.

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## Appendix G:

Vietnamese version (Group 3: Primary EFL teacher participants)

# THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU



**Thông tin ghi ngày:** 23/4/ 2012

**Tên đề tài:**

Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN

**Lời mời tham gia:**

Tôi tên là Vũ Thi Thu Trinh. Tôi đang làm nghiên cứu sinh tại đại học AUT, New Zealand. Tôi mời quý vị tham gia vào đề tài của tôi, ‘Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập VN’. Mục tiêu của đề tài là xây dựng kiến thức về việc phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh dạy tiểu học ở các trường tiểu học công lập ở Việt Nam. Tham gia đóng góp cho đề tài nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và quý vị có thể rút lui bất cứ khi nào nếu muốn. Nếu quý vị rút lui, sẽ không ảnh hưởng gì đến công việc của quý vị

**Mục đích của nghiên cứu?**

Nhằm nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học tại các trường công lập. Cụ thể nghiên cứu này giúp(i) điều chỉnh chiến lược đào tạo sinh viên, (ii) cải tiến chương trình đào tạo, (iii) tổ chức và điều chỉnh hội thảo cho giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học địa phương trong thời gian tới.

**Tại sao quý vị được mời tham gia vào chương trình này?**

Bởi vì quý vị liên quan trực tiếp đến công tác đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học địa phương và sự đóng góp của quý vị là rất lớn cho sự thành công của đề tài.

**Quý vị đóng góp như thế nào vào nghiên cứu này?**

Quý vị sẽ được mời tham gia phỏng vấn và dự giờ một lần từ tháng 9 đến tháng 12 / 2012 vào 1 thời gian thuận tiện cho cả đôi bên. Cuộc phỏng vấn và dự giờ sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh.

**Những bất lợi và cạm bẫy?**

Có thể quý vị cảm thấy lúng túng và không thoải mái khi trả lời phỏng vấn và dự giờ và lo lắng vì thông tin cung cấp sẽ làm lộ ra danh tính.

## **Giảm bất lợi và cạm bẫy bằng cách nào?**

Những thông tin quý vị cung cấp sẽ được dùng để viết báo cáo, nhưng tôi xin bảo đảm để danh tính, và nơi làm việc của quý vị sẽ không bị lộ ra. Điều mà đề tài này muốn đạt đến là vẽ 1 bức tranh chi tiết về việc làm thế nào để phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học hiệu quả, chứ không phải là cá nhân của quý vị.

## **Lợi ích nào đạt được khi đề tài thành công?**

Một bức tranh chi tiết về thực trạng việc dạy và đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học VN sẽ được trình bày cho quý lãnh đạo liên quan. Thông tin chi tiết này rất có lợi để giúp (i) cải tiến chiến lược đào tạo giáo viên, (ii) điều chỉnh thiết kế chương trình đào tạo & (iii) lên kế hoạch cho các hội thảo đào tạo giáo viên. Sự phản ánh của quý vị về việc dạy tiếng Anh hiệu quả bậc tiểu học sẽ rất có lợi cho công việc của quý vị sau này. Ngoài ra, sinh viên được đào tạo làm giáo viên tiếng Anh bậc tiểu học và các em học sinh trường tiểu học công lập do những sinh viên này giảng dạy sẽ rất có lợi. Cuối cùng nhưng không kém phần quan trọng, nghiên cứu này có lợi cho những người làm chính sách dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em bậc tiểu học giúp góp phần cải tiến bảo đảm (i) sinh viên được đào tạo hiệu quả và chuyên nghiệp hơn với phương pháp dạy thích hợp với độ tuổi trẻ em bậc tiểu học và (ii) trẻ em tiểu học được học trong 1 môi trường chuyên nghiệp hơn, có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc hơn với những tình huống đòi thực để khả năng tiếng Anh của các em tốt hơn.

## **Sự riêng tư và bí mật được bảo vệ như thế nào?**

Bảo vệ sự riêng tư và bí mật là mối quan tâm lớn và là trách nhiệm của tôi trong vai trò là nghiên cứu sinh. Tất cả thông tin thu thập sẽ được bảo mật và không sử dụng vào mục đích nào khác để lộ ra danh tính quý vị. Tên thật của quý vị sẽ không được phép dùng trong đề tài này, trong phần trình bày cũng như xuất bản.

## **Chi phí cho việc tham gia vào đề tài?**

Thời gian là chi phí chính cho đề tài này

(i) Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị để thống nhất về thời gian và nội dung của phỏng vấn và dự giờ

(ii) Quý vị sẽ được phỏng vấn 1 lần khoảng 40-60 phút và cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, tôi xin phép gặp quý vị 1 khoảng thời gian ngắn để làm rõ những thông tin mà quý vị cung cấp nhưng chưa rõ ràng.

(iii) Quý vị sẽ được dự giờ 1 lần và giờ dự sẽ được thu âm, đánh máy và dịch sang tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, tôi xin phép thu thập những tài liệu liên quan đến việc giảng dạy của quý vị.

## **Cần nhắc lời mời như thế nào?**

Quý vị có 1 tuần để suy nghĩ, cân nhắc lời mời. Tôi sẽ liên lạc với quý vị qua điện thoại để hỏi ý kiến đã cân nhắc kỹ càng chưa.

## **Bằng cách nào để nhận ra là quý vị đã cân nhắc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này?**

Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, xin gọi điện thoại cho tôi để chứng minh là quý vị đã sẵn sàng. Ngoài ra, xin quý vị điền thông tin vào giấy “Xác nhận đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu” khi quý vị tham gia phỏng vấn.

### **Nhận phản hồi kết quả nghiên cứu như thế nào?**

Quý vị sẽ nhận được nội dung đã được thu âm phỏng vấn và dự giờ để xác nhận độ chính xác của văn bản. Nếu quý vị quan tâm đến kết quả nghiên cứu, xin email cho tôi và quý vị sẽ nhận được bảng tóm tắt khi nghiên cứu này hoàn tất.

### **Thông tin liên lạc:**

Về nội dung đề tài, xin quý vị liên lạc với người hướng dẫn đề tài, Phó GSTS Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey.@aut.au.nz), (+64) 921 9659, phân khoa Nhân Văn ứng dụng, đại học AUT, New Zealand.

Về phương thức tiến hành nghiên cứu, xin quý vị liên lạc với thư ký điều hành, T.S Rosemary Godbold, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9999 ext 8860.

Được sự đồng ý của Ủy ban đạo đức, trường Đại học Công nghệ AUT, NewZealand ký ngày 7/8/2012, số 12/146.

