

**INTEGRATING CULTURE  
INTO VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY EFL TEACHING:  
A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

**Thanh Long Nguyen  
PhD**

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A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

**Thanh Long Nguyen**  
**(Nguyễn Thành Long)**

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To my beloved parents, who are always a source  
of encouragement for my life-long learning

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## **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 material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature: .....

Name: Thanh Long Nguyen

Date: .....



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## **Abstract**

Globalisation and its resulting economic, technological, social and educational transformations have led to an increased need for the development of intercultural competence in education (Scarino, 2009). This ability to communicate across cultural boundaries and mediate between cultures should be an important goal of language education (Byram, 1997, 2009). To address intercultural competence, culture must be explicitly taught as a central element and integrated with the teaching of language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, 2000; Liddicoat, 2002; Newton & Shearn, 2010b). However, language teaching in many places around the world has not yet fully realised this integration. This study examines how Vietnamese university EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers integrate culture into their language teaching. It aims to socially construct knowledge about Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching. It also aims to propose suggestions for positive changes to be made regarding this integration for the development of learners' intercultural competence.

The study has a critical ethnographic design, all levels of which are theoretically underpinned by social constructionism. Participating in this study were 15 EFL teachers from a university in North Vietnam. I collected data from the following main sources: semi-structured interviews with participants (totally 25), classroom observations (totally 30), field notes, and documentation in the form of the teaching materials used in the observed classes. I applied thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Gibson & Brown, 2009) to the data set. The findings indicated that the participants, though having a deep and comprehensive view of culture, had fairly limited goals in addressing culture in their language teaching practices. Their culture teaching activities prioritised the provision of cultural knowledge rather than the development of other components of intercultural competence (e.g., intercultural skills and awareness). Such activities were largely dependent on the cultural content presented in their prescribed teaching materials. The study also found that Vietnamese EFL teachers did not receive necessary support from their teacher professional development programmes regarding teachers' intercultural competence, nor pedagogical knowledge related to the teaching and assessing of intercultural competence. Through these findings, the study has also provided implications for teachers and language education policy makers to improve EFL teaching that aims for the development of learners' intercultural competence.

## **Abbreviations**

|        |                                                          |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ASEAN: | The Association of Southeast Asian Nations               |
| CEFR:  | The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages |
| EFL:   | English as a foreign language                            |
| Ext:   | Extract                                                  |
| IC:    | Intercultural competence                                 |
| ICC:   | Intercultural communicative competence                   |
| iCLT:  | Intercultural communicative language teaching            |
| ILT:   | Intercultural language teaching                          |
| L&CI:  | Language and culture immersion                           |
| LTPD:  | Language teacher professional development                |
| TPD:   | Teacher professional development                         |

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This thesis examines how Vietnamese university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers address culture in their language teaching. This first chapter introduces the research topic area of the present study, in section 1.1. Section 1.2 of the chapter describes the study context with a summary of the history of language education in Vietnam in general and foreign language teaching and learning in particular. It also states the need for addressing culture as a central element in foreign language teaching in this context. Section 1.3 is a description of my own experience as a language learner, a language teacher trainee, a language teacher, and as the researcher of this study. The study focus is presented in section 1.4, which states the overarching question the study addresses and sub-research questions. Section 1.5 explains the rationale for the study. The last section outlines the structure for the presentation of this thesis.

### **1.1 The research topic area**

The present study is situated within the particular research area of language education for communicating across and between cultures, i.e. intercultural communication. The ultimate aim of language education, for the last few decades, has become to educate intercultural speakers who are competent in intercultural situations, or to develop learners' *intercultural competence* (IC) (Byram, 2009). Language and culture are inseparable and culture is influential on all levels of communication, from forming the context for communication to the cultural content embedded in linguistic units (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, 2000). Thus, to achieve the aim of educating intercultural speakers in language education, culture must be treated as a central element that is explicitly taught in an integrated way with language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003; Newton & Shearn, 2010b). This study investigates the topic area of language teachers' integration of culture into language teaching to develop learners' IC. It deals with the issue of IC development within language education but does not cover other forms of intercultural training or education.

### **1.2 The study context**

The present study was conducted in a Vietnamese EFL teaching context. This section describes this context in terms of the history of language education in Vietnam. It also

explains the need for addressing culture as a central element in language teaching in this context.

### ***1.2.1 History of language education in Vietnam***

The history of language education in Vietnam has witnessed numerous changes in what language(s) to be taught and learned, reflecting historical periods and events of the country as well as international historical events (Wright, 2002). Table 1.1, summarised from Wright (2002, 2004), shows the main changes with historical milestones in Vietnam.

Table 1.1 History of language education in Vietnam

| <b><i>Time</i></b>                              | <b><i>Historical periods/ events</i></b>                                                                                    | <b><i>Main language(s) taught and used</i></b>                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 111 BC - 939 AD                                 | Vietnam was ruled by China                                                                                                  | Chinese (for educating children of Chinese rulers and Vietnamese aristocracy)                                                        |
| 939 AD - 13 <sup>th</sup> century               | Independence from China                                                                                                     | Chinese                                                                                                                              |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century     | Nom script (for recording Vietnamese based on Chinese characters) was invented                                              | Chinese (in law and government documents); Nom script (in written literature and arts)                                               |
| Mid 16 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century | French missionaries introduced Christianity and developed Romanised Vietnamese writing system (Quoc-Ngu, national language) | Nom script, Chinese, French, Vietnamese (Quoc-Ngu, known now as Vietnamese)                                                          |
| Late 19 <sup>th</sup> - 1945                    | Vietnam was colonised by France; won independence in 1945                                                                   | Vietnamese as national language; French                                                                                              |
| 1946 - 1954                                     | French War                                                                                                                  | Vietnamese as national language; French                                                                                              |
| 1955 - 1975                                     | American War                                                                                                                | Vietnamese as national language; English in South Vietnam; Russian and Chinese in North Vietnam                                      |
| 1975 - late 1980s                               | Reunion of North and South Vietnam                                                                                          | Vietnamese as national language; Russian, Chinese, English, and French as main foreign languages (Russian as most popular)           |
| Since early 1990s                               | Vietnam's application of "doi moi" (renovations) and open-door policies                                                     | Vietnamese as national language; English, French and Chinese as main foreign languages, with an increased number of English learners |

As seen in Table 1.1, since its independence from France in 1945 Vietnam has witnessed changes in what foreign language(s) should be mainly taught and learned in the country. During the French War (1946-1954), French was still the most popular

foreign language. From 1955 until 1975, a war involving the United States of America occurred in Vietnam. This war is referred to as the American War; it is also known as the Vietnam War outside Vietnam. During this war, English was a popular foreign language taught and learned in South Vietnam; whereas, Russian and Chinese were the two languages taught widely in North Vietnam. From the reunion of North and South Vietnam (in 1975) to the late 1980s, Russian was prioritised to be taught throughout the country's national education system. However, other foreign languages such as English, French and Chinese were also taught in this system. In the past two decades, since the early 1990s, with the open-door policy, Vietnam has attached more and more significance to the teaching and learning of English for the country's integration into the world. Improving Vietnamese people's language competence for communicating with people in other countries around the world has therefore become a chief requirement for Vietnam to be incorporated into the world in, for example, in economic, scientific and educational areas (Wright, 2002).

In 2008, the government of Vietnam launched a national foreign language education policy known as "Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system from 2008 to 2020" (Government of Vietnam, 2008). This policy advocates the teaching and learning of foreign languages for communicating across cultures in a multicultural context. It aims for university graduates, by 2020, to be competent in "an integrative, multi-lingual, multi-cultural working context" (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 1, English translation). As stated in this policy, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages (Council of Europe, 2001) is to be used for designing language curricula, teaching materials, and student assessment. Adopting CEFR as the basis for language education means that the current policy highlights the need for addressing both language and culture. That is, it adopts CEFR's premise that "the language learner is in the process of becoming a language user" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43) and language education aims for the development of the language learner's plurilingualism and interculturality. According to the Council of Europe's (2001) CEFR, plurilingualism is concerned with the diversity of languages and, importantly, with the build-up of the language learner's communicative competence through his/her experiences of languages (i.e., his/her own language and languages of others) in their cultural contexts. In this sense, knowledge and skills in all the languages the learner uses contribute to this communicative competence, and all these languages relate and interact with each other to form this

competence. Thus, plurilingualism is not merely about knowledge of a number of languages. In CEFR, interculturality is concerned with socio-cultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and intercultural awareness and know-how (Council of Europe, 2001).

Presently, among the various foreign languages that are being taught and learned in Vietnam, English has become the most popular, particularly since the late 1990s. For example, in the academic year 1999-2000, up to 98% of school students in Vietnam chose to study English, nearly six times higher than the figure in 1995 (Nguyen, 2004). As a member of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) since 1995, Vietnam has also been using English in communications with other member nations. Within ASEAN, English has been accepted as the *lingua franca* in communication (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Furthermore, Vietnam uses English in international relations with countries around the world, outside ASEAN. Thus, English has a significant role in Vietnam's educational system and its development and foreign relations. The priority for English as a foreign language to be taught in educational institutions in Vietnam is implied in the current foreign language education policy where English is referred to by name while other languages are not. This specification is read as "the foreign languages that are taught and learned in educational institutions in the national education system include English and some other languages" (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2, English translation).

### ***1.2.2 The need to address culture as a central element in language education***

Although language and culture cannot be separated (e.g., Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999) how culture is viewed and taught in language classrooms is an issue to consider. There are different approaches to culture in language teaching: culture as high culture (e.g., literature), as study areas, as societal norms, and as practices (Liddicoat et al., 2003). These approaches reflect either a static or a dynamic view of culture and affect how culture is taught in language classrooms (Liddicoat, 2004).

In the context of Vietnam's foreign language education in general EFL teaching in particular, there seems to still be a heavy focus on only linguistic knowledge, while culture has not received enough attention as observed by Ho (2011), as well as in my own experience. This practice is also reflected in research into language education. There is limited knowledge about how culture is or should be addressed in the Vietnamese EFL teaching context, other than a recent study by Ho (2011) that

extensively investigated the current intercultural teaching and learning in a university in Vietnam. Other available studies investigating English education in Vietnam seem to address different interests, for example: teaching linguistic knowledge and language skills (e.g., Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2010; Le, 2006); issues related to the communicative approach to language teaching (e.g., Pham, 2007); and the cultural identity of Vietnamese teachers and students of English (e.g., Phan, 2007; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004).

The current foreign language education policy of Vietnam, as mentioned above, advocates language teaching and learning for intercultural communication. Thus, it aims to develop learners' *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) as a central component of the language learning process (Byram, 1997). The foregrounding component of ICC, according to Byram (1997) is IC. When language education aims at developing learners' IC and addresses interculturality (Council of Europe, 2001) culture must be integrated into language teaching as a central element from the beginning (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, 2000; Liddicoat et al., 2003; Newton & Shearn, 2010b). Therefore, for the teaching and learning of foreign languages in general, and English in particular, in Vietnam this integration needs to occur at all levels of education. Regarding university curricula for undergraduates, foreign languages are taught as compulsory foundation courses in two or three semesters, usually in the first and second years. These foundation courses are required to be taken by students from all disciplines within a university. Thus, foreign language courses have an important status in undergraduate programmes in Vietnamese universities.

Furthermore, in the current Vietnamese foreign language education policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008) the Council of Europe's (2001) CEFR is used as a basis for language teaching and assessments (see 1.2.1). In this framework, it is necessary to address, along with plurilingualism, interculturality in terms of developing learners' intercultural awareness, socio-cultural knowledge, intercultural skills and know-how (Council of Europe, 2001). These are specific IC components. This means that with the application of this framework foreign language education in Vietnam must take into account the development of learners' IC, or specific IC components. This development, as previously mentioned, requires culture to be addressed as a central element that is integrated with language in language teaching and learning.



### 1.3 EFL teaching and me

This section provides information about my experience as an EFL learner, an EFL teacher trainee, an EFL teacher, and a researcher in the area of EFL teaching. These experiences are the basis of my bias referred to in my discussion and interpretation of the participants' accounts of their experiences, their professional beliefs and practices in three chapters (from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7).

○ *EFL teaching and me as an EFL learner:* In the history of foreign language education in Vietnam, English was one of the four major languages taught and learned over the period from 1975 to the late 1980s, as can be seen in Table 1.1. However, during this period, Russian was the most popular foreign language in the country. I had my first English lessons in 1984 when I was in secondary school. At school, my peers and I had two English classes per week, in three secondary school years. We learned English from a textbook (written by Vietnamese authors and published by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education's publisher). It was the only source we learned English from. Needless to say, we only learned about English grammar (typically verb tenses and sentence structure) and vocabulary, with some grammatical drills and composition tasks. I remember having no practice of English conversations and almost no explicit mention of cultural issues throughout the three years of English learning. All our learning was based on the texts and grammatical points provided in the textbooks. Despite this, the foreignness of our English lessons interested me greatly. I always achieved good examination results in English in my secondary education. My interest in English as well as my good results in this school subject contributed to my decision to get further instruction in English and to become an EFL teacher. I took and passed the national university entrance examinations for a foreign language teacher training college in Vietnam (now a university school within Vietnam National University, Hanoi). There I was a student of the English Department and trained to become an EFL teacher for five years.

As an EFL learner and EFL teacher trainee at the college, I took various courses to develop both linguistic knowledge and language skills. Furthermore, I also studied courses on English language teaching methodology. These provided me with knowledge about principles and techniques in teaching the target language, mainly teaching linguistic knowledge (e.g., teaching pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar) and classroom management. Culture was addressed to the extent of introducing literary works from two English-speaking countries (Great Britain and the United States of

America). Culture was also introduced, in a separate course, in terms of cultural facts (e.g., geography, society, people, economy and politics) related to, basically just these two English-speaking countries.

○ *EFL teaching and me as an EFL teacher:* After graduating from the foreign language teacher training college, I became an EFL teacher, teaching at a university in North Vietnam until I started my PhD studies in New Zealand in 2010. Working as an EFL teacher, I applied the ideas I had learned about language teaching methods. What I was most concerned with was improving my students' linguistic knowledge and language skills. In more recent years, I tried to apply new teaching ideas (e.g., about designing and organising communicative activities, teaching language skills, and developing teaching materials) that I gained from publications and from language teacher professional programmes. However, I felt that this effort was not enough for my students (who had fairly good target language knowledge) to communicate with a reasonable amount of success, particularly with foreigners who they encountered, for example during a class visit by such foreigners. These feelings and my own experience in communicating with foreign visitors and teachers in my university have led me to the recognition of the importance of culture in language use, in particular in using the target language in intercultural encounters. I myself, then, made attempts to look for advice from written sources (e.g., books on language teaching and on cultural issues and papers on the issue of how to teach culture) on how I could incorporate culture in my EFL classes to assist my students to communicate better in intercultural situations. My interest in culture and in integrating culture into EFL teaching was also a driving force for me to write a thesis based on a Vietnamese-English cross-cultural study focussing on the speech act of showing anger, as a partial requirement for my Master of Arts degree from 2001 to 2004. In 2010, I started my PhD studies in New Zealand on a Vietnamese government scholarship. I decided to investigate the area of integrating culture into language teaching to assist me as an EFL teacher to grow both personally and professionally, as well as for other reasons as presented in section 1.5.

○ *EFL teaching and me as the researcher in this study:* Researching the area of developing IC in language education in a familiar context, I brought my own experience both as a language learner and teacher into my research. That is, my research also has my own view as an insider along with my view as a researcher. Being an insider in researching a group of people is both advantageous and disadvantageous, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

## 1.4 Focus of the study

The present study focusses on how Vietnamese EFL teachers integrate culture into their language teaching. It addresses the following overarching question:

*How do we currently understand Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching?*

The study aims to construct knowledge about how EFL teachers in a Vietnamese university EFL teaching context address culture. In particular, it is devoted to constructing knowledge about teachers' beliefs and practices in incorporating culture into language teaching. This knowledge is concerned with teachers' beliefs about teaching culture, their integration of culture into their language teaching, and issues related to *teacher professional development* (TPD). Therefore, the research questions that the study addresses to achieve its general aim are as follows.

- What are Vietnamese university EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching culture?
- How do they integrate culture into their EFL teaching practices?
- What do we know about TPD regarding the integration of culture into EFL teaching in this context?

These research questions also help to form the style of data presentation and discussion in constructing knowledge about how Vietnamese EFL teachers address culture in their language teaching. That is, each research question becomes the central idea of a chapter that presents and discusses data related to a sub-area of knowledge to be constructed. In this way, Chapter 5 deals with the first question, Chapter 6 is centred on the second question, and Chapter 7 focusses on the third question. However, because these questions are inter-related and seen as three different aspects of the overarching question, data presented and discussed in each chapter are cross-referenced among these three chapters as well as among sections within a chapter. The interrelatedness of these sub-areas of knowledge, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issue under study, is presented in section 8.3 of the concluding chapter.

## 1.5 Rationale for the study

I conducted the present study for three main reasons, as described below.

Firstly, I started this study based on my own interest and need for knowledge about culture and how to integrate it into language teaching for the development of language learners' IC. This was the initial driving force that led me to commit to

conducting the study. The study, thus, has helped me enrich my professional knowledge in a focussed way. The findings can be applied to my own teaching practices for better learning outcomes for my students in terms of developing their ability to communicate across cultures in intercultural situations.

Secondly, in the Vietnamese context of foreign language education, there is limited knowledge about the issue of addressing IC. There have been few studies exclusively investigating Vietnamese language teachers' beliefs and practices in integrating culture in their language teaching, except for Ho's (2011) study. However, Ho's study did not extensively or comprehensively discuss the issue of *language teacher professional development (LTPD)*, which is an important factor in language education. For example, his study did not provide knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of current professional development programmes regarding teachers' pedagogical learning, teachers' own IC and teachers' ability to teach and assess IC. The present study aimed to construct knowledge about how Vietnamese EFL teachers integrate culture into their language teaching, covering the above issues and thus addressing this gap in the knowledge base to some extent.