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Appendix H: Informed Consent form (Groups 1 & 3)

English version

# Consent Form

For use when interviews and observations are involved



*Project title:* Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study

*Project Supervisor:* Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

*Researcher:* Vu Thi Thu Trinh

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23 April, 2012
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed but that the interview transcriptions will be shown to me to confirm accuracy
- ☐ I agree to have my classes observed, audio-taped and transcribed but that myclass observation transcriptions will be shown to me to confirm accuracy
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):

Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:.....

Participant's name:.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):.....

Date:.....

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 August, 2012 AUTECH Reference number 12/146***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*



Appendix I: Informed Consent form (Participants in groups 1 & 3)

Vietnamese version

## XÁC NHẬN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Dành cho nghiên cứu có phỏng vấn & quan sát



*Tên đề tài:* Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập ở Vietnam

*Hướng dẫn đề tài:* Phó GSTS Sharon Harvey

*Nghiên cứu sinh:* Vũ Thị Thu Trinh

- ☐ Tôi đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin về nghiên cứu này ghi trong tờ cung cấp thông tin ghi ngày 23/04/2012
- ☐ Tôi có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi và được giải đáp những thắc mắc
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm và đánh máy lại nhưng nội dung thu âm cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ gửi cho tôi xem để xác nhận độ trung thực của văn bản
- ☐ Tôi đồng ý cho nghiên cứu sinh dự giờ của tôi, thu âm, đánh máy nhưng nội dung thu âm giờ dạy giờ học của tôi sẽ gửi cho tôi xem để xác nhận độ trung thực của văn bản
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút lui những thông tin mà tôi đã cung cấp cho đề án nghiên cứu này trước thời gian hoàn tất thu thập thông tin mà không gặp bất lợi nào
- ☐ Nếu tôi rút lui, tôi hiểu rằng tất cả những thông tin mà tôi cung cấp cho đề án bao gồm băng thu âm, phần đánh máy quan sát giờ học sẽ bị hủy
- ☐ Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này
- ☐ Tôi mong ước nhận bản báo cáo của nghiên cứu này (Xin đánh dấu vào khung bên dưới):

Có ☐ Không ☐

Chữ ký của người tham gia:.....

Tên của người tham gia:.....

Thông tin liên lạc với người tham gia (nếu cần):.....

Date:.....

Được sự đồng ý của Ủy ban đạo đức, trường Đại học Công nghệ AUT, New Zealand ký ngày 7/8/2012, số 12/146

*Ghi chú: Người tham gia nên giữ 1 bản*

# Consent Form

For use when interviews and observations are involved



*Project title:* Developing EFL teacher training for public primary schools in Vietnam: A critical ethnographic study

*Project Supervisor:* Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

*Researcher:* Vu Thi Thu Trinh

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23 April, 2012
- ☐ I agree to share my academic achievement in previous years to help the researcher select the “right” sample to give rich and stratified information
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed but that the interview transcriptions will be shown to me to confirm accuracy
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):

Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:.....

Participant's name:.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):.....

Date:.....

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 August, 2012 AUTEK Reference number 12/146***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

Appendix K: Informed Consent form (Participants in group 2)

Vietnamese version

## XÁC NHẬN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Dành cho nghiên cứu có phỏng vấn & quan sát



*Tên đề tài:* Phát triển đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học cho các trường công lập ở Vietnam

*Hướng dẫn đề tài:* Phó GSTS Sharon Harvey

*Nghiên cứu sinh:* Vũ Thị Thu Trinh

- ☐ Tôi đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin về nghiên cứu này ghi trong tờ cung cấp thông tin ghi ngày 23/04/2012
- ☐ Tôi đồng ý cho nghiên cứu sinh xem bảng điểm học tập của tôi trong những năm học trước để giúp chọn mẫu phù hợp và có thông tin phân tầng phong phú
- ☐ Tôi có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi và được giải đáp những thắc mắc
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm và đánh máy lại nhưng nội dung thu âm cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ gửi cho tôi xem để xác nhận độ trung thực của văn bản
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút lui những thông tin mà tôi đã cung cấp cho đề án nghiên cứu này trước thời gian hoàn tất thu thập thông tin mà không gặp bất lợi nào
- ☐ Nếu tôi rút lui, tôi hiểu rằng tất cả những thông tin mà tôi cung cấp cho đề án bao gồm băng thu âm, phần đánh máy sẽ bị hủy
- ☐ Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này
- ☐ Tôi mong ước nhận bản báo cáo của nghiên cứu này (Xin đánh dấu vào khung bên dưới):

Có ☐ Không ☐

Chữ ký của người tham gia:.....

Tên của người tham gia:.....

Thông tin liên lạc với người tham gia (nếu cần):.....

Ngày tháng:.....

Được sự đồng ý của Ủy ban đạo đức, trường Đại học Công nghệ AUT, New Zealand ký ngày 7/8/2012, số 12/146

*Ghi chú: Người tham gia nên giữ 1 bản*

## Appendix L: Interviewing question prompts

*(The Vietnamese language is used to ask and answer the interview. In addition to prepared interview questions according to seven major areas related to this study, the interviewer followed up interviewees' responses with contextually relevant supplementary questions so that other themes had room to arise if necessary)*

### English version

- Date of interview.....
- Time of interview.....
- Participant code.....
- Participant group.....

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### Influential factors in TEYL teachers' English language proficiency

### Possible questions

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#### (i) College admissions policy

- What do you think about our current college admissions policy in relation to the relevant development of training primary EFL teachers in Vietnam?
- What are advantages and disadvantages of adopting such a college admissions policy?
- How appropriate/ inappropriate it is?
- Is the college admissions policy appropriate enough to recruit the “right” primary EFL teacher trainees with an adequate level of English language proficiency?
- Can you give some examples of how appropriate/ inappropriate it is?
- In your opinion, what should the college admissions policy be like?
- Why do you think so?

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#### (ii) Pre-service and in-service teacher training program

- What do you think about our current primary EFL pre-service teacher training program in relation to the development of TEYL teachers' ELP, particularly oral English & professional skills?
  - Is it appropriate enough to help our students achieve the required level of English language proficiency (i.e. level B2 of the CEFR as required) and professional skills?
  - Can you give some examples of how appropriate/ inappropriate the pre-service teacher training program is?
-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In your opinion, what should the pre-service teacher training program be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> <li>○ Do you think that after graduating from a 3-year language training course at the local college, our teacher trainees achieve an adequate level of English language proficiency for TEYL&amp; appropriate professional skills?</li> <li>○ What do you think about our current primary EFL in-service teacher training program?</li> <li>○ Is it appropriate enough to help our students supplement TEYL skills and enhance their English language proficiency?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate the in-service teacher training program is?</li> <li>○ In your opinion, what should the in-service teacher training program be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> </ul>
(iii) Teaching materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think about primary EFL teacher training materials at college in relation to the development of teachers'ELP and professional skills?</li> <li>○ Are they appropriate enough to help our primary EFL teacher trainees achieve level B2 of the CEFR&amp; professional skills?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate our teacher training materials are?</li> <li>○ In your opinion, what should the teacher training materials be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> </ul>
(iv) Gaps b/w current and desired levels of TEYL teachers' ELP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do you feel your English language proficiency level as a primary EFL teacher trainer?/ a primary EFL teacher trainee?/ a primary EFL teacher?</li> <li>○ How do you feel English language proficiency level of our teacher trainees in terms of they are sufficient competent in their teaching work as a primary EFL teacher?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate our students'English language proficiency level is?</li> <li>○ What do you think about the international standard required by the Decree No.1400/ QD-Ttg (2008)?</li> <li>○ What hinders us from meeting the required level of English language proficiency according to the Decree No.1400/ QD-Ttg (2008)?</li> <li>○ What is your view about English language teacher</li> </ul>

	<p>proficiency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How important is it?</li> <li>○ Why do you think it is important/ unimportant?</li> <li>○ What level of language teacher proficiency is sufficient to TEYL? Why?</li> <li>○ In what ways can we help enhance our teacher trainees' English language proficiency level?</li> <li>○ What should we do to help our primary EFL teacher trainees achieve the desired classroom target language?</li> </ul>
(v)Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think about our teacher training methods in relation to the development of teachers'ELP and professional skills?</li> <li>○ Do you think that traditional teaching strategies are appropriate for our primary EFL teacher trainees to achieve B2-level standard and relevant professional skills?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/ inappropriate they are?</li> <li>○ In your opinion, what should teacher training strategies be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> <li>○ What is your view about TEYL methods?</li> <li>○ Are there any differences between adult teaching methods and TEYL methods?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how different/indifferent they are?</li> <li>○ In your opinion, what should TEYL methods be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> </ul>
(vi) Exams and learner assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think about our exams and learner assessment in relation to the required international standard?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate they are?</li> <li>○ Are exams and learner assessment according to the domestic standard equal to the international standard?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> <li>○ What should our exams and learner assessment be like to meet the requirement of the Decree No.1400/ QD-Ttg (2008)?</li> <li>○ What is your view about TEYL exams and young English language learner assessment in our public primary school?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate TEYL exams and young English language learner assessment are?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What should TEYL exams and young English language learner assessment be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> </ul>
(vii) Teaching facilities in relation to the development of higher English language proficiency& professional skills  (i.e. <i>Internet access, computers, laptops, cassette players, tapes, videos etc..</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think about our teacher training facilities in relation to the development of higher English language proficiency for primary EFL teachers&amp; professional skills?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate they are?</li> <li>○ What should teacher training facilities be like?</li> <li>○ Why do you think so?</li> <li>○ What support do we need to enhance the efficacy of primary EFL teacher training?</li> <li>○ What is your view about TEYL facilities in public primary schools?</li> <li>○ Can you give some examples of how appropriate/inappropriate TEYL facilities in public primary schools are?</li> <li>○ What support do we need to enhance the efficacy of TEYL in public primary schools?</li> </ul>

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## Appendix M: Interviewing question prompts

### Vietnamese version

- Ngày phỏng vấn.....
- Thời gian phỏng vấn.....
- Mật mã người tham gia.....
- Người tham gia thuộc nhóm.....

Vấn đề chính	Câu hỏi gợi ý
(i) Chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP trong mối liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu &amp; kỹ năng nghề nghiệp?</li><li>○ Thuận lợi &amp; bất lợi của chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP?</li><li>○ Chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP thích hợp/ không thích hợp?</li><li>○ Chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP thích hợp đủ để chọn sinh viên có mức tiếng Anh đầu vào phù hợp?</li><li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên vị cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp?</li><li>○ Theo quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên chính sách tuyển sinh CDSP nên như thế nào là phù hợp?</li><li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên nghĩ như vậy?</li></ul>
(ii) Chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học & chương trình tại chức	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học trong mối liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu &amp; kỹ năng nghề nghiệp?</li><li>○ Chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học có thích hợp để giúp sinh viên đạt chuẩn năng lực ngôn ngữ B2 của khung tham chiếu Châu Âu &amp; kỹ năng nghề nghiệp phù hợp?</li><li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học?</li><li>○ Theo quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên, chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học nên như thế nào là phù hợp?</li><li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên nghĩ như vậy?</li><li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên có nghĩ rằng sau khi tốt nghiệp, sinh viên của chúng ta có đủ năng lực ngôn ngữ để dạy trẻ em</li></ul>



	<p>tiểu học không?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học tại chức/ chương trình bổ sung vào dịp hè?</li> <li>○ Chương trình này có giúp bổ sung kỹ năng dạy trẻ em và nâng cao trình độ thông thạo tiếng Anh của giáo viên không?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học tại chức?</li> <li>○ Theo quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên, chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học tại chức nên như thế nào là phù hợp?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên lại nghĩ như vậy?</li> </ul>
(iii) Tài liệu dạy trong mỗi liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu & kỹ năng nghề nghiệp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận như thế nào về tài liệu dạy cho sinh viên tại CĐSP trong mỗi liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Tài liệu dạy CĐSP có giúp cho sinh viên đạt được năng lực ngôn ngữ B2 của khung tham chiếu Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của tài liệu dạy CĐSP?</li> <li>○ Theo quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên, tài liệu dạy CĐSP nên như thế nào?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên nghĩ như vậy?</li> </ul>
(iv) So sánh độ thông thạo tiếng Anh hiện tại và mức đòi hỏi theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận như thế nào về độ thông thạo tiếng Anh của mình trong vai trò là 1 giảng viên đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học/ 1 sinh viên đang được đào tạo để làm giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học/ 1 giáo viên đang dạy tiếng Anh tiểu học?</li> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận như thế nào về độ thông thạo tiếng Anh của sinh viên CĐSP xét về khía cạnh là các bạn này có đủ năng lực để dạy học sinh tiểu học theo chuẩn Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của sinh viên CĐSP xét về khía cạnh là các bạn này có đủ năng lực để dạy học sinh tiểu học theo chuẩn Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận như thế nào về chuẩn quốc tế được đòi hỏi theo quyết định 1400 của thủ tướng chính phủ VN ban hành năm 2008?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Điều gì cản trở chúng ta đáp ứng độ thông thạo tiếng Anh theo chuẩn quốc tế?</li> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận như thế nào độ thông thạo tiếng Anh của người thầy?</li> <li>○ Điều đó quan trọng như thế nào?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/ cô/ các bạn sinh viên nghĩ điều đó là quan trọng/ không quan trọng?</li> <li>○ Mức thông thạo tiếng Anh như thế nào là đủ để dạy tiểu học? Tại sao ở mức đó là phù hợp?</li> <li>○ Bằng cách nào chúng ta có thể giúp nâng cao mức thông thạo tiếng Anh cho sinh viên?</li> <li>○ Chúng ta nên làm gì để giúp sinh viên sử dụng tiếng Anh thành thạo trong lớp học?</li> </ul>
(v) Phương pháp dạy trong môi liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu & kỹ năng nghề nghiệp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cảm nhận thế nào về phương pháp đào tạo giáo viên của chúng ta trong môi liên hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu &amp; kỹ năng nghề nghiệp?</li> <li>○ Quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên nghĩ rằng chiến lược dạy truyền thống thích hợp đối với sinh viên CĐSP đạt chuẩn năng lực theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của chiến lược dạy truyền thống?</li> <li>○ Theo ý kiến của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên, chiến lược dạy cho sinh viên nên như thế nào là phù hợp để đạt chuẩn Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên lại nghĩ như vậy?</li> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về phương pháp dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh tiểu học?</li> <li>○ Có sự khác biệt giữa phương pháp dạy người lớn và trẻ em?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự khác biệt/ không khác biệt giữa 2 đối tượng này?</li> <li>○ Theo ý kiến của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên, phương pháp dạy cho học sinh tiểu học nên như thế nào là phù hợp?</li> </ul>
(vi) Thi cử và đánh giá trong môi quan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về thi cử và đánh giá ở CĐSP trong môi quan hệ với chuẩn quốc tế được</li> </ul>