Thirdly, the study aimed to propose suggestions and recommendations for making positive change in foreign language education in Vietnam, particularly at the university level of education. This critical element will help language teachers, such as my colleagues in my university and teachers from other Vietnamese universities where the context is similar to the one described in the present study, to make changes in their teaching practices. It will also assist foreign language education policy makers to produce more supportive policies that advocate the development of learners' IC. These changes are related to teachers' awareness of the important role of culture in language teaching, teachers' pedagogical learning and knowledge, teachers' own IC, and teachers' ability to teach and assess IC. Such changes, when made in the Vietnamese foreign language education context, will ultimately help learners develop their ability to communicate across cultures in intercultural settings, thus meeting the demands of the new government foreign language education policy.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic research area, the study context, a description of my own experience (as a language learner, a language teacher trainee, a language teacher and as the researcher in this study), the study focus,

and the rationale for conducting the study. Chapter 2 describes the general background to the study, i.e. culture in language education. Chapter 3 is devoted to the issue of the integration of culture into language teaching. It also reviews prior research into this area. Chapter 4 describes the research design of the study. It explains the theory underpinning the research design. It also describes and justifies the methodology and methods applied in the study. The findings of the study are presented and discussed throughout three chapters (from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7). Chapter 5 presents the sub-area of knowledge of teachers' beliefs in teaching culture. The focus of Chapter 6 is teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching. This chapter addresses the central issue of the thesis, i.e. teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching practices, and thus is the longest chapter in the thesis. Chapter 7 addresses the issue of professional development for language teachers. Chapter 8, the final chapter, summarises the key findings and concludes the study. It also outlines the relationships among these findings in order to construct holistic knowledge about the issue under study. Furthermore, it proposes suggestions and recommendations about changes that need to be made in the context of Vietnamese foreign language education, for both teachers and policy makers. This chapter also suggests further research to extend the scope of the present study as well as to gain deeper insights into the issue of addressing IC in language education.

## Chapter 2 Culture in language education

### 2.0 Introduction

This study examines the integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching practices. Culture, as a common concept in both daily life and academic circles, has been conceptualised from various perspectives. Thus, in order to provide the basic theoretical framework for the study, this chapter begins with a review of the conceptualisations of culture (section 2.1), which is followed by a description of the relationships between language and culture (section 2.2). It follows from these relationships that a summary of the approaches to culture in language education that have been taken (section 2.3) is necessary and informative to the present study. The next section (section 2.4) discusses conceptions and models of IC, which is seen as an important goal in language education in this era of globalisation (Scarino, 2009) as well as one of the key concepts in this study. The chapter ends with a summary of the issues reviewed.

### 2.1 Conceptualisations of culture

*Culture* is a common concept addressed in various fields such as cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, communication studies, education and political studies. This multidisciplinary nature of the term has led to a debate around its conceptualisation and, thus, to numerous definitions. However, according to Faulkner, Baldwin, Lindsley and Hecht (2006), there are seven themes commonly appearing in contemporary definitions of culture, and several of these themes are usually interwoven in one definition. These themes are described as follows.

- *Structure or pattern*: Definitions involving structure/pattern would conceptualise culture as a system or a framework of elements (e.g., behaviours, traditions, beliefs, norms, and values), describing an observable pattern of regularities in, for example, behavioural systems, way of life, language and speech, and social organisation. They focus on what culture is.
- *Function*: Definitions that stress the functions of culture consider culture a tool to achieve an end; i.e., they focus on what culture does. The functions of culture typically include: the guidance function, for example, of defining the logic of communication in a cultural group; the group identity function that helps members of a group build and maintain a certain identity among themselves or distinguish themselves from other groups; the expressive function that allows members of a group to live in a

way preferable for them; and, the stereotyping function that helps an individual or a group evaluate others.

- *Process*: This theme occurs in definitions that describe how culture is socially constructed and transmitted from generation to generation. Culture is, then, viewed as a process of developing patterns among a group. It can also be a process of sense making, of relating to others, of negotiating power relations between different groups, and of transmitting cultural elements such as norms, beliefs, values and ways of thinking, basically, from generation to generation.
- *Product*: Within this category culture is perceived as a product of meaningful activities. That is, culture is viewed as artefacts such as clothing and buildings. Similarly, culture is also seen as a product of representation in that it refers to artefacts which are specifically meaningful for a certain group such as popular music, folklore, or paintings.
- *Refinement*: This theme is present in definitions that focus on the moral and intellectual refinement of humans. Stressing this theme, a number of definitions treat culture as what distinguishes humans from other species. Meanwhile, other definitions suggest that it might make some individuals more human than others.
- *Power or ideology*: Definitions that conceptualise culture as power or ideology normally focus on the process of gaining and exerting dominance of one group of people over others, and focus mainly on political interests. The assumption of these definitions is that groups have unequal chances to raise their own voices and thus struggle for opportunities to define things within their own interests. Therefore, domination becomes inherent to culture.
- *Group membership*: Within this category culture is perceived as a group of people or as a place (e.g., a country), focussing on the “shared-ness” of the group members in terms of, for example, worldviews, communication systems and behaviour. Thus, a generation, a team or an ethnic group could each be identified as a culture. (Summarised from Faulkner et al., 2006)

Among the above themes, according to structure/pattern, function and process are most commonly found in conceptualisations of culture (as observed in numerous definitions of the term) while one or more of the other themes may well be integrated in a conceptualisation (Faulkner et al., 2006). Because the term culture is “multidiscursive” (Faulkner et al., 2006, p. 50) (i.e., it is defined in various discourses or in various disciplines), the themes that are stressed vary in different definitions.

Moreover, the focus on a certain core theme may reveal the nature of its definition: A stress on structure/pattern or function signifies positivist or neo-positivist positions, while a stress on process would indicate an interpretivist nature, and a focus on power interests that structures, processes and products of culture serve implies a critical nature (Hecht, Baldwin, & Faulkner, 2006). In Hecht et al.'s (2006) view, those who stress structure and/or function in conceptualising the term seem to believe that these structures/patterns and functions are observable and knowable from outside; i.e., structures/patterns and functions are objective elements which can predict communicative, social and political outcomes.

The following definitions illustrate the central status of structure/pattern, function and process in conceptualising the term culture, as well as the integration of one (or more) of the other themes of culture. First, according to Liddicoat et al. (2003), "culture is a complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviours, practices, rituals, and lifestyle of the people who make up a cultural group, as well as the artefacts they produce and the institutions they create" (p. 45). In this definition, priority is given to structure/pattern (i.e., elements of culture) while the idea of group membership (i.e., the shared-ness of the cultural elements among a cultural group) and culture as product are also explicitly included. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) also propose a definition of culture that stresses the themes of structure/ pattern, product and group membership. For these authors, culture is regarded as "the beliefs, behaviors, norms, attitudes, social arrangements, and forms of expression that form a describable pattern in the lives of members of a community or institution" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 21). Another definition in which cultural products are explicitly included is the one proposed by Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005). In their definition, culture is seen as "a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 28). This definition conceptualises culture as: the structure/pattern of elements such as traditions and norms; process (i.e., process of transmission of the structure/pattern from generation to generation through interaction); and, function (i.e., group identity: when the structural elements are shared, a culture can be identified). Furthermore, this definition also contains the themes of group membership (as expressed in the final five words: "interacting members of a



community”) and product (i.e., “symbols”, which, according to the authors, include artefacts, signs, words, and nonverbal behaviour representing something meaningful).

Secondly, Thompson (2003) and Lustig and Koester (2010) share similarities in their focus on themes in their definitions of culture. Thompson (2003) defines the term as “a set of shared meanings, assumptions and understandings which have developed historically in a given community (a geographical community or a community of interest – for example, a professional community)” (p. 109). This definition stresses the ideas of structure (including shared meanings, assumptions, understanding), function (i.e., culture helps to define a group, even a professional community, via the sharing of the structural elements), process (i.e., process of creation/ development), and group membership (i.e., a given community). Another example in which function (alongside structure, process and group membership) is stressed has been proposed by Lustig and Koester (2010), who see culture as “a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people” (p. 25). Regarding the function of culture in the above cited definitions, Thompson mentions the function of identifying a cultural group, Lustig and Koester explicitly stress the guidance function of culture (i.e., culture affects the behaviours of the members of a cultural group).

Thirdly, a number of authors focus on the three themes of structure/pattern, functions and group memberships. For example, according to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), culture is “the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas [emphasis deleted]” (p. 6). Culture is thus seen as a structure of elements forming a whole way of life, as function (in solving problems and reconciling dilemmas) and as group membership. Using a computer analogy, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) define culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others [emphasis deleted]” (p. 4), or “software of the mind [emphasis deleted]” (p. 3). This “software”, according to Hofstede and Hofstede, is comprised of thinking, feeling and acting patterns shared by members of a group or category. These authors conceptualise culture in terms of its structure/pattern, function (identifying and distinguishing groups of people), and group membership (shared-ness of the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting). The following table (Table 2.1) summarises the themes that are present in the above definitions of culture.

Table 2.1 Summary of themes in discussed definitions of culture

| <i><b>Definition</b></i>              | <i><b>Structure/<br/>pattern</b></i> | <i><b>Process</b></i> | <i><b>Function</b></i> | <i><b>Group</b></i> | <i><b>Product</b></i> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Liddicoat et al.'s (2003)             | ✓                                    |                       |                        | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| LeCompte & Schensul's (1998)          | ✓                                    |                       |                        | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Ting-Toomey & Chung's (2005)          | ✓                                    | ✓                     | ✓                      | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Thompson's (2003)                     | ✓                                    | ✓                     | ✓                      | ✓                   |                       |
| Lustig & Koester's (2010)             | ✓                                    | ✓                     | ✓                      | ✓                   |                       |
| Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1998) | ✓                                    |                       | ✓                      | ✓                   |                       |
| Hofstede & Hofstede's (2005)          | ✓                                    |                       | ✓                      | ✓                   |                       |

Concerning the core themes being focussed on in defining culture, Hecht et al. (2006) point out that purely structural definitions are advantageous for the analysis and comparison of cultures as these definitions provide common terms. However, these authors also note that such definitions are likely either to lead to an over-emphasis on one element at the expense of others or to neglect the dynamic nature of culture. Similarly, purely process definitions, which have the benefit of attending to this dynamic nature, might overlook the structural elements and the function of the process (Hecht et al., 2006).

One important aspect in the conceptualisation of culture is the visualisation of its layers or levels, as well as the theme(s) of focus. Various scholars have proposed and/or worked on visual models of culture, typically the “onion” model (e.g., Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), the “iceberg” model (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005), and the “atom” model (Hecht et al., 2006). Following is a description of these models.

Firstly, culture can be imagined to contain layers, from the outer layer to the core – i.e., the onion model of culture. The onion model of culture proposed by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) consists of three layers: artefacts and products as the outer layer, norms and values as the middle layer, and basic assumptions as the core (see Figure 2.1). In this model, “explicit” culture includes all that can be observed, such as language use, buildings, fashions, food, art, and agriculture. The middle layer consists of norms and values, which are characterised by semi-awareness.

The core of culture includes basic assumptions about existence, which are taken-for-granted by people within the culture.

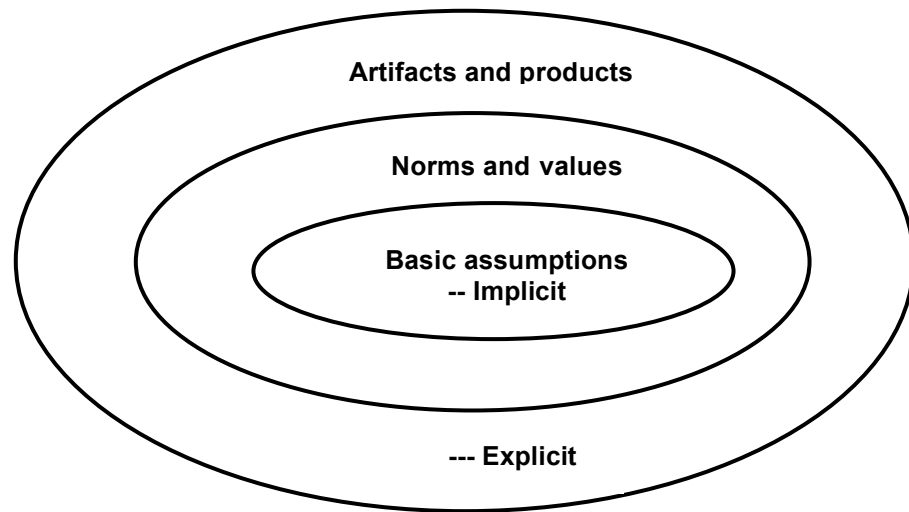


Figure 2.1 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's onion model of culture  
(Source: Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 22)

According to Hofstede and Hostede's (2005) onion model of culture (see Figure 2.2), culture consists of four layers, from the outer layer of symbols to the next layer of heroes to rituals and finally to the core comprised of values, together with a set of practices subsuming the layers of symbols, heroes, and rituals. These layers and sets of practices are summarised as follows.

- *Symbols*: Symbols form the superficial, outermost layer of culture, including cultural products and objects (e.g., words, images, costumes, and flags) that have particular meanings constructed and interpreted by members of a cultural group. Symbols might change with time due to the appearance of new symbols and the disappearance of old ones.
- *Heroes*: Heroes, the layer beneath the outer one, are those people whose characteristics are highly valued among a cultural group and who are considered as behavioural models. Heroes can be either alive or dead, and either real or imagined.
- *Rituals*: Beneath the layer of heroes is the layer of rituals. Rituals are essential collective activities carried out to pursue an aim, for example, social ceremonies and ways of greeting and of using language in communication.
- *Values*: Values form the core layer of culture and denote the tendencies in preference of certain state of affairs over others (e.g., evil versus good, irrational versus rational).

- *Practices*: Practices are considered the manifestations of symbols, heroes, and rituals. It is via the sets of practices of members of a cultural group that the cultural meanings of symbols, heroes, and rituals can become visible to an outsider. (Summarised from Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005)

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Figure 2.2 Hofstede and Hofstede's onion model of culture  
(Source: Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 7)

Secondly, culture is also conceptualised in the form of an iceberg. For example, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) describe culture in the form of an image of an iceberg with the surface, intermediate, and deep levels (see Figure 2.3). In their model, the tip of the iceberg above the water surface represents the surface-level culture, or popular culture, which can be directly observed in everyday life, for example cultural artefacts such as costumes. The next layer below this is the intermediate-level culture, consisting of symbols, meanings and norms. According to Ting-Toomey and Chung, a symbol may exist in various forms such as a sign, a gesture, a word, a nonverbal behaviour to which interpretations are attached (i.e., meanings). Beneath the second layer is the deep-level culture, which is comprised of the traditions, beliefs and values shared by the members of a cultural group. The elements of the deep-level culture are rooted in universal human needs, for example, for security, love or connection, inclusion and respect. This explains why though members from different cultures are different in various ways they share many such basic needs across cultures.

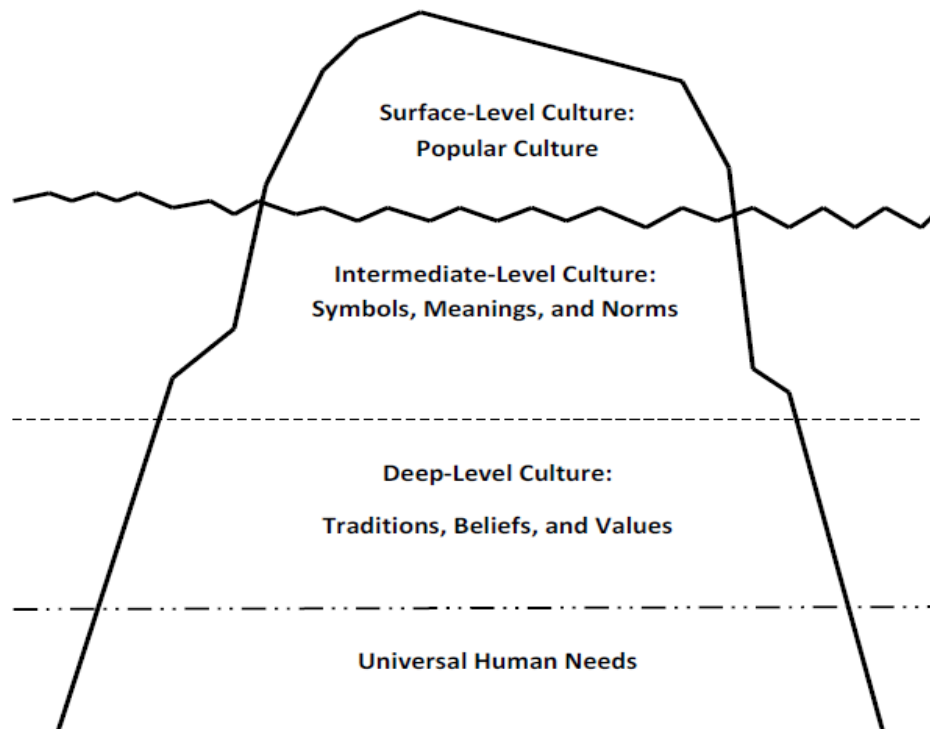


Figure 2.3 Ting-Toomey and Chung's iceberg model of culture  
(Source: Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 28)

As can be seen in the above two ways of visualising culture (i.e., the onion analogy and the iceberg analogy), culture is commonly conceptualised with a focus on what it is, i.e. its elements and layers. However and thirdly, culture is a multifaceted term and has traditionally been conceptualised with a combination of themes as already mentioned. That one or more than one of these themes can be stressed or not in defining culture depends on the interests and worldviews of the person who conceptualises it. Among the seven common themes found in definitions of culture the three themes of structure/pattern, process and function are pervasive (Hecht et al., 2006). This is because the theme of structure/pattern focusses on what culture is, the theme of process deals with how culture is formed, and the functional theme describes what culture does in human life. Thus, in the atom analogy of culture proposed by Hecht et al. (2006), structure/pattern, process and functions are positioned in the centre and considered the nucleus of an atom, whereas the other themes (i.e., products, power, group, and refinement) revolve around and are driven by the nucleus (see Figure 2.4).