hệ với chuẩn quốc tế được đòi hỏi	<p>đòi hỏi?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của việc thi cử và đánh giá ở CĐSP?</li> <li>○ Việc đánh giá của chúng ta theo chuẩn nội địa có tương đương chuẩn quốc tế?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên lại nghĩ như vậy?</li> <li>○ Thi cử và đánh giá ở CĐSP nên như thế nào để đáp ứng quyết định 1400 của thủ tướng chính phủ 2008?</li> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về thi cử và đánh giá ở các trường tiểu học công lập?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp của việc thi cử và đánh giá ở các trường tiểu học công lập?</li> <li>○ Thi cử và đánh giá học sinh tiểu học ở các trường tiểu học công lập nên như thế nào?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên lại nghĩ như vậy?</li> </ul>
(vii) Phương tiện dạy học ( Internet, máy tính, băng, máy cát sét...) trong môi quan hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về những phương tiện dạy học ở CĐSP trong môi quan hệ phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp về những phương tiện dạy học ở CĐSP?</li> <li>○ Những phương tiện dạy học ở CĐSP nên như thế nào?</li> <li>○ Tại sao quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên lại nghĩ như vậy?</li> <li>○ Sự ủng hộ nào chúng ta cần để nâng cao hiệu quả đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học?</li> <li>○ Quan điểm của quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên về những phương tiện dạy học ở các trường tiểu học công lập?</li> <li>○ Xin quý thầy/cô/ các bạn sinh viên cho 1 vài ví dụ để chứng minh sự thích hợp/ không thích hợp ?</li> <li>○ Sự ủng hộ nào chúng ta cần để nâng cao hiệu quả dạy tiếng Anh cho học sinh ở tiểu học?</li> </ul>

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# Observation protocol

(Used for classroom observation)

***Project title: Developing EFL teacher training for public primary school: A critical ethnographic study***

- (i) *Kind of observation:* Overt, non-participant, semi-structured classroom observation
- (ii) *The role of the classroom observer:* The researcher as an over, non-participant classroom observer does not play any important part in the observed class. That is, the focus is on the teaching practices (ii.a) of primary EFL teacher trainer participants in teacher training classes and (ii.b) of primary EFL teacher participants
- (iii) *What to be observed:* Teachers' teaching practices are observed including
  - (iii.1). Exhibition of teachers' English language proficiency through:
    - Utilization of English resources
    - Class management using English
    - Provision of rich and authentic English language input
    - Provision of accurate English language models
    - Provision of corrective feedback in English
    - Provision of adequate explanations in English
    - Improvisation competence in English language teaching
  - (iii.2). Teaching strategies to help learners use English naturally
- (iv) *Who to be observed:* Teachers in two target groups of participants
  - *Group one:* TEYL teacher trainers in teacher training classes
  - *Group three:* TEYL teachers in children's classes
- (v) *What to be collected:*
  - Relevant documents related to the teachers' teaching practices in the two target groups of participants including (v.a) teaching materials, (v.b) teaching aids, (v.c) lesson plans, and (v.c) worksheet in the observed classes. What is related to learning evidence of primary EFL teacher trainees and of primary school children in public primary schools are not collected
- (vi) *What & how to be recorded:*

The teaching practices of TEYL teacher trainers and of TEYL teachers are recorded using audio-taping and fieldnotes. The focus is to look at what the teachers say is important for effective TEYL and the development of higher English language proficiency from their interviews and then compare their responses with what they are actually doing in their teaching practices. The focus is on two major areas namely (i) English language teacher proficiency and (ii) teaching strategies to help English language learners use authentic English in natural situations. Apart from audio-taping classroom observations, jotted fieldnotes are used to capture nuances of participants' expressions through their non-verbal communications.

## Appendix O: Field notes

Field notes are used to collect multiple kinds of data such as

- Description of behaviour (i.e. what people are observed, seen, heard doing or said doing)
- Description of an occurrence (i.e. a piece of behaviour in a particular situation such as a discussion, a meeting...)
- Description of an institution/ school/ class... (i.e. the way of construction...)
- Description of appearance (i.e. what the people/ the settings look like)
- Description of research events (i.e. what people say or do in the semi-structured interviews & informal conversations...)

Date:.....

Time:.....

Place:.....

Participant name:.....

*Notes:* (i.e. the weather, participants' feeling, attitude, statements, all non-verbal behaviours, body language...)

The researcher's written impressions: (i.e. comment on what is heard or seen at the time of data collection)

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## Appendix P: Original extracts in participants' own words in Vietnamese

### Section 6.3.1.1: Reliance on set teaching materials

Extract 1: Tôi đã sử dụng tài liệu New Cutting Edge như là 1 tài liệu chính để dạy cho sinh viên chuyên ngữ tại phân khoa tiếng Anh trong 1 vài năm trở lại đây. Tôi nghĩ tài liệu này là phù hợp cho sinh viên. Chuyên gia nước ngoài viết chắc chắn là họ có nhiều kinh nghiệm hơn giáo viên tiếng Anh ở Vietnam.

### Section 6.3.1.2: Teaching materials for mixed-ability classes

Extract 2: Một trong những thách thức đương đầu với giáo viên hiện nay là làm thế nào thiết kế và phát triển tài liệu thích hợp với trình độ tiếng Anh lộn xộn của sinh viên để giúp cho chúng đạt chuẩn năng lực ngôn ngữ như yêu cầu.

### Section 6.3.5: Developing a learning-to-learn competency

Extract 3: Mình nghĩ chỉ có khoảng 1/3 sinh viên đạt được cả B1 và B2 vì các em thụ động và lười lắm, ít khi đến thư viện để tìm tài liệu tham khảo sách vở thêm. Các em chỉ học trong sách giáo viên cho hay trong mấy tờ handout phát ra thôi. Các em có thói quen phụ thuộc hoàn toàn vào giáo viên và thiếu kỹ năng tự học.

### Section 6.4.2 TEYL teacher trainees' limited ELP level

Extract 4: Sinh viên của trường chúng ta có mức tiếng Anh tương đối thấp, nhất là kỹ năng nghe-nói vì các em được đào tạo để đạt chuẩn địa phương và chuẩn này do các cơ sở đào tạo xây dựng. Chuẩn giữa các trường có lẽ cũng không giống nhau.

Extract 5: Chuẩn Châu Âu đã có từ lâu rồi nhưng Vietnam không theo một chuẩn nào hết. Vì thế chất lượng dạy và học thấp, không theo kịp với thế giới. Đó là lý do tại sao sinh viên của chúng ta khó đáp ứng trong những kỳ thi tiếng Anh quốc tế.

Extract 6: Theo như em biết thì nhiều giáo viên cấp một và cấp hai không đạt chuẩn đang dạy trong các trường. Nếu tình hình này cứ tiếp tục, tình hình dạy và học tiếng Anh ở Vietnam có nguy cơ không phát triển được.

Extract 7: Chất lượng đào tạo thấp, và ít ai trong số sinh viên của chúng em có khả năng để được chuẩn B2 vì chúng em không có một môi trường học gây hứng thú để đầu tư hết công sức học tập của mình.

Extract 8: Em có nghe nói đến chuẩn Châu Âu. Với vốn tiếng Anh của sinh viên chúng em bây giờ, đạt cho được B2 là khó lắm (Thở dài) Nghe, nói, đọc, viết cái gì cũng khó hết.

Extract 9: Sinh viên một, hai điểm tiếng Anh chuẩn nội địa đã đậu vào cao đẳng sư phạm. Học xong cao đẳng ba năm thì đòi chuẩn quốc tế B2. Ba năm với chương trình cao đẳng là khác nhau xa quá. Không thể được, khoảng cách là quá lớn.

### Section 6.4.3 Low TEYL teacher trainee motivation

Extract 10: Em không thích học để làm giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học. Em chọn lựa ngành này vì không còn sự chọn lựa nào khác. Bố mẹ em khó khăn và không đủ điều

kiện kinh tế chu cấp cho em đi học đại học tại thành phố. Nếu em học Cao đẳng thì bố mẹ em không phải đóng tiền học phí cho em.

- Extract 11: Em đã đậu Đại học tại thành phố HCM, nhưng em chọn lựa để học ở đây bởi vì chẳng tốn kém gì. Bố mẹ em nghèo và không có đủ khả năng về kinh tế để chu cấp tiền ăn học cho em suốt 4 năm tại thành phố HCM. Em không còn sự chọn lựa nào khác. Em rơi vào bước đường cùng. Em chấp nhận làm giáo viên tiểu học, mặc dù em không thích nghề này.
- Extract 12: Chúng em thích tìm nguồn sách vở tài liệu thích hợp ở thư viện để tự học nhưng không dễ dàng gì. Mặc dù có nhiều sách vở hay trên thị trường nhưng chúng em không đủ điều kiện để mua. Chúng em chỉ mua 1 vài cuốn mà chúng em nghĩ là phù hợp nhưng chúng em cũng không chắc là những cuốn sách này có giúp nâng cao khả năng tiếng Anh của chúng em hay không.
- Extract 13: Em thường chuẩn bị bài vở rất cẩn thận trước khi đến lớp. Nhưng nhiều lúc em cảm thấy thất vọng do việc không tiếp cận được các phương tiện dạy học. Em thấy thật khó để motivate học trò học để đạt chuẩn B2. Em cũng không hiểu tại sao học trò mình lại lười vậy. Nhiều khi em chuẩn bị hoạt động này, hoạt động kia để vào lớp nhưng học trò không hưởng ứng làm em cũng muốn nản luôn. Sinh viên bảo với em là chúng thấy chán. Em hỏi chúng điều gì làm tụi em thấy chán. Chúng bảo với em là nhiều thứ, chương trình học gì mà toàn những môn chung mà không thấy ích lợi gì, thư viện cũng chẳng có sách vở gì hay ho mà tham khảo, 1 số giáo viên không gây hứng thú cho sinh viên học, lên lớp thì chiếu lê cho qua giờ. Ra trường cũng không biết có xin được việc làm hay không. Bất công trong xã hội lan tràn, những người có năng lực thật sự thì có thể không tìm được việc làm... Em khuyên học trò em trước mắt cứ lo học để đạt chuẩn B2 đi rồi chuyện công việc hãy tính sau...
- Extract 14: Em nghĩ là phương pháp dạy đơn điệu và tẻ nhạt 1 phần đã đóng góp cho vấn đề chất lượng học tập thấp và thiếu hứng thú của sinh viên. Giáo viên dường như không biết khai thác tài liệu một cách hiệu quả để làm cho nó thú vị và kích thích học sinh hơn. Giáo viên cứ dạy theo sách giáo khoa và chúng em cảm thấy chán muốn chết.
- Extract 15: Theo ý kiến của em, cái cách mà giáo viên truyền đạt bài giảng rất đơn điệu và chán. Em thích giáo viên sử dụng nhiều phương pháp dạy khác nhau để kích thích sự học hỏi, tìm tòi sáng tạo của sinh viên.
- Extract 16: Em nghĩ là hầu hết giáo viên đều biết rằng phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống có thể làm cho sinh viên mất đi sự hứng thú. Tuy nhiên 1 số giáo viên bận rộn thích sử dụng phương pháp này vì tính đơn giản và thuận tiện. Họ không tốn quá nhiều công sức để chuẩn bị bài vở trên lớp bởi vì họ quá bận rộn với việc dạy thêm ở nhà. Học chỉ việc theo tiến trình của sách giáo khoa và sách hướng dẫn giáo viên với đáp án có sẵn.
- Extract 17: Em đã học tiếng Anh ở đây gần 3 năm rồi nhưng em không thấy triển khai một hoạt động ngoại khóa nào cả. Em cũng không thấy triển khai câu lạc bộ nói tiếng Anh hay chương trình văn nghệ bằng tiếng Anh. Theo em, thì các hoạt động ngoại khóa chuyên ngành giúp nâng cao động cơ học tập tiếng Anh của sinh viên chuyên ngữ. Kỹ năng nói của hầu hết sinh viên rất yếu. Em cũng vậy. Chúng em cần nhiều cơ hội để thực hành nói tiếng Anh 1 cách tự tin hơn.