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Figure 2.4 The atom model of culture and its definition  
(Source: Hecht et al., 2006, p. 69)

In this thesis, I propose an operational definition of culture as follows:

*Culture is defined as a system of patterned beliefs, values and norms that shape and guide the observable behaviour of members of a community, created and transmitted by the members in social interactions. Such a community is considered a cultural group.*

This definition contains the ideas of structure/pattern, function, and – specifically – process, as well as group membership. Firstly, the principal structural elements include beliefs, values and norms. Beliefs refer to the “fundamental assumptions or worldviews that people hold dearly to their hearts without question” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 33), for example the assumptions about the meaning of life and death, or about the after-life. Values are ideas shared by members of a cultural group about identifying those which are important or desirable (Klyukanov, 2005). More concretely, cultural values refer to “a set of priorities that guide ‘good’ or ‘bad’ behaviours, ‘desirable’ or ‘undesirable’ practices, and ‘fair’ or ‘unfair’ actions” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 35), and provide logic for the observable behaviours. Norms are the behavioural standards that are accepted by a cultural group (Thomas, 2008), and can serve as reference standards for rewarding or setting sanction for norm-conforming or norm-violating actions, respectively (Klyukanov, 2005). According to Klyukanov (2005), norms can be further categorised as folkways (i.e., customs) such as how people eat and dress, mores (i.e., cultural practices that have moral connotations) and laws. Second, the function of culture is broadly seen as that which shapes and guides the behaviour (e.g., language behaviour) of the group members. In addition, the behaviour patterns that can be observed within a cultural group are seen as social practices, which manifest the

beliefs, values and norms of the group (Lustig & Koester, 2010). Third, culture is socially constructed by the members, shared and transmitted in social interactions. This idea stresses the dynamic nature of culture. Next, culture is also conceptualised as belonging to a group, which can be a nation, an ethnic group, or a professional community.

Thus, culture, as defined in this thesis, also includes a professional community (of interest) comprised of, for example, EFL teachers in a university; i.e., EFL teachers in an educational institution might be considered a cultural group, as expressed in Thompson's (2003) definition of culture. In this cultural group these teachers share certain beliefs concerning, for example, their conceptualisation of culture, their goals in teaching culture and their EFL teaching practices into which culture is integrated. Moreover, this thesis aims at constructing, together with this cultural group of EFL teachers, knowledge about the integration of culture in EFL teaching practices in a Vietnamese socio-cultural context. Thus, the proposed operational definition of culture serves as a contribution to the construction of an understanding of culture and how it is integrated in EFL teaching practices, especially in relation to the aim of developing EFL students' competence in communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds, in the local context in which the study was conducted. In other words, this thesis examines Vietnamese university EFL teachers' "culture" (especially their beliefs and practices) in addressing culture in relation to the development of their students' IC.

In summary, culture has been conceptualised from different perspectives, focussing on different theme(s) of interest, and embodying different philosophical viewpoints. For example, a focus on structure/pattern or function (i.e., the static side of the term) would represent positivism and a focus on process (i.e., the dynamic nature of culture) would signify interpretivism (Hecht et al., 2006). Thus, the operational definition of culture proposed in this thesis includes and stresses this theme (i.e. process), and allows the study to be conducted with an interpretivist position (i.e., it aims at constructing knowledge about a cultural group of EFL teachers in an educational institution). Structure/pattern, function and process are the ideas commonly stressed in various definitions of culture. Other themes are products, moral and intellectual refinement, power and ideology, and group membership. Being an abstract term, culture can be imagined to consist of layers representing its visible and invisible elements. These layers are popularly presented in both the onion analogy and the iceberg analogy of culture, as described above. The atom model of culture and its

definitions, however, does not focus on the layers of cultural elements (which are considered one of the themes in defining culture – i.e. structure/ pattern); instead, it presents the themes commonly mentioned, typically structure, functions and process. Table 2.2 summarises the models of culture (and its definitions) described above.

Table 2.2 Summary of the described models of culture

| <i><b>Model</b></i>                   | <i><b>Analogy</b></i>                         | <i><b>Features</b></i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1998) | Onion, with three layers                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explicit culture: artefacts and products</li> <li>- Middle layer: norms and values (semi-awareness)</li> <li>- Implicit culture: basis assumptions</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
| Hofstede & Hofstede's (2005)          | Onion, with four layers and sets of practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Symbols: easy to change, e.g. cultural products</li> <li>- Heroes: alive or dead, real or imaginary; considered as models of behaviour</li> <li>- Rituals: e.g. ways of greeting, of using language</li> <li>- Values</li> <li>- Sets of practices: manifestations of symbols, heroes, and rituals</li> </ul> |
| Ting-Toomey and Chung's (2005)        | Iceberg, with three layers                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surface-level culture: popular culture, cultural products</li> <li>- Intermediate culture: norms, symbols, meanings</li> <li>- Deep-level culture: traditions, beliefs, values</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| Hecht et al.'s (2006)                 | Atom, with seven themes                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three core themes: structure/pattern (of cultural elements such as norms, beliefs, values); functions; and process (of forming and transmitting cultural elements)</li> <li>- Four themes revolving around and driven by the core themes (or, nucleus): product, power, group, and refinement</li> </ul>      |

Culture is constructed and transmitted through human interactions, and thus, it has close relationships with language. The following section (section 2.2.) describes such relationships.

## **2.2 Relationships between language and culture**

There are different views on the relationship between language and culture. For many, language and culture are inseparable and interwoven (e.g., Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, 2000); for others, these two are separable in certain respects depending on the point of departure in viewing them (e.g., Risager, 2006). Risager (2006) argues that when language and culture are considered at the generic level (i.e., human language and



human culture) these two are inseparable. However, at the differential level that distinguishes languages and cultures, it can be observed that language and culture can be separated because “languages spread across cultures, and cultures spread across languages” (Risager, 2006, p. 2). For example, one can explain or describe the cultural content (e.g., the cultural presentation of an image in his/her culture) in another language (Risager, 2006). Similarly, language can also be separated from its cultural context because people can move from one cultural context to another (e.g., in migration) while still using their first language (Risager, 2006).

Despite these different points of view, it is a point of consensus that human language and culture are inseparable, specifically in the sense that “culture is embedded in language as an intangible, all-pervasive and highly variable force” (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, p. 116). This all-pervasive embedded-ness of culture in language is represented by what Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) term “points of articulation between language and culture” (p. 116): culture in context, in general textual structure, in text units, in organisations of text units, and in linguistic structures, words, syntax, and nonverbal behaviours. These interrelationships are central features of the process of human communication and can be found at all levels of human communication, specifically intercultural communication (Liddicoat, 2009). These links are summarised below.

- *Culture as context*: Culture forms knowledge of the world and a way of life in a cultural context. It is this context that provides language with local and specific meanings. For example, culture adds associations and connotative meanings to the denotative meaning of a term.
- *Culture in text structure*: Next, the world knowledge formed in a specific cultural context exerts its influence on the forms of communication, for example, on the recognition and use of genres within a cultural group. Though some genres (e.g., stories) exist in all cultures, some others are specific to certain cultures (e.g., magic spells). The influence of culture on text structure is also found in the properties and purpose of textual features which are used in communication. That is, cultures differ in organising text (e.g., circular versus linear organisation) and in judging text aesthetically and intellectually.
- *Culture and pragmatics and interactional norms*: Culture, then, is present in the norms of language use (i.e., pragmatic norms), for instance, in the realisation of positive or negative politeness. Culture is also influential to the norms of interactions (e.g., how

to open and close a conversation) in a, say, given community. At this level, the impact of culture on communication seems to be most clearly observed in intercultural communication where people from different cultural backgrounds come into contact, though culture has an impact on all communication.

- *Culture and linguistic form*: Culture can be found embedded in linguistic and paralinguistic structures. For example, lexical items such as words and phrases can carry cultural content specific to a certain culture; and, silence may convey different meanings in different cultures. (Summarised from Liddicoat, 2009)

Thus, culture and language are interwoven. Culture is in language and language encodes and constitutes culture. In the context of language education, how to address culture has always been an issue of interest. The section below (section 2.3) discusses the approaches to culture in language education.

### **2.3 Approaches to culture in language education**

Culture and language are inseparable, as described in the above section (see 2.2). However, there are various approaches to culture in language education. Four main approaches to culture in language education, according to, for example, Liddicoat (2004) and Liddicoat et al. (2003), are as follows.

- *The culture as high culture approach*: Within this traditional approach culture is commonly conceptualised as product, primarily the literature of the target language. Culture teaching is typically via the teaching of literary works in the target language.
- *The culture as area studies approach*: This approach sees culture as group membership, associating culture and country. Culture teaching involves mainly knowledge about the history, the geographical features and institutional issues of the country or countries in which the target language is mainly used.
- *The culture as societal norms approach*: This static structural and functional conceptualisation of culture focusses on language behaviours, typically the pragmatic and interactional norms, of the members of a certain cultural group. Addressing culture, thus, aims at enabling the language learner to predict the native speakers' language behaviours and to understand the values and beliefs in the target language culture.
- *The culture as practice approach*: Within this approach culture is seen as sets of practices in individuals' lived experiences in interactions. This dynamic view of culture, thus, encourages interactions with members of the target culture in teaching and learning culture. Culture teaching (in language education) aims at assisting language

learners to develop their intercultural communicative skills. (Summarised from Liddicoat, 2004; Liddicoat et al., 2003)

Among the four approaches to culture in language education summarised above, the first three represent a static view of culture, while the final one – culture as practice – represents a dynamic view (Liddicoat, 2002). According to Liddicoat (2002), each of these two views of culture has its own distinctive characteristics. A static view is generally characterised by the following. Firstly, cultural knowledge mainly refers to facts and artefacts. Secondly, teaching culture is via the provision of cultural information (i.e., teaching about the target culture). Thirdly, culture teaching is separated from language teaching. Next, cultural competence is largely dependent on language learners' memory of cultural information (e.g., about the history, institutions, customs, artefacts of a country or people). Finally, there are no stated relationships between cultural knowledge, language use, and the language learner as a language user. In contrast, the following features can describe a dynamic view of culture. In the first place, culture is defined as sets of practices engaged in by people in their lives in particular contexts. Secondly, culture learning is acquired via engaging with the practices (both linguistic and non-linguistic) of the target culture, and via understanding the way of life in a particular context. Thirdly, cultural knowledge is seen as knowing how to engage with the practices of a culture, and it has explanatory power to language use and other behaviours in the lives of the members of a cultural group. Next, cultural competence is defined largely in terms of intercultural behaviour, in which language learners are able to communicate across cultural boundaries and at the same time to establish their own identities. Finally, culture and language are closely related.

The view of culture and the approach to culture affect how culture is taught. When culture is approached as static, it might be treated separately from language (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004). For example, within the culture-as-high-culture approach culture is usually limited to literary works in the target language and addressed separately from language teaching. Similarly, within the culture-as-area-studies approach addressing culture means providing and exploring information about, for instance, the society, history and geographical features of a country, usually the country in which the target language is mainly spoken. However, if seen in a dynamic view, and thus within the culture-as-practice approach, culture is integrated into language education and involves language learners' engagement with both linguistic and non-linguistic practices in particular cultural contexts (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004).

To summarise, there are various approaches to culture in language education. These approaches, reflecting the views of culture (i.e., static and dynamic), affect how culture is treated in language teaching and learning. They also reflect the aims of language education. The following section (section 2.4) discusses a trend in defining language education aims, especially of foreign language education, in this era of globalisation.

## **2.4 Intercultural competence**

For the last few decades, language education has witnessed a shift in defining the aims of foreign language education: the shift from considering a native or native-like speaker of the target language as the model to strive for to the modeling of an intercultural speaker (Byram, 2009). An intercultural speaker can be defined as one who can mediate between cultures (including, but not limited to, the culture(s) of the target language) using the target language (Byram, 2008). An intercultural speaker can be seen as a “bilingual speaker”, in Liddicoat’s (2002) terms, “who is comfortable and capable in an intercultural context” (p. 10). In other words, the aims of foreign language education include the aim to produce the language user who is competent in intercultural encounters. The issues here are what the nature of intercultural communication is, what competences are required for such a language user, as well as what the objectives are in addressing the development of IC in language education.

### ***2.4.1 The nature of intercultural communication***

As a process, intercultural communication, according to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), occurs under the influences of various factors: cultural, socio-cultural, psycho-cultural, and environmental. Culturally, communication patterns are both similar and different across cultures, for example, in terms of power distance, low- or high-context communication, and individualism-collectivism tendencies. Socio-culturally, issues such as gender, sex, class, and ethnic, or in-group and out-group distinction have a strong effect on the process of intercultural communication. Psycho-culturally, stereotypes, prejudices, and degrees of ethnocentrism also affect this process. Finally, the environmental factors of physical, spatial, and temporal environments, as well as the particular situation, are influential in intercultural communication.

Neuliep (2009) works on the following five assumptions to present the nature of intercultural communication. These assumptions are summarised as follows.

- *Misunderstanding of messages*: The message that is sent by one is not always the message that is received by the other(s) during an intercultural encounter.
- *Primacy of nonverbal communication*: Intercultural communication is carried out primarily through nonverbal acts (especially in face-to-face communication).
- *Communication style clash*: Because cultures differ in communication styles, intercultural communication commonly involves a clash between communication styles (e.g., silence versus talk, direct versus indirect).
- *Experience of group phenomena by individuals*: During intercultural communication, one normally sees the interlocutor as belonging to a certain group rather than as being a specific individual, hence a stereotyping effect on the participants.
- *Stress-adaptation cycle*: As intercultural communication occurs between people from different cultural backgrounds, it involves anxiety, uncertainty, and stress; however, one can adapt to these feelings and grow. (Summarised from Neuliep, 2009)

Thus, Neuliep's (2009) assumptions as summarised above seem to imply that intercultural communication requires participants' efforts to overcome the problems that may arise during and after the process (e.g., misunderstandings, culture clashes and stereotyping effect). It is through the efforts that one makes to adapt oneself that an individual grows personally.

Another way of approaching the nature of intercultural communication is by figuring out the problems that may happen during an intercultural interaction. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) point out various potential problems in intercultural communication, of which the following are notable. Firstly, in an intercultural encounter, individuals tend to seek similarities, which may lead to excluding dissimilar people, or result in withdrawal from the interaction. Secondly, as intercultural communication is communication with dissimilar people, anxiety seems to be the inherent feature. Thirdly, if uncertainty is not reduced, the communication process may suffer from breakdown or even non-occurrence. Fourthly, as a result of the fact that the interlocutors lack familiarity and similarity, stereotyping commonly occurs. Finally (but not the last among those discussed by the authors), prejudices may result in hostility towards a certain group of people.

One way in which the nature of intercultural communication can be described is via the depiction of its internal factors, as can be seen in Byram's (1997) much-cited framework. In this framework, these factors are described in five categories of "savoir", summarised below.

- *Savoir être* (i.e., attitudes): This factor consists of the attitudes towards those who are culturally dissimilar in terms of cultural meaning, beliefs and behaviors. These attitudes, which are needed for mutual understandings among those involved in an intercultural interaction, include curiosity, openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about and judgment of the interlocutor's and of one's own meanings, beliefs, and behaviors.
- *Savoirs* (i.e., knowledge): This factor includes knowledge of one's own and of the interlocutor's culture and country, and knowledge of the interaction process.
- *Savoir comprendre* (i.e., skills of interpreting and relating): This factor denotes the skills of interpreting a "document" in another culture or country and relating it to documents in one's own culture or country.
- *Savoir apprendre/faire* (i.e., skills of discovery and interaction): This factor refers to the skills to acquire new knowledge (e.g. understanding beliefs and behaviours in documents and interactions) and to participate in intercultural interactions.
- *Savoir s'engager* (i.e., the development of critical cultural awareness in education): This factor involves the evaluation of one's own and others' cultural beliefs, meanings and behaviours. (Summarised from Byram, 1997)

In summary, intercultural communication (i.e., the communication between people from different cultural backgrounds) is a complex process that is influenced by various factors: cultural, sociocultural, psycho-cultural, and environmental (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). This process can be characterised by a number of assumptions, for example the understanding of messages, the type of communication channel (e.g., verbal and non-verbal) and styles (Neuliep, 2009). As a process of communicating with a culturally dissimilar interlocutor, intercultural communication may contain potential problems such as communication breakdown caused by anxiety, withdrawal as a result of the tendency to seek similarities, prejudices and stereotyping, and the universal ethnocentric view held by each interlocutor (Samovar et al., 2007). Specifically, this process requires various aspects of competence: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness (Byram, 1997). Following is a discussion of the competence needed for the intercultural communication process to be successful, i.e. IC.

#### **2.4.2 Intercultural competence**

In the context of foreign language education, ICC has become the ultimate goal. ICC is defined as the ability "to interact with people from another country and culture *in a foreign language* [emphasis added]" (Byram, 1997, p. 71). According to Byram (1997),

this competence requires that both the speaker and the interlocutor be satisfied during the interaction, and it includes, in certain situations that arise, the ability “to act as a mediator between people of different cultural origins” (p. 71). Byram’s ICC model (see Figure 2.5) consists of the following four component competences:

- *Linguistic competence*: the ability to interpret and produce language, both in spoken and in written forms, applying the acquired linguistic knowledge
- *Sociolinguistic competence*: the ability to understand one’s interlocutor’s (either a native speaker’s or a non-native speaker’s) taken-for-granted meanings, and negotiate meanings with the interlocutor
- *Discourse competence*: the ability in dealing with strategies to interpret and produce language in communication with one’s interlocutor, either conforming to the interlocutor’s cultural conventions or negotiating the meanings attached to the language as an intercultural text
- *Intercultural competence*: “the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and skills in interpreting, relating and discovering” (Byram, 1997, p. 70). These component competences of ICC are summarised from Byram (1997).