2 tiết 1 tuần trong lớp luyện tập nói tiếng Anh là không đủ để gia tăng sự tự tin của chúng em.

Extract 18: Chúng em có động cơ học tập thấp bởi vì chúng em thiếu những hoạt động ngoại khóa, câu lạc bộ nói tiếng Anh, những buổi giao lưu học hỏi với người nước ngoài. Nếu chúng em có cơ hội để nói chuyện với người nước ngoài và họ giúp cho chúng em, có lẽ chúng em sẽ có động lực tốt hơn để học tiếng Anh.

Extract 19: Em nghĩ là có rất nhiều nguyên nhân dẫn đến tình trạng sinh viên có động cơ học tập thấp. Có thể là do thói quen học tập không có hiệu quả, thiếu 1 môi trường chuyên nghiệp để học tập và làm việc, rồi phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên cũng đóng góp cho tình trạng này. Ngoài ra trong hiện trạng Vietnam hiện nay, tình trạng con ông cháu cha, anh em bà con của các lãnh đạo địa phương, chuyện chạy công ăn việc làm vào biên chế nhà nước đang rất bức xúc trong khi đó nhiều người có năng lực thật sự không kiếm được việc làm cũng làm cho sinh viên chúng em nản chí.

Extract 20: Chúng em học thì học nhưng không biết có tìm được việc làm hay không. Bất chấp những nỗ lực để đạt được chuẩn quốc tế mà Bộ GD đòi hỏi, có thể chúng em cũng không có thể tìm được việc làm tại địa phương, nếu chúng em không có tiền mà chạy việc, vật chất đánh đổi thực lực. Vấn đề này làm cho chúng em rất chán nản vì không thấy tương lai sáng sủa gì cả.

#### **Section 6.4.4** Lack of prioritisation for developing ELP in teacher preparation programs

Extract 21: Em nghĩ là những phân môn chính giúp cho học sinh phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ cần phải ưu tiên hàng đầu so với các môn chung.

Extract 22: Chúng tôi ý thức sự phân chia thời gian giữa các phân môn là bất hợp lý. Chúng tôi cũng đã kiến nghị rất nhiều lần nhưng cấp trên bảo với chúng tôi rằng vẫn còn nhiều khó khăn. Chúng tôi đang chờ ý kiến từ Bộ GD-ĐT.

Extract 23: Theo ý kiến của em thì 50% thời gian phân bổ cho những phân môn chính trong chương trình đào tạo là không đủ để phát triển năng lực tiếng Anh cho sinh viên của chúng ta. Vấn đề ở đây không chỉ là thời gian để dạy kiến thức tiếng Anh mà còn là thời gian phát triển kỹ năng nghe nói cho sinh viên cần phải xem xét lại.

Extract 24: Em nghĩ là chương trình đào tạo giáo viên tiếng Anh tiêu học là không thích hợp về mặt phân bổ thời gian của các môn ngành chính để giúp phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ. Nếu chương trình không thay đổi, ít ai trong số chúng em có khả năng đạt được chuẩn quốc tế B2.

Extract 25: Ít bạn nào trong lớp em có đủ khả năng để đạt chuẩn B2 theo yêu cầu của Bộ. Một phần là do lượng thời gian quá ít. 50% lượng thời gian phân bổ trong chương trình là không đủ. Hơn nữa dạng đề thi IELTS/TOEFL quá xa lạ và mới mẻ đối với chúng em. Chúng em cần thêm thời gian để làm quen với các dạng đề thi như vậy.

Extract 26: Em tốt nghiệp CĐSP năm 2000 (khóa 1997-2000). 5 năm sau thì em tham gia khóa học cấp tốc lấy bằng ĐH chuyên ngành tiếng Anh. Em đã lấy được bằng B2 sau khi tham gia dự thi lần thứ 2. Thực ra mà nói thì em đã nỗ lực rất nhiều và em thấy là chương trình đào tạo CĐSP chưa thực sự phù hợp để giúp chúng



em lấy bằng B2 của khung Châu Âu. Em muốn nói là chương trình đào tạo như vậy chỉ giúp cho sinh viên đạt chuẩn địa phương thôi. Số lượng thời gian được cho trong chương trình là không đủ để giúp cho sinh viên đạt năng lực quốc tế.