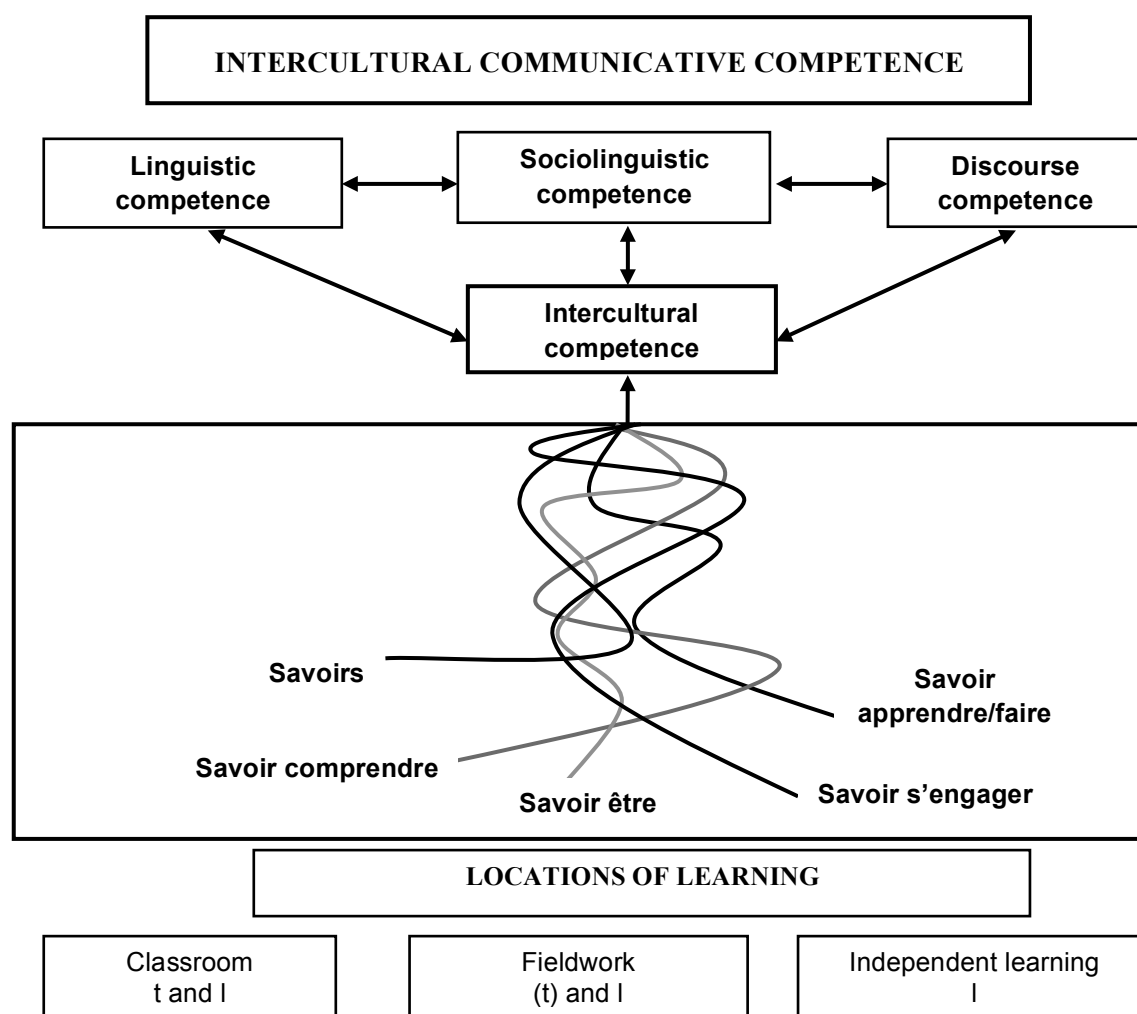


Figure 2.5 Byram's ICC model  
(Source: Byram, 1997, p. 73)

Byram's (1997) ICC model describes the competences aimed for in foreign language education. In this model, IC is seen as a foregrounding competence, and thus indicates a shift in defining the aims of foreign language education. That is, IC becomes a significant aim of language education, together with communicative competence. However, Kramsch and Whiteside (2008) propose the concept of symbolic competence to describe the variable and shifting communicative and intercultural competences required in a multilingual setting. This concept is defined as the ability "to play with various linguistic codes and with the spatial and temporal resonances of these codes" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664). In other words, an individual with symbolic competence can creatively and competently communicate with people from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds in fluidly changing contexts (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). Symbolic competence involves subjectivity, historicity, performativity, and reframing (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). For these authors, subjectivity refers to the ability to position oneself appropriately in certain symbolic spaces by selecting a



particular language or switching between languages. Historicity means the ability to construct mutual understandings of cultural memories that are conveyed by symbols such as words and gestures. Performativity refers to the ability to creatively play with languages in a setting where people speak different languages. Reframing is the ability that allows individuals to change the situation in which a conversation occurs by manipulating societal norms and conventions.

For Kramsch and Whiteside (2008), it is important that symbolic competence involve the creativeness of individual speakers in a multilingual setting. Symbolic competence, with a stress on this creativeness, thus seems to go further than the concept of IC (as used by Byram, 1997, 2008, 2012; Liddicoat, 2002, 2008). However, the term IC (as described in greater detail the following sections) would serve the present study best in the context of Vietnamese EFL education (see also section 1.2). This is because the term IC is a widely accepted term. This term has been well-established in the literature and, in this context, Vietnamese EFL teachers and other stakeholders will find it more familiar to work with. Therefore, rather than using Kramsch and Whiteside's (2008) term symbolic competence, I use the term IC in this study.

Various authors, for example, Byram (1997), Deardorff (2004 as cited in Deardorff, 2006) and Liddicoat (2002) provide definitions and propose models of IC. These conceptions and models of IC are described in the rest of this section.

#### *2.4.2.1 Byram's conception and model of intercultural competence*

According to Byram (1997), the IC of, for example, foreign language learners, refers to “the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and skills in interpreting, relating and discovering” (p. 70). He also emphasises that this competence is typically derived from the process of second language learning, even when the second language is not used in the interaction (Byram, 1997). Byram's IC model (see Figure 2.6) consists of five categories of “savoirs”, representing the aspects of IC: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. These “savoirs” are seen as the components of IC, as well as the internal factors of intercultural communication (see 2.4.1).

In Byram's (1997) IC model, critical cultural awareness (i.e. *savoir s'engager*) is positioned in the centre. According to Byram (2012), this central positioning of critical

cultural awareness is the embodiment of “the educational dimension of language teaching” (p. 9). Even though all the other three components in the model (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes – either linguistic or cultural) can also be acquired without critical cultural awareness, the addition of critical cultural awareness enables language teaching to maximise its educational function for language learners (Byram, 2012).

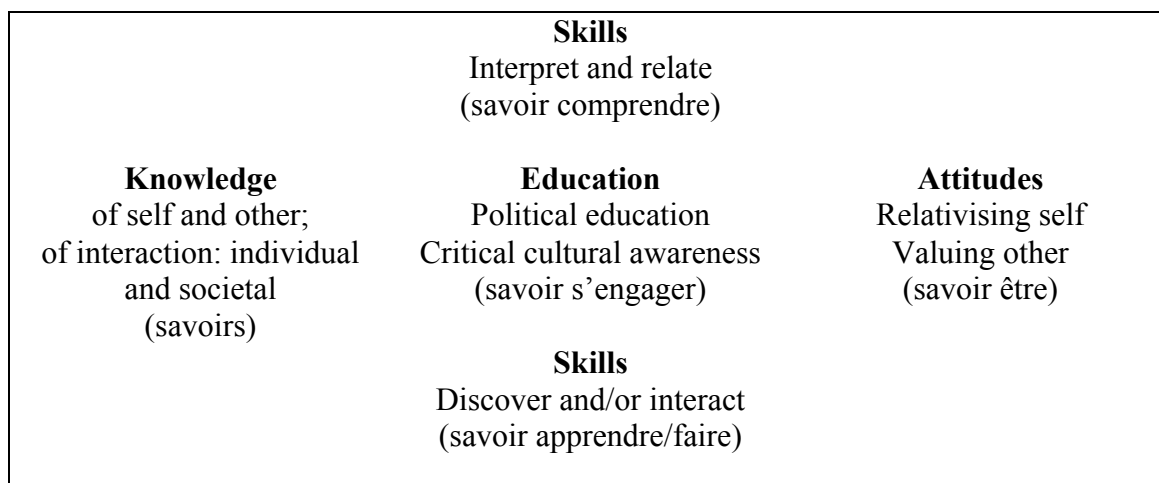


Figure 2.6 IC elements  
(Source: Byram, 1997, p. 34)

#### 2.4.2.2 Liddicoat’s conception and model of intercultural competence

In conceptualising IC in the context of language teaching, Liddicoat (2002) stresses the ethno-relative view to be developed in language learners. “Intercultural competence means being aware that cultures are relative, that is, being aware that there is no one ‘normal’ way of doing things, but rather that all behavior is culturally variable” (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10).

Language and culture are interrelated, and culture affects all levels of, especially verbal, communication, from the level of context of communication to the level of linguistic form (e.g., Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). Thus, IC can be effectively developed via the acquisition of another language; and reflecting on one’s own and others’ linguistic behaviour can function as “the primary tool for this development”(Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10).

The development of IC, according to Liddicoat (2002) and Liddicoat et al. (2003), is a cyclical process (see Figure 2.7). In Liddicoat’s (2002) model of IC development, language learners, with certain knowledge of their own cultural practices, are exposed to new cultural input from the target culture. This input has to be noticed by language learners. When noticing a difference in the input, they reflect on that

difference and make a decision on how far they will modify their cultural practices as a response to the difference noticed. They then internalise this decision into, and modify, their own communicative system, thus affecting their use of the target language, i.e. output. The modification of language learners' cultural practices as output, at this point and in its turn, becomes new input for a new noticing which can be either positive or negative. That is, the modified cultural practices can be seen as either successful or unsuccessful. In addition, on the basis of the reflection on whether or not the modified practices are successful, language learners make further modification to their cultural practices as modified output. Thus, cycles of input-noticing-reflection-output continue in the developmental process of IC. However, Liddicoat (2002) stresses that in language education the end point of this development "is not second language cultural practices, but rather an intermediate intercultural 'third place' developed between the sets of practices in the first and second languages" (p. 11).

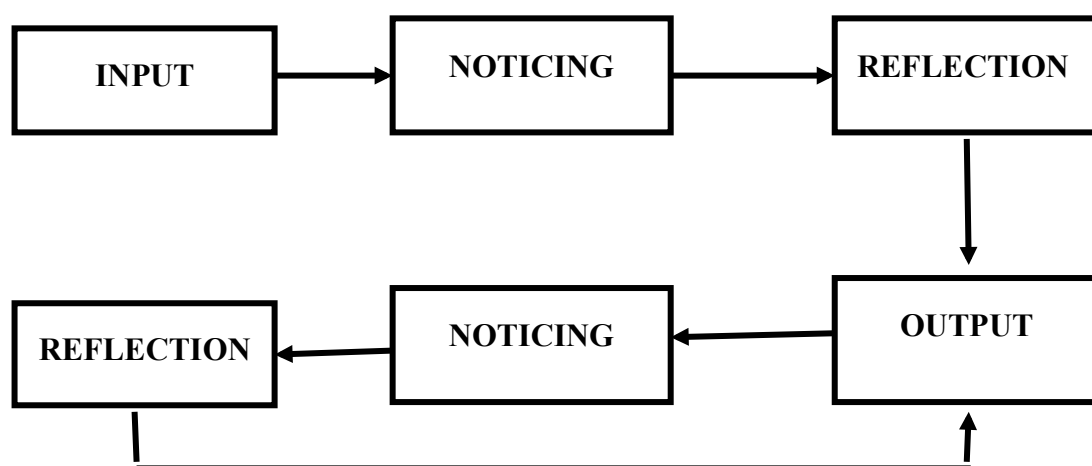


Figure 2.7 Liddicoat's IC development pathway  
(Source: Liddicoat, 2002, p. 11)

#### 2.4.2.3 Deardorff's conception and model of intercultural competence

Deardorff (2006) defines this competence as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 247-248). The process model of IC (see Figure 2.8) explains how this competence is acquired and developed.

According to Deardorff (2006), the process in which IC is acquired begins at the individual level and with the individual's positive attitudes (e.g., respect in valuing other cultures, openness, and curiosity). From that point, the individual gains knowledge

and understanding (including cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness) and develops skills in listening, observing and evaluating others, as well as in analysing and interpreting. Equipped with such knowledge and skills, an internal outcome, embodied by a shift in his/her frame of reference, is then developed in the individual. The informed frame of reference shift is represented by empathy, adaptability, flexibility, and an ethno-relative view. At the interactional level, the individual presents an external outcome, i.e. effective and appropriate communication and behaviour in an intercultural situation. This external outcome then becomes a driving force for the development of the individual's positive attitudes, which function as the starting point for another cycle of the development of IC.

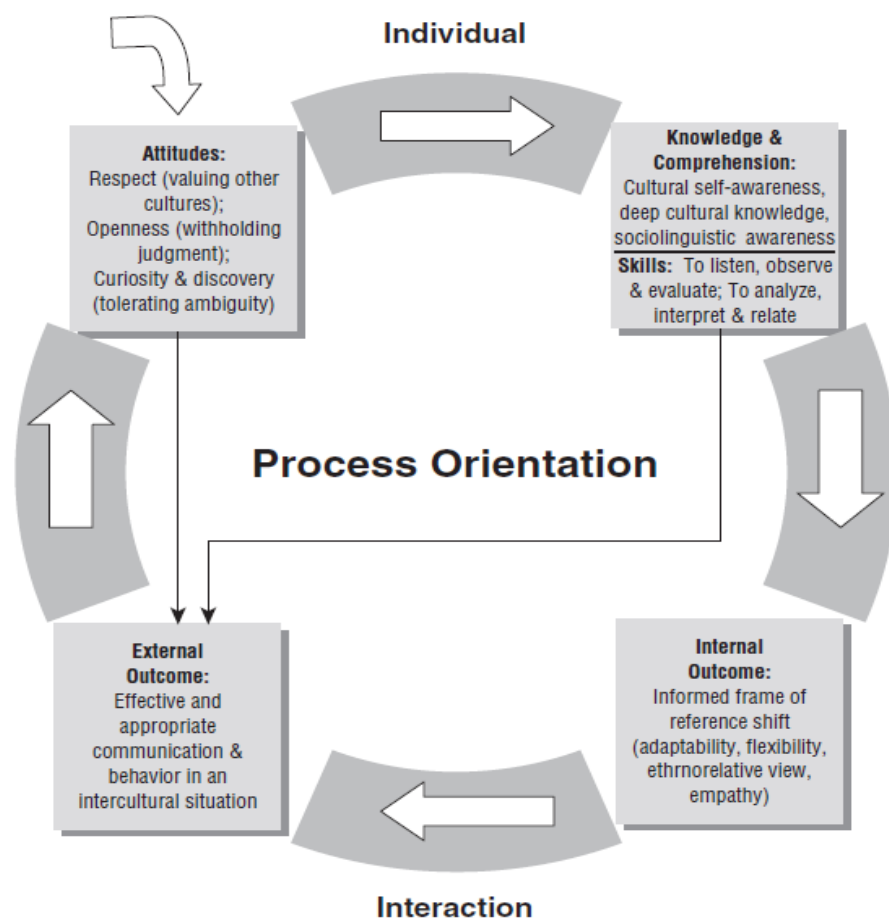


Figure 2.8 Deardorff's process model of IC  
(Source: Deardorff, 2006, p. 256)

Deardorff (2006) also emphasises that it is not always necessary for IC to develop in a full cycle as described above. For example, it is possible to move straightaway from the individual's attitudes and/or from his/her acquired knowledge and skills to external outcome, as shown in the model. However, in these cases "the

degree of appropriateness and effectiveness of the outcome may not be nearly as high as when the entire cycle is completed and begins again” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 257).

#### 2.4.2.4 Summary and evaluation of intercultural competence models

Table 2.3 summarises the conceptions and models of IC described in sections above.

Table 2.3 Summary of conceptions and models of IC

| Conception and model | Features                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Byram's              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consisting of five categories of “savoirs”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Savoirs: knowledge of one's own and one's interlocutor's culture/country</li> <li>- Savoir comprendre: skills of interpreting and relating</li> <li>- Savoir apprendre/faire: skills of discovery and interaction</li> <li>- Savoir être: positive attitudes, e.g. curiosity and openness</li> <li>- Savoir s'engager: critical cultural awareness</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Componential model with descriptive elements</li> <li>○ Seen as sets of objectives in language education</li> <li>○ Significance of critical cultural awareness in language education</li> </ul> |
| Liddicoat's          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IC: being aware that cultures are relative</li> <li>○ Process model of IC (i.e. a pathway)</li> <li>○ Cyclical process of intercultural development:<br/><i>Input – Noticing – Reflection – Output – Noticing ...</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Deardorff's          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IC: being effective and appropriate in intercultural communication, drawing on intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes</li> <li>○ Process model of IC</li> <li>○ Cyclical process of intercultural development (full cycle):<br/><i>Individual's intercultural attitudes – Intercultural knowledge and skills – Internal outcome – External outcome – Individual's intercultural attitudes . . .</i></li> <li>○ Possible to move from <i>individual's attitudes and/or knowledge and skills</i> to <i>external outcome</i> straightaway</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |

As can be observed in the above ways of modelling IC, each model has its own advantages. Byram's (1997) model is advantageous in pointing out the structural components of IC, as well as in listing the objectives that need to be aimed for in language education for the development of this competence. Thus, this model is valuable in depicting the norm of an intercultural speaker to aim for in language education. In contrast, Liddicoat's (2002) IC model, though not specifying the structural component of this competence in detail, has high pedagogical values in showing how to address the goal of developing IC in language education. It is the cyclical developmental process proposed in Liddicoat's model that provides language teachers with ideas and principles in addressing culture in their own teaching contexts.

Deardorff's (2004 as cited in Deardorff, 2006) process model of IC can be described as a combination of the strengths of both Byram's and Liddicoat's models. Deardorff's model not only depicts IC components that need addressing but also shows how this competence is best addressed (i.e., in a full cycle) and shows alternative ways to address this competence (e.g., moving straight from an individual's attitudes to external outcomes). However, Byram's model as well as his lists of objectives (as presented in section 2.4.3, below) in developing IC would be the most detailed description of the competence and provide valuable ideas in languages education in general and in foreign language teaching in particular.

### **2.4.3 Intercultural awareness and intercultural objectives**

Regarding the "awareness" component of IC, there are different views and thus different attributes to this component: cultural awareness, intercultural awareness, and critical cultural awareness. Liddicoat et al. (2003) and Newton and Shearn (2010a, 2010b) seem to use the term *cultural awareness* and *intercultural awareness* interchangeably in discussing IC and its development. The reason is, perhaps, though the term intercultural awareness appears to stress the interculturality in intercultural communication, both these two terms could refer broadly to the fact that cultures are relative and diverse. Byram (1997, 2012) moves further to stress the critical side of this awareness and uses the term *critical cultural awareness*. For Byram, critical cultural awareness, as already mentioned above, refers to the ability not only to be aware of cultural differences but also, and more importantly, to critically evaluate cultural perspectives, practices and products in both one's own and others' cultures and countries. There has been a recent argument for the necessity of a distinction between cultural awareness and intercultural awareness, especially in the context of teaching English as a lingua franca (Baker, 2012). In Baker's (2012) view, cultural awareness is mainly related to the understanding of and comparing between language learners' culture and the target language culture(s). Whereas, intercultural awareness would be reserved for describing successful communication using English as a lingua franca between language learners and its native as well as, especially, non-native speakers, and thus moves beyond cultural awareness. Intercultural awareness refers to "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication" (Baker, 2012, p. 66). In this thesis, in order to be consistent I use the term *intercultural*

*awareness* in presenting my own discussion of IC and its development, and when reviewing the literature I use terms (e.g., cultural awareness, intercultural awareness, and critical cultural awareness) as they are used by the authors in their works.

In foreign language education, the overall objective is to train the intercultural speaker, or to develop learners' IC, as discussed earlier. In line with Liddicoat's (2002) definition of cultural competence with a stress on cultural awareness, Schulz (2007), focussing on awareness of differences across cultures in communication, argues that the fundamental objective for culture teaching and learning is basically cultural awareness. This objective includes the following:

- Awareness of the influence of the environment on culture;
- Awareness of the shaping effect of factors such as power, age, and gender on interpersonal communication;
- Recognition of cultural stereotypes or generalisations;
- Awareness of cultural images and symbols that convey cultural connotations;
- Awareness of common potential sources of cultural misunderstandings in intercultural situations. (Summarised from Schulz, 2007)

Intercultural awareness should be addressed in language teaching together with cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes because they are interrelated (Fantini, 2009). Furthermore, critical cultural awareness should be considered as the centre of IC in language education (Byram, 2012). Byram (1997) describes a set of objectives for each of the five categories of "savoir" of IC in foreign language teaching and learning. These sets of objectives are as follows.

- *Savoir être* (attitudes) – Objectives:
  - willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; this should be distinguished from attitudes of seeking out the exotic or of seeking to profit from others;
  - interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices;
  - willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment;
  - readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence;
  - readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and nonverbal communication and interaction.
- *Savoirs* (knowledge) – Objectives:

- historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries
  - the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems
  - the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins
  - the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of one's interlocutor's country
  - the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on it from one's own
  - the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries
  - the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own
  - the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and one's interlocutor's country
  - social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and one's interlocutor's
  - institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them
  - the process of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country.
- *Savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating) – Objectives:
- identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins;
  - identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present;
  - mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.
- *Savoir apprendre/faire* (skills of discovery and interaction) - Objectives:
- elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and to develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena;
  - identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations;
  - identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances;
  - use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture, taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country and culture and the extent of difference between one's own and the other;
  - identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and country;



- identify and make use of public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures;
  - use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture.
- *Savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness/ political education) - Objectives:
- identify and interpret explicit and implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures;
  - make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events that refers to an explicit perspective and criteria;
  - interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of them by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes. (Byram, 1997, pp. 50-53)

The above-cited lists of the objectives for each “savoir” can be used as a framework for designing objectives in language teaching and assessment. For example, Council of Europe's (2001) CEFR provides a basis for language curriculum, language textbooks, and language teaching and examinations Europe-wide. In this framework, a number of the objectives listed above are specified and modified for presentation of the description of language learner/user competences even though CEFR does not directly address IC (Council of Europe, 2001). CEFR is also used in many other contexts of language education outside Europe, including Argentina, the United States of America, New Zealand, China, Japan (Byram & Parmenter, 2012), Taiwan (Vongpumivitch, 2012) and Vietnam (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Within CEFR, in terms of, for instance, intercultural skills and know-how (within the category of *savoir-faire*) language learners/users need to possess:

- The ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other;
- Cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;
- The capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations;
- The ability to overcome stereotyped relationships. (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 104-105)

Byram's (1997) lists of objectives previously cited can also help language teachers to plan their teaching, especially in setting cultural goals related to the development of their learners' IC. Byram (2009) advises that “language teachers should plan their teaching to include objectives, materials, and methods that develop the specific elements of intercultural competence” (p. 331).

Supporting Byram's (1997) specification of the *cultural* side of critical cultural awareness, Baker (2012) proposes a list of 12 elements of *intercultural* awareness, categorised into three levels: basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness and intercultural awareness (see Figure 2.9). These levels represent a developmental process of achieving intercultural awareness. The first level (i.e., basic cultural awareness) represents an understanding of the cultural contexts in which communication, fundamentally related to the learners' language, occurs. The second level (i.e., advanced cultural awareness) features a more complex understanding of, and the relationships between, culture and language. The third level (i.e., intercultural awareness) describes the features of intercultural awareness that are necessary for successful intercultural communication. These features represent the understanding of languages and cultures that is required for the success of intercultural communication in global settings.

*Level 1: basic cultural awareness – An awareness of:*

- (1) culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
- (2) the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
- (3) our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
- (4) others' culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs.

*Level 2: advanced cultural awareness – An awareness of:*

- (5) the relative nature of cultural norms;
- (6) cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
- (7) multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
- (8) individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
- (9) common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.

*Level 3: intercultural awareness – An awareness of:*

- (10) culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
- (11) initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through:
- (12) a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

Figure 2.9 Elements of intercultural awareness  
(Source: Baker, 2012, p. 66)

According to Baker (2012), it is not always necessary for language learners (especially English language learners) to develop the above listed elements of

intercultural awareness in an exact order from the first to the final element. For example, growing up in a multilingual context, a learner of English may have been, either consciously or unconsciously, aware of the elements of the third level (i.e., intercultural awareness) and can develop them during the language learning process. However, these three levels show a developmental process in addressing intercultural awareness in language education and are practical in the language classroom. For example, language education needs to build up in learners, from basic to more complex, understandings of cultural contexts in communication related to their first language, of the relationship between language and culture, and of languages and cultures in intercultural communication (Baker, 2012). In the language classroom, learners can develop their intercultural awareness via activities, from exploring their own culture and their language learning materials to exploring cultural resources (e.g., the internet) and participating in intercultural communication (Baker, 2012).

## **2.5 Summary**

As a multifaceted concept, culture is conceptualised in numerous ways, each of which may focus on one or more than one theme of interest. The cultural elements, the functions of culture in human life, and the process in which culture is constructed and transmitted are the most common themes in defining the term, according to Hecht et al. (2006). Besides, culture is also described as a place or a group of people or in terms of political dominance, cultural artefacts, and moral and intellectual refinement.

In terms of its structural components, culture is seen as consisting of different levels, both visible (e.g., cultural artefacts and behaviour) and invisible (e.g., beliefs, values, and norms). As a process, culture is constructed and transmitted from generation to generation through interactions among members of a cultural group; culture changes over the course of time. Culture and language are interwoven and cannot be separated. Culture influences all levels of human communication, especially communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, i.e. intercultural communication (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). Thus, in language education, how to address culture has always been an issue of interest.

There are various approaches to culture in language education, namely: teaching culture as high culture, as area studies, as societal norms, and as practices (e.g., Liddicoat, 2004). Each approach reflects a view of culture, seeing it as static or dynamic. These approaches to culture and views of culture affect the aims of language

education. In this era of globalisation when foreign language education aims at educating speakers who are competent in intercultural communication and can mediate between cultures, IC has become an important goal.

Various conceptions and models of IC have been proposed. Byram (1997) focusses on the structure of the competence by describing the elements (i.e., categories of *savoirs*). These *savoirs* can be seen as the descriptive elements, representing four aspects of the competence: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness. Liddicoat (2002) and Deardorff (2006) stress the developmental process of this competence, both noting that IC development is an on-going process. Each of these ways of conceptualising and modelling IC has its own strengths and can be applied in language teaching practice that aims for the development of learners' IC. While Byram's model helps to explain the necessary components of IC to aim for in language teaching, Liddicoat's model shows how to achieve the aims of developing this competence in the language classroom, and Deardorff's model is advantageous in both depicting the aims and the process of achieving these aims. Moreover, Byram (1997) also provides a detailed list of objectives to be aimed for in achieving IC, as well as the objectives concerning each component of the competence (i.e., each category of *savoir*).

When IC is considered an important goal in language education, the issue is how culture can be addressed to achieve this goal. The following chapter (Chapter 3) reviews the literature specifically on the integration of culture in language teaching in ways that address the development this competence in learners.

## **Chapter 3 The integration of culture into language teaching practices**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Culture must be integrated into language teaching as a core element in order to develop the language learner's IC, and culture needs to be viewed as both static and, importantly, dynamic as explained previously in Chapter 2. This chapter especially deals with the integration of culture into language teaching practices. It provides the framework for the present study that aims to understand how Vietnamese university EFL teachers integrate culture in relation to IC development in their teaching practices. The chapter begins with a description of *intercultural language teaching* (ILT) approaches, which directly address the language-culture links and the development of learners' IC (section 3.1). Section 3.1 describes the basic principles for such an approach and, then, the issues concerning how culture is to be addressed as an integrated part of language in language teaching. These principles and issues help to form a basis for critical evaluation and discussion of the findings reported in prior studies (see 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4) and, especially, the findings from the present study (as presented in Chapter 5 to Chapter 7). Section 3.2 that follows reviews the research literature on the integration of culture into language teaching practices, focussing on how language teachers conceptualise culture, what they see as their goals (or, their objectives) in teaching culture, and how they address culture in their classrooms. Because the interactions between language teachers and their students and among the students are generally based on the language teaching materials used, section 3.3 provides a review of the literature on the presentation of culture in language teaching textbooks, a popular form of teaching materials in Vietnam. Furthermore, language teaching, as a profession, requires continuous professional development. Thus, section 3.4 of this chapter is devoted to the issues related to this development. It includes a description of teacher professional learning processes as the foundation for such a development and a review of studies of professional development programmes for language teachers, both in-country and overseas (i.e., language and culture immersion) ones. The final section (section 3.5) summarises the points presented in the whole chapter.

### **3.1 Intercultural language teaching**

When the intercultural speaker, an individual who has some or all the “savoirs” of IC (Byram, 2009), is considered as the model in foreign language education, IC becomes

an important goal, as presented in Chapter 2. This competence involves (inter)cultural knowledge, intercultural skills and attitudes, and critical cultural awareness (e.g., Byram, 1997, 2012; Fantini, 2009). In other words, culture becomes a core element in foreign language teaching in attaining this goal. To directly address the development of learners' IC in language education, ILT approaches have been developed. ILT supports language learners' development of this competence through the learning of the target language and of language-culture relationships (Crozet, Liddicoat, & Lo Bianco, 1999). Within such an approach, "learners are encouraged to notice, compare and reflect on language and culture, and to develop their understanding of their own culture as well as the culture of others" (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 289). The adoption of an ILT approach requires its own principles, which are presented below.

### ***3.1.1 Intercultural language teaching principles***

Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) propose a set of five principles for the adoption of an ILT approach as follows.

- *Culture is not acquired through osmosis. It must be taught explicitly:* Adopting an ILT approach, the language teacher needs to see culture learning as an exploratory process, and to be knowledgeable in and to focus on the interrelationships between language (in both the spoken and the written forms) and culture.
- *The bilingual/multilingual speaker is the norm:* ILT directly addresses IC development, and sees the bilingual/multilingual speaker (not the native speaker) as the norm. This implies that the language learner's first language, for example, is necessarily allowed in the learning process and in the classroom.
- *Conceptual and experiential learning is required to acquire intercultural competence:* As learning a language includes in itself learning about languages, it is necessary to introduce to learners concepts (i.e., meta-knowledge) in order to enable learners (and the teacher) to talk about language and culture. It is also necessary for language learners to be exposed to the target language and culture (or, the linguaculture) and to use it as their own experience of the target language user.
- *Role of teachers and learners are redefined:* In adopting an intercultural approach, the language teacher needs to become a learner of both language and culture so that he/she can best facilitate his/her students in both learning and exploring the linguaculture.

- *New approaches to language testing are needed to assess intercultural competence:* As teaching and assessment are interrelated, IC needs to be assessed as an integrative part of language assessment. However, this integration is not yet well established in language assessment. (Summarised from Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999)

Newton and Shearn (2010a, 2010b) use the term *intercultural communicative language teaching* (iCLT) to explicitly stress the status of both communicative competence and IC in language teaching and learning. In this term, “communicative” represents the status of the language element, and “intercultural” – the status of the culture element, both being of equal status in the context of languages education in New Zealand (Newton & Shearn, 2010a, 2010b). On the basis of research evidence in language teaching and learning within iCLT, Newton and Shearn have developed a framework of principles for effective iCLT (see Figure 3.1).

In Newton and Shearn’s (2010b) framework of six principles for effective iCLT, these principles are interrelated. The framework, aimed at the development of ICC in language teaching and learning, begins with principle one as a starting point, which states the interrelationships between language and culture as well as the necessity of addressing culture from the beginning. These six principles in the framework are summarised as follows.

- *Principle 1: iCLT integrates language and culture from the beginning.* This principle is considered the starting point of the whole set of principles in the framework. It stresses the interrelationships between language and culture, especially the pervasive embedded-ness of culture in language as Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) and Liddicoat (2009) point out. This principle also requires that culture be integrated right from the beginning of the language teaching and learning process. This early integration is not only feasible as cultural content is present in even simple language units to be introduced to the language learner such as ways of greeting, but also necessary in helping the learner to avoid stereotyping and prejudice.
- *Principle 2: iCLT engages learners in genuine social interaction.* Because of the dynamic nature of culture (i.e., culture as a process of forming, transmitting, and changing, and as practices) and the embedded-ness of culture in language, it is necessary for the language learner to interact and engage with the target language and other culture(s). Furthermore, this “interaction” principle also aims to provide opportunities for the learner to explore the deep-level culture elements (e.g., beliefs, values, and norms) through the culture (in language) input. It also helps the learner to

develop, for example, what Byram (1997) terms “savoir comprendre” (i.e., skills of interpreting a document in the target language/culture and relating it with the document in his/her own language/culture).

- *Principle 3: iCLT encourages and develops an exploratory and reflective approach to culture and culture-in-language.* An iCLT approach, with a dynamic view of culture, sees culture teaching as moving beyond merely transmitting cultural knowledge to the language learner. Instead, culture teaching requires the learner to explore both visible and invisible cultural elements, as well as language-culture relationships. This exploration, thus, enables the learner to construct knowledge from his/her own experience and reflection, as well as to gain understandings about others’ lived cultural experience. Exploration is an on-going process for both the language learner and the language teacher.

- *Principle 4: iCLT fosters explicit comparisons and connections between languages and cultures.* It is fundamental in an iCLT approach to compare languages and cultures. Exploring culture and culture in language (as stated in principle three) is advantageous in opening up opportunities for the language learner to compare and relativise cultures, hence a development of intercultural awareness and ability to mediate between cultures. It is necessary to address intercultural issues explicitly in the language classroom.

- *Principle 5: iCLT acknowledges and responds appropriately to diverse learners and learning contexts.* In educational contexts in which the language class is characterised by learners’ diversity in cultural and linguistic backgrounds, iCLT entails recognising and embracing this diversity. Each of these cultures needs to be respected, represented and participated in during the culture teaching and learning process (e.g., exploration of cultures, comparison of languages and cultures, and engagement with cultures via interactions).

- *Principle 6: iCLT emphasises intercultural communicative competence rather than native-speaker competence.* In an iCLT approach, the goal of language teaching and learning is ICC with the components proposed by Byram (1997): knowledge, skills (both for interpreting and relating and for discovering and interacting), attitudes and critical cultural awareness. That is, the norm is the intercultural speaker, who can be competent in communicating with both native and non-native speakers of the target language. (Summarised from Newton & Shearn, 2010b)



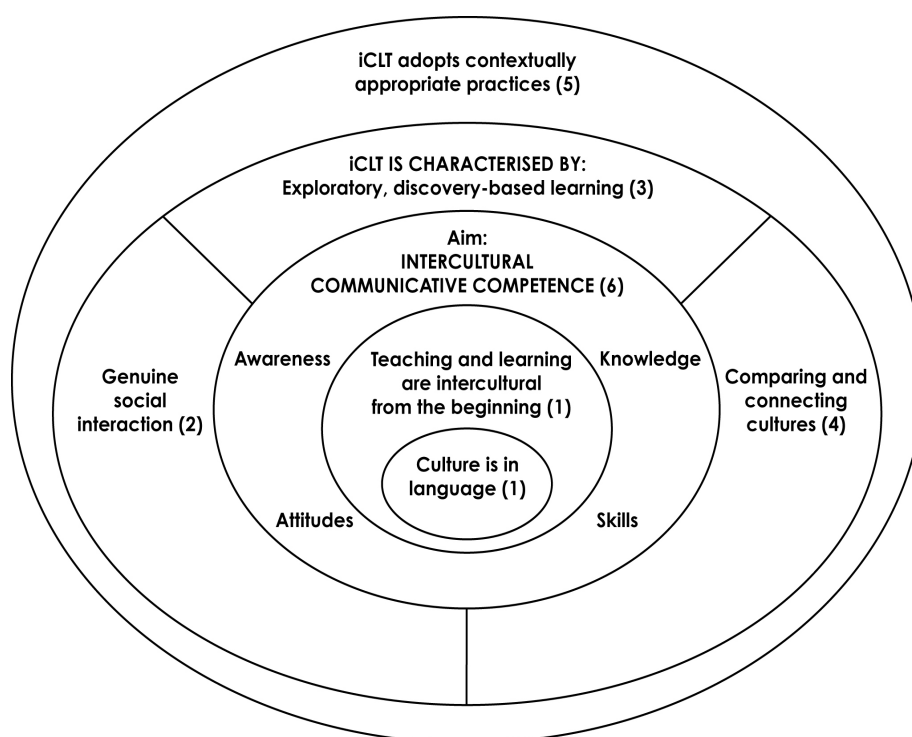


Figure 3.1 Principles for iCLT  
(Source: Newton & Shearn, 2010b, p. 64)

In summary, in an ILT approach (Liddicoat, 2002; Liddicoat et al., 2003) and an iCLT approach (Newton & Shearn, 2010b), general principles concern: the interrelationships between language and culture; the dynamic nature of culture which requires exploration, comparison and engagement; the necessity to explicitly address culture and its diversity; and, the goal of developing IC for the language learner with the intercultural speaker as the norm. For such an approach, culture needs to be integrated into language teaching. The following section (section 3.1.2) provides a description of this integration.