#### Section 6.4.5 Resources for training TEYL teachers

- Extract 27: Em không tìm thấy những tài liệu phù hợp để dạy cho sinh viên giúp chúng cải tiến năng lực ngôn ngữ. Em nghĩ nếu sinh viên của chúng ta có cơ hội tiếp cận tài liệu quốc tế như IELTS/TOEFL, các em có thể đạt được mức B2 mà Bộ yêu cầu, bởi vì có sự tương đồng giữa kỳ thi quốc tế & kỳ thi B2 về độ khó, việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ và dạng đề thi.
- Extract 28: Thách đố chúng ta đang đương đầu là tìm tài liệu dạy phù hợp giúp nâng cao năng lực ngôn ngữ của sinh viên. Mặc dù có nhiều sách có giá trị trên thị trường, chúng tôi cũng không đủ khả năng để mua những cuốn sách đắt đỏ như vậy với đồng lương khiêm tốn.
- Extract 29: Bởi vì em không tìm ra những tài liệu phù hợp trong thư viện trường. Em mua sách trên thị trường tự do mà em nghĩ là sẽ hữu ích cho sinh viên. Với đồng lương eo hẹp, em không có khả năng mua cả bộ sách thay vì chỉ mua cuốn sách students' book thôi & sử dụng như 1 tài liệu dạy cho sinh viên.
- Extract 30: Đề cập đến vấn đề trang thiết bị dạy học, phải sử dụng từ “*cực kỳ thiếu thốn*”. Trường chúng ta quá thiếu cơ sở vật chất để giúp các em đạt chuẩn châu Âu. Ví dụ là yêu cầu áp dụng công nghệ thông tin vào dạy học, mà cái phòng máy thì hư hỏng hết, cái đèn chiếu thì cả khoa chỉ có một cái, mà mỗi lần em dạy phải tự đi bắt dây vào, nói chung là mất rất nhiều thời gian. Ví dụ, em dạy hai tiết mà đi bắt cái máy thì mất hết nửa tiết rồi. Đôi khi hư hỏng nữa là mất hết một tiết luôn. Lẽ ra là phải có cái phòng máy, giáo viên thích dạy kiểu nào cũng được, hôm nay thì sử dụng đèn chiếu, còn hôm khác thì dán tranh, dán ảnh trong phòng thì mới đảm bảo dạy tích cực được.
- Extract 31: Các giáo viên trong khoa đều sử dụng laptop để dạy, nhưng 1 cái laptop thì không thể dạy được, một buổi dạy phải di chuyển từ lớp này sang lớp kia, có lớp thì dùng, có lớp không dùng, nhưng em vẫn cứ phải tha đi. Cầm hai cuốn sách thật dày này rồi chưa kể là dây, rồi loa của cái laptop nữa thì rất là bất tiện. Vì sợ bị mất cắp, em không dám để laptop và mấy thứ linh tinh trong văn phòng khoa.
- Extract 32: Em nghĩ việc quản lý trang thiết bị không hợp lý làm cản trở việc dạy tiếng Anh hiệu quả. Phân khoa chúng ta cần có 1 phòng riêng với đầy đủ trang thiết bị dạy học như máy chiếu, computer, màn hình, loa... Căn phòng này phải làm sao cho giáo viên dễ dàng sử dụng bất cứ khi nào họ muốn. Bảo vệ trường nên làm nhiệm vụ bảo quản trang thiết bị thay vì giao nhiệm vụ này cho trợ lý khoa bởi vì bảo vệ có mặt thường xuyên tại trường khi giáo viên cần liên lạc. Việc quản lý trang thiết bị kém hiệu quả làm cho giáo viên đôi lúc cũng bức mình. Ví dụ tuần tới, em cần máy chiếu, em phải đăng ký trước với trợ lý khoa để mượn cái chìa khóa. Rồi em phải đem theo cái laptop rồi 3 cái thứ lằng nhằng, nào là loa, rồi cuộn dây điện và thậm chí cả cái cầu chì nữa, phòng khi cái cầu chì nó cháy hay bị gỡ ra mất ... Em phải mất rất nhiều thời gian để chuẩn bị cho 1 tiết dạy 45 phút. Chuyện rắc rối liên quan đến trang thiết bị dạy học đôi lúc làm cho em mất hết hứng thú dạy học.

### Section 6.5.3. Review of resourcing policy

Extract 33: Thủ tục hành chính ở trường rất là phức tạp và phiền toái. Để có những tài liệu phù hợp cho sinh viên thì cả là 1 quá trình phiền phức và tốn nhiều thời gian. Mỗi năm thì khoa Anh văn cũng có nhận đề nghị của trường những loại sách nào cần phải mua. Khoa đề nghị thì cứ đề nghị nhưng mua hay không thì lại là chuyện của thư viện. Công việc thì cũng còn nhiều bất cập, sách trường mua toàn là sách tiếng Việt nhưng cán bộ thư viện mình không quen với cách làm việc của các nhà xuất bản nước ngoài. Nếu muốn làm thì em phải đích thân đi làm lấy, làm các loại tờ trình, rồi đi tìm người nọ ký, người kia ký, rồi mới đem lên thư viện, nói chung là 1 quá trình rất dài và gặp nhiều khó khăn, phiền phức.

### Section 7.3.1 Self-taught English knowledge and skills

Extract 34: Em cũng biết giáo viên rất ít có cơ hội để học qua những hội thảo. Dạy cũng là 1 cách học thông qua công việc. Trước khi có giờ trên lớp, em thường chuẩn bị bài rất cẩn thận. Em nghĩ rằng nếu em chuẩn bị bài chu đáo các hoạt động học, em có cơ hội sử dụng tiếng Anh để giao tiếp với sinh viên. Thực hành liên tục sẽ giúp dần dần cải tiến kỹ năng tiếng Anh của mình.

Extract 35: Chúng em không có nhiều cơ hội để cải tiến thông qua những workshop. Chúng em chỉ học hỏi để nâng cao năng lực của mình bằng cách luyện tập để giao tiếp với học sinh trong lớp. Em nghĩ dạy cũng là một cách để phát triển năng lực chuyên môn. Em thường chuẩn bị bài cẩn thận rồi luyện tập 1 vài lần ở nhà trước khi trình bày trên lớp.

Extract 36: Chúng em biết là mình hiếm có những cơ hội để học hỏi thông qua các chương trình hội thảo. Chúng em cải tiến năng lực chuyên môn bằng cách chuẩn bị bài vở ở nhà chu đáo trước khi đến lớp. Thỉnh thoảng em cũng có nghe đài VOA để cải tiến kỹ năng nghe yếu kém của em.

Extract 37: Không có ngạc nhiên khi em biết là nhiều giáo viên tiếng Anh tiểu học không có khả năng đạt chuẩn quốc tế và em cũng không phải là ngoại lệ. Chúng em có rất ít cơ hội để nâng cao kiến thức chuyên ngành. Lần đầu khi thi B2 em cũng không có thành công. Sau khi tốt nghiệp ra trường kỹ năng nghe nói dần dần mai một. Mới đây, em cũng thử cải tiến kỹ năng của mình bằng cách xem phim tiếng Anh có phụ đề.

Extract 38: Ngoại trừ 1 số những thủ thuật về lý thuyết, các workshop ít hiệu quả và em cũng không học được gì nhiều. Em thường mua sách có bài test rồi tự luyện tập ở nhà để tự nâng cao khả năng tiếng Anh của mình.

### Section 7.3.2 Opportunities for improving teachers' ELP through INSTEP

Extract 39: Những workshops thường chú trọng đến lý thuyết nhiều hơn thực hành, nhiều khi là cơ hội cho các nhà xuất bản sách quảng cáo. Em thấy ít có cơ hội để học hỏi vào những dịp như vậy. Chủ yếu là cơ hội cho em gặp gỡ bạn bè và giao lưu (cười)...

Extract 40: Chúng em thường tham gia tập huấn hè 1-2 ngày trung bình là 1 năm 1 lần, nhiều khi lâu hơn, thường là giáo viên cao đẳng hay đại học giúp cho chúng em, mà chủ yếu cũng chỉ là lý thuyết. Chúng em không có cơ hội để share kinh nghiệm của mình và học hỏi từ đồng nghiệp. Thời gian quá ít ỏi không đủ cho

chúng em có cơ hội thực hành. Hơn 100 giáo viên tham dự mà chỉ 4-5 giảng viên giúp mà thôi.