### 3.1.2 *Integrating culture into language teaching*

In order to develop language learners' IC, culture is considered a core element and inseparable from language, hence the term "linguaculture", and thus the teaching of a language becomes "the teaching of a linguaculture" (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 11). The overall aspects of integrating culture into language teaching to develop this competence in ILT include: teaching and learning about cultures, comparing cultures, exploring cultures (or, intercultural exploration), and mediating between cultures (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2002). In other words, ILT involves teaching and learning both static and dynamic views of culture.

Though culture has traditionally been treated in different ways in language education, shown in the different approaches to culture, as presented previously in Chapter 2 above (see 2.3), it is possible to take an intercultural stance within any of these approaches. That is, culture is possibly integrated into language teaching in addressing the development of IC, or separate components of this competence, within all these approaches to culture that may be taken. Newton and Shearn (2010a) point out and exemplify this possibility. For example, first, “an intercultural stance on ‘high culture’ (i.e., study of arts and traditions) encourages students to reflect on the origins of and values associated with cultural artefacts, and to make explicit comparisons with arts in their own culture” (Newton & Shearn, 2010a, p. 43). Second, within the culture as area study approach, language learners could be encouraged not only to gain knowledge about a cultural area (e.g., education system) in the target culture, but also to understand an area of their own culture from a relativistic point of view. This could assist language learners in developing their understanding of and, more importantly, their respect for individuals and institutions in the target culture. Finally, an intercultural stance can be taken within the approach that sees culture as societal norms. Because the effect of culture on communication seems to be the most apparent in these norms (both pragmatic and interactional) across cultures and in intercultural communication (Liddicoat, 2009) language learners can be encouraged to challenge cultural assumptions, from both their and others’ perspectives. However, this approach may lead to language learners stereotyping the target culture via its members’ lived experiences. In order to deal with the stereotyping effect of this approach, “learners can be encouraged to focus first on stereotypes of their own culture, and thus gain insights into the constructed and subjective nature of stereotypes” (Newton & Shearn, 2010a, p. 44). In other words, learners are encouraged to interpret as well as evaluate the deeper levels of cultures (e.g., beliefs and values) and, thus, to develop critical intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

Particularly, according to Newton and Shearn (2010a), within a culture-as-practice approach an intercultural stance can be taken in three ways: exploring self, exploring culture and comparing cultures. First, intercultural language learning requires self-reflection for the understanding of the influence of culture on language use and the reflection of culture in communication and interaction. Second, it is necessary for the language learner to explore their own culture and other cultures to understand the elements of the less visible level of cultures and to be able to mediate between cultures.

Third, ILT involves learners comparing cultures, with a focus on the relativisation of cultures, i.e. seeing and being able to describe the differences and similarities comparing their own culture and others' cultures.

An ILT approach centres on teaching culture as an integrated element of language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000), drawing specifically on the embedded-ness of culture in language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2002, 2009). Liddicoat (2002) has developed five general principles for teaching culture within such an approach, attending to the dynamic nature of culture. These principles are described as follows.

- *Culture is integrated into other language skills*: In an ILT approach, culture is considered as a fifth macro-skill, alongside the four traditional language macro-skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Teaching culture is not merely the provision of cultural knowledge; instead, culture teaching involves engaging with culture, and culture thus becomes a macro-skill.
- *Culture is taught from the beginning*: This enables language learners to avoid drawing on their assumptions and understandings rooted in their own culture when introduced to new language input with cultural content, even in the first lessons.
- *The bilingual speaker is the norm*: This aims at training the intercultural speaker, who is competent in communicating not only with native speakers but also with non-native speakers of the target language in intercultural encounters.
- *Language acquisition involves intercultural exploration*: This enables language learners to compare their own culture to another culture they are exposed to, especially though learning the target language. Thus, they can relativise cultures; i.e. they become aware that cultures are relative.
- *Learning how to keep learning*: Because of the complex and dynamic nature of culture, the language teacher cannot teach everything about culture, and language learners cannot expect to learn everything about it, either, in the language classroom. Instead, it is only possible to help language learners, via the analysis of their own experiences and the development of cultural awareness, to learn how to learn about culture. Culture learning is life-long. (Summarised from Liddicoat, 2002)

To summarise, ILT stresses the dynamic view of culture and its diversity, though this approach takes a static view of culture as well. To achieve the goal of developing IC, culture must be integrated in language teaching in a dynamic and interactive way. These ideas provide the principles for culture to be taught as an

integrated element of language in pursuing the development of IC. Section 3.2 below reviews the literature on language teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching practices.

### **3.2 Research on the integration of culture into language teaching**

There is a large body of research on language teachers' beliefs and practices concerning teaching culture. Pajares (1992) contends that in general teachers' educational beliefs have a close relationship with their teaching planning and decisions as well as their classroom teaching practices. For example, in considering a group of teachers in a certain socio-cultural context (i.e., a cultural group), it is important to note that their beliefs are an important driving force of their teaching practices. In other words, practices manifest beliefs (Lustig & Koester, 2010). Teachers' beliefs about teaching culture may include, for example, their views and conceptualisations of culture, its role and status in language teaching, their goals in teaching culture, the obstacles that they face in teaching culture, as well as their intentional practices to address culture. In research, "beliefs must be inferred" (Pajares, 1992, p. 326) on the basis of the participants' description of their own beliefs (e.g., in forms of statements such as "I believe [ . . . ]" and "I think [ . . . ]") and their intentional behaviour and practice. Thus, in order to understand teachers' teaching practices it is necessary to know about their educational beliefs.

Regarding the integration of culture into language teaching, how culture is taught largely depends on teachers' beliefs about teaching culture, especially how they view culture (Liddicoat, 2002; Newton & Shearn, 2010a) as well as on what goals are aimed for in teaching culture (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). In the context of foreign language education, it is necessary to define culture both as a dynamic, developmental and on-going process that has cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions (for culture learning) and as a shared structured pattern of behaviours (for the purpose of comparing cultures) (Schulz, 2007). In other words, a combination of both static and dynamic views of culture is needed. This section reviews research on language teachers' beliefs about teaching culture (focussing on their beliefs concerning their conceptualisations of culture, their goals in teaching culture and their description of culture teaching activities) as well as their classroom practices in integrating culture into their language teaching.

### ***3.2.1 Teachers' conceptualisations of culture***

As mentioned above, one main factor that leads to how culture is addressed in language teaching practices is how the language teacher views and conceptualises culture (Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Liddicoat, 2002). There have been various empirical studies investigating language teachers' views and conceptions of culture. Below is a review of such studies.

One empirical study addressing foreign language teachers' definitions of the term in a Finnish context is Larzén-Östermark's (2008) study involving Finnish-Swedish EFL teachers. She collected data from interviews with thirteen participants, who were representative in terms of their teaching experience (novice and experienced), gender (male and female), and first-hand experience of encounters with other cultures (measured in terms of their time spent abroad – much and little). She found that the participants conceptualised culture as: factual knowledge (i.e., cognitively); skills (i.e., behaviourally); and a bi-directional perspective (i.e., affectively). Firstly, the participants saw the cognitive aspect of culture as factual knowledge of four main groups (realia; common cultural products; traditions and ways of life; and the deep-level elements of values, norms, and beliefs) associated with the target language. Thus, it appears that these participants saw culture teaching mainly as fact transmission from the foreign language teacher to the students. Secondly, in these participants' views, culture included social and sociolinguistic skills to be acquired to serve their students' future use in intercultural encounters involving both verbal and nonverbal codes in an appropriate manner, i.e. intercultural skills. Again, this element of IC also involved knowledge of such use. These views of the participants seemed to reflect the approach that sees culture as societal norms (Liddicoat, 2004). Thirdly, according to the participants, culture involved "a dual perspective" (Larzén-Östermark, 2008, p. 536), which allowed one to relate his/her own culture with others' cultures. They commented that EFL learners should be encouraged to look at their own culture from another perspective and to look at other cultures from their own perspective. This means that the participants conceptualised culture as products and deep-level elements. They also saw the IC development merely in terms of cultural knowledge, preparation for future intercultural situations and development of positive cultural attitudes. Thus, it is apparent that these participants' conceptions reflected a static and more traditional view of culture; meanwhile, the dynamic nature of culture was not identified in these participants' conceptions of the term.

In a Vietnamese university EFL teaching context, Ho (2011) found from interviews with Vietnamese EFL teachers that most of them explicitly defined culture in terms of “native speakers’ manners, customs, beliefs, behaviours, moral values, habits, lifestyle, lifestyle, etiquette, conventions, ways of eating, ways of working, or kinds of food” (p. 100). Several other teachers, according to Ho, defined culture in terms of, for example, religion and characteristics of a nation. In this way, these teachers typically approached culture as cultural elements and products. They also saw relationships between culture and language (e.g., sentence formation) and the function of culture in shaping language use and communication. Thus, these participants tended to conceptualise culture in terms of its structural elements, cultural products, and function.

In a Hong Kong context of EFL teaching, Luk (2012) investigated, as part of his study, how EFL teachers (both English native and non-native speakers) defined culture. Luk found that most of the participants conceptualised culture in terms of its structural elements (e.g. beliefs, perceptions of the world, traditions, and customs), and cultural products (e.g. food and clothing). These participants were also aware of the interrelationships between language and culture, and defined culture in terms of language. One similarity in the conceptualisations of culture by Luk’s (2012), Ho’s (2011), and Larzén-Östermark’s (2008) participants is that the dynamic nature of culture (e.g., culture as process and as lived experience) was not present in their conceptions. They tended to take a static view of culture rather than a dynamic one (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004).

In an extensive study of the impact of *language and culture immersion* (L&CI) programmes on New Zealand language teaching practice, Harvey, Roskvist, Corder, and Stacey (2011) also investigated the issue of teachers’ conceptualisations of culture, as part of the findings about the impact of such programmes. According to these authors, when asked about the cultural knowledge gains from L&CI programmes they had attended, the participants named these gains in terms of knowledge in and about: (a) “food, festivals, daily life”; (b) “social, political, and geographical facts”; (c) “elements of subjective culture” such as attitudes, values, behaviour, and social expectations; and, (d) the relationship between language and culture, e.g., culture being reflected in language structure, use of colloquial or idiomatic expressions (Harvey et al., 2011, pp. 50-55). These participants tended to conceptualise culture in terms of cultural product and cultural elements. One point that could be noticed from Harvey et al.’s (2011) report is that many of the participants mentioned their lived experiences during these

L&CI programmes as an aspect of culture. That is, though not explicitly stated by the authors of the report, it can be argued that these participants seemed to have a dynamic view of culture, seeing the importance of engaging with a culture in learning about it (e.g., homestay, living and interacting with locals, and being fully immersed in the target culture and language). These views and conceptions were, to some extent, different from those of the participants in Larzén-Östermark's (2008), Ho's (2011), and Luk's (2012) studies who had not attended overseas L&CI programmes (except for those participants who had spent some time in a foreign country).

Thus, it can be seen from the above studies that language teachers generally conceptualised culture in the form of cultural products (e.g. food, festivals, realia, and daily life), cultural elements (e.g. values, beliefs, and social expectations), and functions (e.g. shaping the use of language) in different contexts. That is, they conceptualised culture as product, structure, and function (Faulkner et al., 2006), hence a static view of culture (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004). Only the participants in Harvey et al.'s (2011) studies linked culture to cultural engagement, especially from their own L&CI experiences. That is, these participants also conceptualised culture as process (Faulkner et al., 2006) and lived experience, and seemed to take a dynamic view of culture (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004) as well. This dynamic view of culture that these participants had might be due to the L&CI experience they had had.

The present study also investigates Vietnamese university EFL teachers' beliefs concerning how they operationally conceptualise culture, as a starting point to gain an understanding of their integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices. In addition, it looks for any relationships between how they conceptualise culture, how they describe their goals in addressing culture, as well as how they integrate culture in their language teaching practices.

Another issue that affects teachers' practices of addressing culture in the language classroom is how they specify their goals in teaching culture (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). Below is a review of the literature on this issue.

### ***3.2.2 Teachers' specifications of goals in teaching culture***

As mentioned earlier, how language teachers specify their goals in addressing culture is one of the factors affecting how they integrate culture into their language teaching practices. The following empirical studies have addressed the issue of foreign language teachers' specification of cultural goals in their language teaching.

Firstly, Byram and Risager (1999) found that most language teachers in Denmark and England saw addressing the cultural dimension in the language classroom as not being as important as addressing the linguistic aims. Secondly, in the Spanish context of EFL teaching, Castro, Sercu, and García's (2004) participants, Spanish EFL teachers, identified three most important cultural teaching goals concerning cultural information, intercultural attitudes, and cultural awareness. The first goal, also the most important one according to these Spanish EFL teachers, was to provide EFL students with information about daily life and routines with shared values and beliefs in the target culture(s), and experiences containing cultural expression such as films and literature. The second one was to help the students develop open attitudes and tolerance (regarding cultural differences). The third goal was for the teacher to promote students' reflection on cultural differences. However, the participants in the study did not see the enrichment of their students' knowledge of their own culture and the development of their students' intercultural skills as important goals. As Castro et al. (2004) did not explicitly address the issue of how their participants conceptualised culture, it is hard to draw any links between this and how the participants specified their goals in teaching culture.

Another study which was mentioned earlier, Larzén-Östermark's (2008), found that the cultural objectives (or, goals) specified by the Finnish-Swedish EFL teachers in interviews included three categories: descriptive, normative, and holistic. The first category was the descriptive objective of providing general background information, about English-speaking countries (mainly in the form of teachers transmitting knowledge to the learners). The second category was the normative objective of preparing for learners' future intercultural encounters with people from the target culture(s), focussing on raising the learners' awareness of the social and sociolinguistic conventions of the target culture(s). The third one was the holistic objective of promoting the learners' tolerance and empathy, thus reducing their ethnocentricity. These participants conceptualised culture cognitively (i.e., in forms of knowledge about cultural products and cultural elements related to the target language), behaviourally (i.e., social and sociolinguistic knowledge and skills for future intercultural encounters), and affectively (i.e., intercultural attitudes and awareness) as presented in the previous section. These conceptualisations led to how these teachers specified their culture teaching objectives as summarised above. However, as the author noted, "the teaching of culture is defined mainly in terms of the transmission of information about English-



speaking countries. Few teachers in the study reflected upon how cultural issues could be introduced to develop the students' general understanding of and respect for otherness" (Larzén-Östermark, 2008, p. 543).

Thus, in gaining understanding of how culture is integrated into language teaching by a professional community of language teachers, it is necessary first to construct knowledge about their beliefs about teaching culture, for example, how they conceptualise culture, and what goals they aim for in teaching culture. This is because these beliefs are interrelated and affect teachers' practices in addressing culture in the language classroom. Following is a review of the literature on language teacher's integration of culture into their language teaching practices, both reported by teachers and observed in the language classroom.

### ***3.2.3 Teachers' culture teaching activities***

When language teaching aims at the development of learners' IC, it is vital that teachers address culture as a core element and in integration with language. However, numerous studies with empirical data have shown that language teachers, in various places, have not yet treated culture as a core element in their language teaching practices. Rather, culture has been addressed to a fairly limited extent in language teaching. Following is a review of such studies.

First, Castro et al.'s (2004) study in a Spanish context of EFL teaching showed that Spanish EFL teachers focussed on the language element rather than on the culture element in their perceptions. The culture teaching objectives for these participants in the study were mainly to provide cultural knowledge related to the target language, and to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures (Castro et al., 2004). In addition, nearly all of these teachers (32 out of 35 respondents) reported that they devoted only around 20% of the class time to addressing culture, while the other 80% of the time was for teaching language (Castro et al., 2004). The authors also found that this limited culture teaching practice was caused by a lack of time, of suitable material available, of teachers' confidence in teaching IC, and of their limited intercultural experience. Thus, the study also revealed the effect of language teachers' perceptions of the culture teaching objective on classroom culture teaching practices, such as the time devoted to teaching culture.

In Belgium, foreign language teachers (of English, German, and French) in Sercu's (2005) study shared similar tendencies with Spanish EFL teachers in Castro et

al.'s (2004) study in integrating culture into their language teaching. The teachers in Belgium described their cultural teaching activities as occurring mainly in forms of transmitting factual knowledge (e.g., about the foreign country and culture and about fascinating or strange aspects of the target culture) from the teacher to students. The most common cultural topics that the participants in both these studies reported included: routines, daily life, food and drink, tradition, and youth culture (Sercu, 2005).

With data collected from foreign language teachers in seven countries (i.e., Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden), Sercu et al. (2005) found that teachers were becoming more competent to address the cultural dimension in their teaching. However, these authors pointed out that teachers were still not yet competent enough to teach IC in their language classrooms with respect to knowledge, skills and attitudes. In particular, the cultural knowledge and knowledge in teaching culture of teachers participating in Sercu et al.'s study was sufficient to teach about a foreign culture, but was not yet sufficient to teach IC comprehensively. The same could be said about their skills in teaching IC (i.e., selecting and developing appropriate materials and organising activities to teach IC). Furthermore, though teachers were in support of teaching IC and were willing to teach IC, they still tended to separate the cultural dimension from language, presumably because they still did not have the appropriate skills and knowledge (Sercu et al., 2005).