- Extract 41: Em không có thích tham dự hội thảo gì hết bởi vì em nghĩ nó cũng chẳng lợi lộc gì cả. Giảng viên trình bày hội thảo dùng tiếng Việt như 1 phương tiện để truyền đạt 1 số những kiến thức lý thuyết dạy hơn là thủ thuật thực hành dạy. Sau hội thảo, thì cũng chẳng có gì là thay đổi hay cải tiến.
- Extract 42: Em rất thích hội thảo vì em có cơ hội để gặp gỡ bạn bè đồng nghiệp cũ để tán gẫu và giảm stress do áp lực công việc hơn là học hỏi cái gì đó mới mẻ và bổ ích. Sau hội thảo, chúng em không nhận được bất cứ 1 form đánh giá nào để yêu cầu chúng em phản ánh ý kiến. Tóm lại, nhiều người trong số chúng em tham dự hội thảo vì nhiệm vụ cấp trên đòi hỏi mà thôi.
- Extract 43: Theo ý kiến của bản thân em, các workshop nên tạo nhiều cơ hội hơn nữa cho participants chia sẻ những ý tưởng giảng dạy của họ trong đời thực cũng như những khó khăn thách thức họ đang đương đầu bằng tiếng Anh thay vì ngồi yên 1 chỗ và lắng nghe 1 cách bị động. Rồi những lý thuyết mới về dạy cho trẻ cần phải tinh chế & chắt lọc lại và cần mang tính thực hành, thực tế nhiều hơn nữa. Participants cần cho thêm những cơ hội để thử những sáng kiến mới trong việc thực hành thực tế. Theo em, việc tổ chức workshop hiện tại làm hao tốn kinh phí của chính phủ và không có hiệu quả, bởi vì chúng em cảm thấy mình không được giúp đỡ để cải tiến kỹ năng giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh, kỹ năng nghe & nói tiếng Anh cũng như kỹ năng nghề nghiệp để dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em.
- Extract 44: Em đã dự giờ và được dự giờ nhiều lần rồi nhưng em thấy cái lợi mà em đạt được rất là ít. Em có cảm giác là đồng nghiệp của em không thích bị dự giờ và họ thường né tránh đăng ký giờ dạy để người khác dự. Những người được dự thì có cảm giác là họ đang bị chỉ trích hơn là đang được giúp đỡ để cải tiến cách dạy.
- Extract 45: Sau khi dự giờ, chúng tôi thường có những buổi họp để góp ý cho người được dự giờ. Thực ra mà nói, tôi cảm thấy rất ngột thở với bầu không khí góp ý cho nhau. Tôi không thích cái cách mà đồng nghiệp tôi góp ý cho giờ dạy của tôi. Họ bắt tôi phải làm cái này hay làm cái kia trong giờ dạy của tôi thay vì hỏi lý do tại sao làm điều này mà không làm điều kia. Theo tôi nghĩ, cách thức góp ý cần phải thay đổi để mọi người thích được dự giờ để mà lắng nghe góp ý xây dựng của người khác.
- Extract 46: Ít cơ hội để cải tiến trình độ tiếng Anh. Hầu hết các hội thảo 1 -2 ngày mà mình tham dự thì mình thấy ít có lợi. Chủ yếu các hội thảo chú trọng vào việc cung cấp kiến thức lý thuyết hiện đại trên thế giới về việc dạy và học tiếng Anh. Giáo viên không được cho cơ hội thử sáng kiến mới vào việc giảng dạy. Vì thế, mọi thứ vẫn đâu vào đấy sau hội thảo.
- Extract 47: Chúng em hiếm có cơ hội để thử sáng kiến mới vào việc dạy hằng ngày. Chúng em rất thích có những cơ hội để tiếp xúc với các chuyên gia về lĩnh vực dạy tiếng Anh cho trẻ em để học hỏi những sáng kiến cũng như những kinh nghiệm để giúp cải tiến năng lực ngôn ngữ của sinh viên tại địa phương.
- Extract 48: Chúng em làm gì có cơ hội mà cải tiến khả năng tiếng Anh. Hội thảo sử dụng chủ yếu là tiếng Việt. Một vài giảng viên trình bày hội thảo bằng tiếng Anh

nhưng trường hợp như vậy rất hiếm. Đối với em thì không gặp khó khăn gì trong việc nghe hiểu buổi nói chuyện. Em có thể hiểu được nội dung chính yếu nhưng em không biết những người khác thì thế nào. Chúng em cũng không được cho những cơ hội để trình bày những khó khăn trong việc giảng dạy để cùng nhau tìm ra 1 giải pháp giải quyết vấn đề. Hội thảo xong, mọi chuyện cũng vẫn như vậy.

Extract 49: Không có nhiều cơ hội giúp cải tiến trình độ tiếng Anh cho giáo viên. Chúng em làm gì có điều kiện để trình bày những ý kiến cá nhân trong các hội thảo chuyên ngành trong nước cũng như quốc tế. Chúng em cũng không có những cơ hội tiếp cận với những chuyên gia đầu ngành để giúp cải tiến khả năng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên.

Extract 50: Mặc dù cơ hội rất ít ỏi để học hỏi nâng cao trình độ nghề nghiệp, 1 số giảng viên nhiệt tình đam mê với nghề cũng đã thử những sáng kiến mới trong việc dạy học. Tuy nhiên họ không được đồng nghiệp cũng như các lãnh đạo địa phương ủng hộ. Nghịch lý là các chính sách của chính phủ cũng không tạo điều kiện để giáo viên thử sáng kiến mới để cải tiến trình độ tiếng Anh cho sinh viên. 1 số giáo viên bận dạy course có khuynh hướng thích sử dụng phương pháp dạy truyền thống vì không tốn nhiều thời gian. Rốt cục thì đầu vẫn hoàn vào đây. Chả có gì thay đổi sau các cuộc hội thảo chuyên ngành.

#### **Section 7.4.1**

Extract 51: Tôi nghĩ điều quan trọng bậc nhất để phát triển kỹ năng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên là giúp cho các em ý thức học để đáp ứng kỳ thi tiếng Anh quốc tế tương đương với B2, chứ không phải là kỳ thi nội địa. Để làm điều này chúng ta cần phải cải tiến 7 kỳ thi tiếng Anh tại CDSP. Ngoài ra các chương trình hội thảo cũng nên tạo điều kiện cho các em thi thử 1 kỳ thi quốc tế để đo trình độ tiếng Anh hiện tại của các em.

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