In Finland, Larzén-Östermark's (2008) study showed that Finnish EFL teachers stated three categories of activities in which they addressed culture in their teaching practices. The first category, which was the most typical one, consisted of activities in which EFL teachers conveyed factual information about English-speaking cultures, and students explored and analysed this information. The second category dealt with the preparation of the learners for their future encounters with English native speakers by relating to the teacher's own intercultural experiences, especially in culture-clash situations. The third one included activities in which EFL teachers provided opportunities for students to participate in intercultural encounters (e.g., visits by native speakers, virtual or simulated contacts with native speakers). As described in the section above, these participants mainly conceptualised culture in terms of cultural elements and products (or, taking a static view of culture). This way of conceptualising culture seemed to affect how they specified their goals in addressing culture in the sense that though they specified three culture teaching objective categories (i.e., cultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and attitudes) they prioritised the objective of providing

their students with cultural facts. Thus, their reported culture teaching activities were typically the transmission of cultural information to their students. However, the third category of culture teaching activities they reported (i.e., students participating in intercultural encounters), though not usually organised, would mean that a dynamic aspect of culture (Liddicoat, 2002, 2004) was present in their classroom teaching practices, though the dynamic nature of culture was not found in their description of how they saw culture.

Harvey et al.'s (2011) evaluative study of the impact of L&CI programmes for New Zealand teachers of languages other than English and Māori covered a wide variety of impacts of such a programme. These impacts included those on teachers' development of language proficiency, teachers' cultural knowledge and IC, teacher's language teaching and culture teaching practice, and students' learning opportunities and outcomes. The authors' survey results concerning the impact on teachers' culture teaching practice showed that the teachers, when returning from such L&CI programmes, reported the employment of various activities to address culture in their classroom language teaching. These activities included: retelling personal experiences; showing personal photos, using authentic realia and games; utilising DVDs, videos, films, texts from the target language country; comparing and contrasting cultural issues; organising language units around cultural topics, and inviting native speakers to class. However, "for the most part culture was taught as background to language acquisition and focussed primarily on the 'four Fs': food, fairs, festivities and facts" (Harvey et al., 2011, p. 92). These findings implied that the participants' culture teaching practices did not yet grant culture the status of a core element in language teaching, nor did they have any intercultural elements such as an authentic or simulated activity involving interacting with people from a different culture or country.

East (2012) found from interviews with New Zealand teachers of Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish that many of these teachers mainly addressed culture in the classroom as artifact and as an element separated from language. Several of these participants, though reporting experiential ways of culture teaching and learning to serve the aim of motivating their students, focussed on cultural products (mainly food and festivals). Some of the participants also reported that they treated language as "a mediator of culture" (East, 2012, p. 64). For these participants, language and culture, to a greater or lesser extent, were integrated in their teaching practices. However, they still stressed the presentation of cultural facts, seeing this presentation as

an opportunity for the students to explore how language could be used appropriately in contexts, i.e. conforming to socio-cultural norms.

In a Hong Kong EFL teaching context, Luk (2012) found from interviews with EFL teachers that the participants supported the integration of culture into language teaching, seeing the interrelationships between language and culture as well as the power of culture in motivating their students. However, these participants reported a marginal role of culture in their teaching practices, focussing on the development of their students' linguistic knowledge and skills. In this EFL teaching context and with an analogy of a meal, the participants saw culture as "a special treat, a lesson sweetener, or an appetizer before the main course" (Luk, 2012, p. 256).

Second, several studies have investigated language teachers' actual culture teaching practices with data from classroom observations. In the context teaching languages other than English and Māori (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, German, French, and Spanish) in New Zealand, Harvey, Conway, Richards, and Roskvist's (2010) extensive evaluative study of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's one-year part-time LTPD programme addressed, among other issues, the language teachers' observed practices of providing language learners with opportunities to develop their cultural knowledge. The study results related to this area showed that though both language knowledge and cultural knowledge are equally important as explicitly stated in the language curriculum, "teachers were developing students' cultural knowledge and intercultural skills in fairly limited ways" (Harvey et al., 2010, p. 54). For example, few teachers included explicit culture teaching aims in their lessons and treated these cultural aims, if any, separately from linguistic aims. However, though not explicitly stating cultural aims in the language lesson, many observed teachers in the study addressed the issue of cultural knowledge in their actual classroom teaching practices, and these culture teaching practices included comparing cultural practices, using visual support, connecting cultures, and linking culture and language.

Particularly, in this context, Conway, Richards, Harvey, and Roskvist (2010), with an observation framework derived from previous works in ILT, further examined New Zealand language teachers' classroom practices in addressing culture. In a re-examination of the data from Harvey et al. (2010), the authors reported on seven teacher observations in language classes and focussed on five areas of interest, three times per teacher. These areas were concerned with the observed teachers' provision of opportunities for their students to make connections between cultures, to compare and

contrast cultures, to link language and culture, to reflect on their own culture, and to participate in intercultural encounters. The authors found that the opportunities provided for the students to learn culture were limited to the first three areas (i.e., connecting cultures, comparing and contrasting cultures, making language-culture links). Meanwhile, there were no observed opportunities for the students to participate in intercultural encounters, or to reflect on their own culture from others' perspective. Approximately half of the observed teachers "did not provide any opportunities to develop learners' cultural knowledge" (Conway et al., 2010, p. 454).

Finally, in the Vietnamese context of university level EFL education, Ho's (2011) study found that the participants were observed teaching culture in two main ways: teaching cultural connotations via target language vocabulary items such as words and expressions and, especially, teaching cultural facts and knowledge (e.g., famous people, target language country and cultural practices). This facts-oriented approach to culture teaching might be due to the participants' conceptualisation of culture, their focus on language rather than on culture, their belief that culture teaching is topic dependent, and a lack of cultural exposure in the courses they taught (as mentioned earlier).

Thus, it can be seen from these studies that though culture should be treated as a core element in language teaching to address the development of IC, current culture teaching practice in various places has not yet realised this. Classroom culture teaching activities that were reported by language teachers and observed in the actual practices mainly focussed on the transmission of cultural knowledge and comparison of cultural practices; the intercultural elements such as participation in intercultural encounters were virtually non-existent. It seems that in many language classrooms worldwide culture has not yet been well integrated with language; instead, it has been given a peripheral and supporting role to the acquisition of language (Harvey et al., 2010; Harvey et al., 2011; Luk, 2012). This state of affairs might be said to be caused, among other factors, by the language teachers' static views of culture and their conceptualisations of culture chiefly in terms of cultural products, cultural structural elements, as well as by how they specified their culture teaching objectives or goals.

In the language classroom, language teachers interact with their students, and in most classroom contexts these interactions are based on the available teaching resources. The most common teaching material is a textbook. Section 3.3, below, provides a review of the literature on cultural content in language teaching materials.

### 3.3 Cultural content in language teaching materials

Language teaching textbooks as a form of teaching and learning materials/resources are regularly used, and their significant role is, as Feng and Byram (2002) note, undeniable especially in foreign language education. However, concerning the cultural content in language teaching materials, Liddicoat et al. (2003) comments that many of the textbooks available for language teachers do not provide sufficient cultural content, nor do they integrate culture and language. Some of these textbooks even simply provide cultural information in the target language, hence a separation between culture and language. Thus, an important factor for the integration of culture into language teaching and learning is the need to develop materials that can expose language learners to culture and provide opportunities for them to reflect on their own culture (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000). That is, language teaching materials which integrate culture and language need to be developed. Following is a review of studies of cultural content in EFL textbooks.

Firstly and generally, experienced English language teachers in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France participating in Young and Sachdev's (2011) study were aware of the insufficiency and inappropriateness of cultural content in English language teaching textbooks that they used. According to these participants, the textbooks, especially EFL ones, "still tended to deal only with superficial aspects of cultural differences, and thus needed to be either supplemented or replaced" (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 92) in pursuing the goal of developing English language learners' ICC. Therefore, in their teaching practices, these teachers used supplementary culture input, for example, television programme excerpts and newspaper articles from English-speaking countries.

Secondly and with a close examination of particular materials, Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) investigated the cultural content presented in internationally distributed English language teaching textbooks. They analysed this content in seven series of textbooks (with a total of 25 books), for example, *New Headway English Course* by Liz and John Soars, *Interchange* by Jack C. Richards with Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor, and *World View* by Michael Rost. (Some of these textbooks are also widely used for EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam, and were used by the participants in my study as presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.) According to these investigators, in such textbooks the cultural content is mainly presented in the form of factual cultural information, particularly tourism and surface-level culture. The opportunities for

language learners to explore and discuss deep-level culture (e.g., beliefs and values) and to reflect on their own culture(s) are neglected. Another noticeable finding was that the cultural content in most of these textbooks centres on the English-speaking countries (e.g., the USA, the UK, Canada, and New Zealand). However, several books, with a separated section on aspects of culture, present, along with English-speaking cultures, local cultures for the students to compare cultures. It should be noted here that these sections are separated ones, and thus, these contemporary textbooks still tend to separate language and culture, not to integrate culture and language (Liddicoat et al., 2003).

Similarly, Yuen (2011) analysed the cultural content provided in two series of textbooks used by Hong Kong students of English. The author examined the cultural content with the framework of four cultural aspects: products (e.g., movies, television programmes, and food); practices (e.g., customs, society, and daily life); perspective (i.e., beliefs and values); and persons (e.g., famous individuals and fictitious people). Among these four aspects, the cultural content related to cultural products is the most frequently presented in these series of textbooks, while the other three aspects are less frequently introduced, especially the aspect of beliefs and values (or, deep-level culture). Furthermore, and similar to Shin et al. (2011), Yuen found that the cultural content provided in these textbooks is mainly related to English-speaking cultures. Though Asian and African cultures are also presented in these textbooks, they appear much less frequently, especially African ones. In addition, cultures other than English-speaking are presented in a fragmented and stereotypical way.

Finally, Naji Meidani and Pishghadam (2013) provided a diachronic view of the presentation of culture in internationally distributed English language teaching textbooks. The authors selected English language teaching textbooks published within a time span of twelve years (from 1994 to 2006), including (in the order of time of publication): *New American Streamline* by Hartley and Viney, *Cambridge English for Schools* by Littlejohn and Hicks, *Interchange Series Third Edition* by Richards, Hull and Proctor, and *Top Notch* by Saslow and Ascher, for analysis. According to these researchers, there has been a tendency of presenting a diversity of cultures (i.e., multiculturalism) in the selected textbooks throughout this period of twelve years. There has been an increase in the presentation of cultural themes (e.g., environmental, social, political, personal, humanities, and arts) related to an increased number of cultures other than English-speaking ones. Meanwhile, there has been a decrease in the presentation of

English-speaking cultures, and these cultures have become less highlighted. In particular, there has been a gradual change in acknowledgement of language learners' own culture(s), with an inclusion of opportunities for language learners to explore and reflect on their own culture(s).

In summary, the above reviewed studies have shown that English language textbooks currently have not yet met the requirement of integrating culture and language. A bias can be found in both the cultural content (e.g., focussing on cultural products and on factual knowledge) and in how this content is presented (e.g., a separated between culture and language, or a provision of cultural knowledge in the target language). However, there has been a more recent tendency to present more cultures other than target language cultures, and thus a decentralisation from English-speaking cultures, in providing opportunities for language learners to explore and reflect on their own culture(s) in English language teaching textbooks (Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013).

The present study also includes the issue of how the participants, i.e. Vietnamese university EFL teachers, see and evaluate the cultural content in the teaching materials they use in order to gain an understanding of their integration of culture in their EFL teaching practices. An analysis of the cultural content in copies of the sections from the teaching material that the participants use in their observed class hours also helps further understand how culture is addressed in this EFL teaching context.

Moving towards a full application of an ILT approach depends on various factors such as teachers' time, training and competence, teaching material, support from educational authorities, and all other stakeholders (e.g., learners, learners' families, and other colleagues in the same institutions). Central to this move is LTPD, which is the focus of the following section.

### **3.4 Teacher professional development concerning culture teaching**

On-going in-service TPD is important for improving teaching practice, as teachers tend to forget part of what they learned from, say, a training session six months after the end of the session (Goldschmidt & Phelps, 2010). Furthermore, with an aim of increasing teachers' expertise, "one-off" professional development programmes (e.g., training workshops or sessions that last a day) for teachers are far less favourable than continuous and extended ones (Timperley, Wilson, Barra, & Fung, 2007). This is because it is a long and complex process, involving: integrating and retrieving



knowledge; applying knowledge in specific contexts; and changing teachers' teaching practices to have a noticeable impact on their students' learning outcomes (Timperley et al., 2007). Thus, when TPD aims at certain desired student outcomes, continuing professional development or extended learning opportunities are necessary.

Timperley et al. (2007) argue that teacher professional learning processes are iterative, because, as deep learning processes, they necessarily involve teachers engaging with repeated learning-practice-outcome cycles. These authors propose a model with three processes, each with its outcome, for this learning (see Figure 3.2). These processes are summarised as follows.

- *Process 1:* The first process is the one in which teachers, in a TPD programme, cue and retrieve their own prior professional knowledge, for example, theories about teaching and learning. The cueing and retrieving of prior knowledge is likely to lead to a consolidation of this knowledge and to enable the other two processes to occur. By engaging with prior knowledge, teachers, besides cueing and retrieving it, explore and understand it. This assists teachers to relate new information (introduced in process 2) to their prior knowledge. The outcome, thus, is a consolidation or examination of prior knowledge.
- *Process 2:* The second process is developing an awareness of new information. There are two approaches to this process: “one-off” and extended opportunities to learn. The former refers to short (e.g., one-day) teacher professional programmes; the latter refers to more extensive ones with the idea of assisting teachers to progress from novice teachers to experts. Because “one-off” programmes are short in terms of time, they do not usually involve teachers' in-depth understandings of prior and new knowledge or integration of knowledge in diverse situations. Next, after such a programme, teachers would have difficulty in translating what they have gained into their own teaching context. However, these programmes may work when the aim is to transmit information to the teacher participants or to raise their awareness of a new idea. Extended teacher professional learning programmes aim at developing teachers' levels of expertise, hence a “novice-to-expert” developmental progression. These programmes deal with the shortcomings of the “one-off” sessions, and focus on teachers' performance in integrating prior and new knowledge and skills in diverse situations and translating them into their own teaching context effectively. Important conditions for extended programmes are: using a coherent conceptual framework to present new understandings and linking it to the existing ones; creating teachers' emotional comfort with the innovation in adjusting

the new practice to their own context; and, providing motivation for teachers (e.g., in terms of relevance of such programmes to their professional life). Thus, the outcome of this process is an adoption and/or adaptation of new knowledge. However, one of the two limitations of this process is that this new integrated practice, even that of experts, does not always guarantee effective student outcomes. The second one is that the possible dissonance, or conflict, between the conceptual frameworks underpinning these teachers' existing practice and the new one introduced becomes problematic.

- *Process 3*: Dissonance occurs when the new information challenges teachers' beliefs and values underlying their existing teaching practices. The outcome of this process is either acceptance or rejection of the current position (i.e., the current system of teachers' beliefs and values), and thus teachers' current system of beliefs and values is repositioned or reconstructed. (Summarised from Timperley et al., 2007)

| <b>(Iterative) Learning Processes</b>                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The learning processes engaged when developing new understandings and skills involve cycles of (one or more of) the following: |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Process 1</b>                                                                                                               | Cueing and retrieving prior knowledge<br><i>Outcome</i> : Prior knowledge consolidated and/or examined                                                                                    |
| <b>Process 2</b>                                                                                                               | Becoming aware of new information/skills and integrating them into current values and beliefs system<br><i>Outcome</i> : New knowledge adopted or adapted                                 |
| <b>Process 3</b>                                                                                                               | Creating dissonance with current position (values and beliefs)<br><i>Outcome</i> : Dissonance resolved (accepted/rejected), current values and beliefs system repositioned, reconstructed |

Figure 3.2 Teacher professional learning  
(Source: Timperley et al., 2007, p. 8)

Thus, Timperley et al.'s (2007) outlined processes of teacher professional learning help understand how these processes occur within teachers. The authors seem to believe that once teachers' beliefs have been reconstructed with the new ideas that they have confirmed in a programme and teachers are willing and feel comfortable to implement the new practice in their own teaching context, they are likely to do so.

According to Brody and Hadar (2011), TPD is a dynamic progression occurring on pathways with four stages: anticipation and curiosity, withdrawal, awareness and change. In the first stage of anticipation and curiosity, teachers participating in, say, a TPD course, anticipate their professional learning and develop their curiosity about the content of the course. During the course, when teachers are learning, for example, about

new theories and teaching methods, they become sceptical about their own existing educational beliefs and practices. In the withdrawal stage, several teachers may stop adopting the new ideas they are learning (i.e., they prevent themselves from learning these new ideas) either by dropping out of the course or remaining in the course with their “mental withdrawal” (Brody & Hadar, 2011, p. 1231). This means that these teachers reject the new ideas introduced in the course and they thus sustain their current beliefs and practices. This withdrawal results in the condition of “stasis” (Brody & Hadar, 2011, p. 1231). Those who can emerge from the withdrawal stage can enter the stage of awareness where they become aware of what the new ideas they are learning can bring to their professional development in terms of both their beliefs and, especially, their teaching practices. These teachers, thus, become open to making change. In the final stage of change, teachers apply innovations to their own teaching practices to varying degrees, from adjusting their teaching strategies to constructing their new pedagogical framework. Brody and Hadar also stress that professional development trajectories vary among teachers in terms of both their selection of trajectories and pace of progression. The progression is dependent on individual teacher’s willingness to progress as well as their ability to grow out of a stage and enter a new one. Thus, Brody and Hadar’s model of TPD has the strength of describing the difference in trajectories of teachers’ growth.

It can be seen that both Timperley et al. (2007) and Brody and Hadar (2011) are similar in seeming to believe that awareness (with teachers’ confirmation of the positive values that the new ideas they are learning can bring to their professional development) leads to change in both teachers’ beliefs and practices. However, Wong (2013), based on a study of the sustainability of such changes as the impact of an overseas LTPD course, argues that awareness, even when accompanied by change in teachers’ beliefs, does not always lead to changes in teachers’ actual classroom teaching practices. According to Wong, even when teachers have become aware of the possibilities of their professional development in terms of their beliefs and intentional practices (i.e., what they think they will do), they seem to make change, or apply innovations, to their own classroom teaching practices only when other contextual factors are supportive of such changes. That is, the occurrence of teachers’ translation of their newly constructed beliefs and intentional practices into their actual classroom teaching practices depends on whether or not these beliefs and intentional practices are in alignment with the whole existing system of cultural beliefs and practices in their working context (Wong, 2013).

The “interference” (Wong, 2013, p. 164), i.e. the system of contextual factors that prevent teachers from making change, in Wong’s view, usually consists of curriculum design, assessment mode and other stakeholders’ different expectations.

The above professional learning processes may apply to teachers from all disciplines. Specifically regarding language teachers, there are two main categories of TPD programmes: in-country teacher professional programmes and overseas L&CI programmes. These categories are discussed below.

### ***3.4.1 In-country teacher professional development programmes***

A considerable number of studies have investigated in-country models for LTPD, for example, the school-based follow-up development activity (Waters & Vilches, 2000), the online professional development course model (Signer, 2008), and teachers being producers of knowledge by presenting at LTPD seminars (Lee, 2011). These models are described as follows.

Firstly, the school-based follow-up development activity model, suggested by Waters & Vilches (2000), has the power of linking between what in-service TPD programmes introduce to participants and their follow-up teaching practices when they are back at their work places. This model involves an action plan prepared by the teacher participating in a development programme, serving as a bridge connecting the “seminar island” (i.e. the seminar, course, or development programme) and the “school inland” (i.e. the school or institution where the teacher works), using Waters and Vilches’s words. The programme contains three main components: orientation (involving topic choice, preparing drafts of data collection instruments, and observation strategies); execution, with the four main stages of preparation, implementation, review and follow-up; and, after-care, including follow-up monitoring and support. The key gains for teachers participating in such a development programme, according to the authors, would include: increased overall teaching competence; higher professional self-esteem; greater structure and self-direction; and, improved working relations (i.e., making teaching more socially interactive, involving collaboration with various people). The value of this model, according to these authors, is that with carefully planned activities in the programme components, teachers can actively participate in a wider range of activities that help to develop and deepen their professional understandings and skills in a professional learning environment as suggested by Timperley et al. (2007).

Secondly, in Signer's (2008) online professional development course model, teachers use the internet to access resources for their lessons, to share reflections on their teaching with other teachers, and to improve their future lessons. This model can be applied to teachers of various subjects, including English as a second language. The three core components of the course model (i.e., online resources and research, classroom implementation, and assignments and requirements) are interrelated and organised by weeks, each week with a specific theme. For a theme, the teachers are required to read a pedagogical or research article, to implement the topic-related lessons with their students, applying the findings in the article, and to reflect on their activities and their students' learning. The interactions are online, and occur between the teachers, the professor (who is responsible for the course), and with the course components. In this course, discussion postings by the teachers decide the evaluation grade. According to the author, the model has the strength of producing a positive impact on the teachers' teaching practice and on the quality of interactions.

Finally, Lee (2011) presents the benefits of continuing professional development seminars in which teachers participate actively in preparing and presenting ideas. This participatory mode of professional development involves a number of teachers preparing to present on a number of topics related to a seminar theme, sharing preliminary ideas, commenting on each other's preparation, and presenting the topic at the seminar. This practice benefits both the teachers presenting and the audience teachers. The presenter teachers could gain deeper understandings of the issues of the seminar, have first-hand experience of a professional learning community, and have collaborative and collegial professional development. The audience teachers' chief professional gain is mainly in the form of deeper understanding from sharing experience. This model, according to Lee, can help participants produce and construct knowledge; it can demonstrate the worthiness of this way of constructing knowledge in the participants' own working contexts as well.

In particular, with an attempt to help language teachers to address culture in their teaching practice, He, Prater, and Steed (2011), described their professional development sessions for English language teachers based on research findings and teacher needs assessment, and studied the impact of the professional development programme. Their year-long programme was conducted in forty-six hours in a total of nine sessions, and was based on their analysis of teacher needs. The programme focussed on: incorporating language and culture; teachers' self-awareness of their

cultural roles (beside instructional practices); teachers' understanding of the second language learning process; the importance of language and culture as a goal of instruction; and other related issues. The delivery of the professional development sessions highlighted collective participation and active learning. The collaboration was between English language teachers and regular (or, content area) teachers who taught the same grades. These teachers discussed and applied the content, as well as learned from each other in an active way. Concerning the impact of the programme, the authors found, first, that the participants gave positive feedback on the training sessions. Second, the participants showed a growth of their knowledge in terms of, notably: knowledge of more concrete and relevant strategies to work with ESL students; effective practices; understanding language development theories; and cultural understanding. Third, the programme also had a positive impact on the participants' English students, especially in raising their levels in listening, speaking, and reading skills. According to these authors, the benefits of this model included: enabling the students (including English language students) to gain academic success; increasing teachers' knowledge of culture and language; and developing teachers' skills in collaborating with others as well as critical reflection.

Though the above-described general models may be applied to programmes with a focus on a certain aspect of language teaching (e.g., addressing culture or a particular language skill), inadequate attention has been paid to the aspect of addressing culture in in-country language teacher development. This lack of attention can be observed in Richards's (2010) recent outline of "dimensions of skills and expertise in language teaching" (p. 101). Out of the ten dimensions that Richards sees as the pinpoints for planning LTPD programmes, none directly addresses the issue of culture teaching as a component of teachers' language-teaching competence or performance to be developed. These ten dimensions are listed as follows.

- *Language proficiency*: including the ability, for example, to comprehend texts accurately, to provide good language models, to maintain use of the target language in the classroom, and to use appropriate classroom language;
- *Content knowledge*: with disciplinary knowledge (drawn from various fields such as history of language teaching methods, second language acquisition, discourse analysis, and others), and pedagogical content knowledge (drawn from the study of language teaching and language learning);

- *Teaching skills*: focussing on the teachers' repertoire of techniques and routines in, for example, opening the lesson, setting up learning arrangement, guiding student practice, and monitoring students' language use;
- *Contextual knowledge*: knowledge of the social and physical context, such as of the school, the curriculum, the specific values, norms of practices and patterns of social participation in the school;
- *Language teacher identity*: the social and cultural roles of the teacher and students in their interactions during the process of learning;
- *Learner-focussed teaching*: with higher degree of learner engagement with, participation and interaction in the lesson, reflecting learners' needs and preferences;
- *Specific cognitive skills*: pedagogical reasoning skills, for example, "how teachers' beliefs, thoughts and thinking processes shape their understanding of teaching and their classroom practices" (Richards, 2010, p. 114);
- *Theorising from practice*: developing ideas, concepts, theories and principles from their experience;
- *Membership of a community of practice*: for collaboration; and
- *Professionalism*. (Summarised from Richards, 2010)

Harvey et al. (2010) also point out this lack on the basis of their evaluative study of the impact of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's professional development programme for New Zealand teachers of languages other than English and Māori. This programme, according to the authors, focussed mainly on developing the participants' teaching language proficiency, their language curriculum knowledge, and their methodological knowledge in second language acquisition. The training programme, concerning language curriculum knowledge, gave a priority to the language knowledge strand over the cultural knowledge strand, although these two strands are of equal importance in the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Therefore, Harvey et al. suggest that a cultural component dealing with the cultural knowledge strand in the curriculum and IC be incorporated in such LTPD programmes. It should also be noted here that in the New Zealand context, this LTPD programme and the L&CI programmes examined by Harvey et al. (2011) were separate programmes for the teacher participants (i.e., these programmes were not designed for the same participants), thus they might not be mutually supportive.

One alternative to the in-country LTPD programmes is the L&CI experience, which aims at developing language teachers' both language proficiency and IC as well

as teachers' ability in addressing IC in their teaching practices. Section 3.4.2, below, is devoted to these programmes.

### **3.4.2 *Language and culture immersions***

It is necessary for language teachers to have continuous opportunities to develop their language teaching methodological knowledge, language proficiency as well as cultural knowledge (Allen, 2010). The idea of improving the language teacher's teaching language competence and IC by having the teacher immersed in the target language and culture reflects a dynamic view of culture. Such practices require the language teacher, as both a teacher and learner, to engage with the culture in particular contexts (Liddicoat, 2004). These L&CI programmes, or immersion sojourns, have been studied from the perspectives of language students and language teacher trainees (or, pre-service teachers) (e.g., Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Coleman, 1998; Jackson, 2004), as well as those of in-service language teachers (e.g., Allen, 2010; Bilash & Kang, 2007; Bridges, 2007; Harvey et al., 2011; Wernicke, 2010). These programmes can be long-term (e.g., one year) or, and in most cases, short-term (e.g., from two weeks to six weeks and several months). In the descriptions of such programmes in the studies mentioned above, L&CI experience can be characterised by homestay (i.e., the sojourners live with a host family during the period of time spent in the host country), interactions with local people (including members of the host family) in the target language, and engagement with the target culture.

In general, L&CI programmes, to varied extents, are effective in developing the participants' own target language skills, intercultural awareness, knowledge, and understanding (e.g., Allen, 2010; Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bilash & Kang, 2007; Harvey et al., 2011). However, in order to maximise the efficacy of such programmes, support for teachers in the pre-departure, on-site, and re-entry stages are necessary (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Harvey et al., 2011; Jackson, 2004; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008). For example, according to Harvey et al. (2011), in preparing for the departure, teachers need support with information (e.g., itinerary, orientation, cultural information, and accommodation), setting goals and outcomes (e.g., development of language proficiency, gathering language/culture resources). When on-site, they also need support in terms of, for example, mentoring, keeping diaries, and accommodation. In the re-entry stage, debriefing of teachers' L&CI experience is another important factor that helps ensure the efficacy of the experience in terms of changes the teachers can make in



their classrooms. Following is a description of these impacts on in-service language teachers, which is directly informative to the present study.

Firstly, Bridges (2007) studied the participants' perceptions of their language skill development, language pedagogy, and intercultural understanding in a six-week L&CI programme for Chinese-speaking English teachers from Hong Kong organised in Australia. The programme included language proficiency courses and assessments, classroom language use, and homestay. The study found that the participants perceived and showed a growth in all the four language macro-skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), classroom language, and linguistic awareness. In terms of pedagogy, the study found the participants' growth in their personal pedagogic constructs (though the programme did not focus on explicit training of language pedagogy), and participants' perception of "issues regarding cultural relevance and the possible cultural tension between pedagogic styles" (Bridges, 2007, p. 50). The participants also perceived benefits in terms of culture understanding from interactions in both academic and social contexts. Moreover, the participants "saw a chain of effect building their constructs of intercultural and interpersonal understanding alongside the development of competence and confidence in English language" (Bridges, 2007, p. 53) with the chain components being: critical reflection (about language, culture, and pedagogy), awareness, projection (of enactment in language use, classroom practice, and intercultural communication), implementation, and impact.

Secondly, Bilash and Kang's (2007) study was based on a four-week professional development L&CI programme in Canada for Korean teachers of English as a second language. With the purpose for the participants to improve their language competence, cultural understanding, and pedagogical understanding, the programme included: homestay; historical and cultural activities; professional development activities and theoretical issues; and classroom activities. According to the authors, such L&CI programmes have important impact on the participants' perceived English language improvement, cultural awareness, language pedagogy, and professional development, as well as on their world views. In particular, the impact can be observed in several noticeable areas as follows. The participants reported that they had learned about their teaching experience during the L&CI programme, improved their teaching practice, and became more knowledgeable and showed more initiative. These participants also believed that there had been an improvement in their English language competency, especially in their confidence in using English for communication,

teaching English, and sharing ideas about their worldviews. In addition to this development, they reported on their perceived development of professional consciousness, and of their awareness of cultural differences. However, several participants also reported resistance to change due to cultural differences and conflicts. Thus, more efforts from immersion sojourners would be needed to modify their own system of beliefs and values to overcome this resistance.

Thirdly, Allen's (2010) study, based on a summer three-week L&CI programme in Lyon, France, for American teachers of French, investigated the impact of such programmes on foreign language teachers. In this programme, the participants – during the pre-departure stage – committed to French-only communication during the L&CI period, read materials (in French) about aspects of Lyon and France. The on-site stage featured: homestay (for daily life interactions in natural, contextualised settings in French), formal presentations by French history professors, historical and cultural visits, interactive language tasks (to improve language proficiency), and gathering materials for their future instruction. The re-entry stage included on-going discussions, establishing, and maintaining a network. The study showed that the programme significantly contributed to the participants' professional development. The benefits for these participants included: an increase in target language proficiency, especially in terms of language skills, and – beyond proficiency – confidence in target language production; a growth in cultural knowledge (that is, cultural products, practices, and perspectives); changes in the participants' curriculum and/or instructional practices, especially in using authentic materials; and a positive impact on professional lives outside the classroom (e.g., sharing ideas, resources, and advice in a network, and on-going discussions).

According to Harvey et al. (2011), L&CI programmes have an impact at different levels on participants' language proficiency and cultural knowledge and language teaching practice. Firstly, concerning the impact on teachers' language proficiency development, the teachers in Harvey et al.'s study perceived an improvement mostly in oral skills and vocabulary. These teachers reported that the improvement was fostered by factors such as interactions with native speakers, homestay interaction, language class attendance, and teachers' personal motivation. Secondly, regarding the development of teachers' cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and IC, though most teachers perceived a desirable increase in their cultural knowledge, they did not show such an increase in their understanding of the relationship

between language and culture, nor of their own ICC. Thirdly, with regard to the impact on teachers' teaching practice, the improvements were found in how these teachers addressed culture. These improvements included: increased confidence in using the teaching language; increased use of the teaching language in classrooms and authentic resources; more attention paid to culture; provision of more opportunities for students to produce the target language and to acquire vocabulary; and use of a wider range of activities to develop students' cultural knowledge.

The teachers in Harvey et al.'s (2011) study also reported more attempt to address culture and a wider range of culture teaching activities (e.g., using personal experiences and realia from the immersion cultures) as a result of such L&CI experiences. They perceived, as an impact of these L&CI programmes on their students' outcomes, positive change, to various extents (from a little change to a considerable change), in their students' attitudes to learning about culture. However, a majority (68% of the teachers who responded to the question to what extent their L&CI experiences had an impact on their students' development of ICC) reported that there was no or little change in their students' ICC, which is seen as an ultimate goal of foreign language teaching (e.g., Byram, 1997). Thus, according to the authors of the study, such L&CI programmes tended to have no or little impact on student outcomes in terms of the development of their ICC in general, and IC in particular. The main reason for this, in these authors' view, was the implementation of the teachers' own improved ICC in their classroom teaching. Most of the teachers in the study were not involved in post-sojourn debriefs; nor did they receive further professional supports in making changes to their teaching practices. Thus, Harvey et al. (2011) suggest that when teachers return from such L&CI programmes, they need to be facilitated by those with expertise in the areas of language teaching and ICC in implementing changes in their classroom teaching practices in ways that can have positive impact on their students' learning outcomes.

In summary, L&CI programmes are beneficial to teachers' development of their language proficiency as well as cultural knowledge and IC. The studies reviewed above showed that these programmes also had positive impact on teachers' teaching practice after returning from the host countries. The teachers attending such programmes perceived that the culture element in their language teaching practices received more attention from teachers. Some participants perceived the impact of such programmes on their teaching practices and on their student learning outcomes, mostly in terms of attitudes in learning about culture, but these outcomes were not measured. However,

these programmes had only little or no effect on student outcomes in terms of the development of ICC, as Harvey et al. (2011) found out. This is because there was a lack of well-structured pre-sojourn awareness raising and goal setting. Appropriate post-sojourn engagement such as teacher debriefing sessions and supports from those with expertise in language teaching and ICC were also lacking.

In Timperley et al.'s (2007) view, "changing teaching practice in ways that have a significant impact on student outcomes is not easy" (p. 225). Furthermore and noticeably, the in-service teachers participating in the L&CI programmes described above did not seem to receive sufficient further professional support or training regarding the integration of their new gains from such programmes into their teaching practices, especially into their culture teaching, in a way that could have a positive impact on the students' learning outcomes. This lack of post-immersion professional support might weaken the efficacy of such programmes, for example, in terms of the development of the language learner's IC.

### **3.5 Summary**

Serving the aim of educating the intercultural speaker (e.g., Byram, 1997, 2009; Newton & Shearn, 2010b), culture needs to be addressed as an integrated element in language teaching (e.g., Crozet et al., 1999; Liddicoat, 2002). Both a static view and a dynamic view of culture are necessary in addressing culture (Liddicoat, 2002; Schulz, 2007), especially in an ILT approach. The adoption of such an approach requires key principles in teaching culture, for example, integrating culture and language, addressing culture from the beginning of the learning process, the intercultural (or, bilingual/multilingual) speaker being the norm, and learning about and engaging with culture (Liddicoat, 2002).

However, research has shown that most language teachers, in various contexts, still tend to conceptualise culture in terms of cultural artefacts, cultural elements and its functions. Thus, this tendency signifies a static view of culture, rather than a dynamic view. These conceptualisations and views of culture seem to affect how language teachers define their goals (or, objectives) in teaching culture. The most common reported goals include provision of cultural information, development of language learners' positive attitudes towards other cultures and cultural differences, and supporting language acquisition. With these conceptualisations of culture and goals in teaching culture, most language teachers address culture to a limited extent in their

language teaching practices. In other words, a full adoption of an ILT approach in which culture and language are integrated has not been widely evidenced in the literature.

In terms of cultural content and presentation of culture in textbooks, focussing on English language textbooks, a common form of language teaching materials, current textbooks in general have not yet met the demand of integrating culture and language. Instead, they present culture with a bias of cultural content (i.e., focussing on cultural products and factual knowledge) and of how the cultural content is presented (i.e., separating culture from language, thus providing cultural knowledge in the target language). Furthermore, English language textbooks, as found in various studies, focus mainly on presenting the cultures of the target language (i.e., English-speaking cultures). However, there has been a tendency for these textbooks to present diverse cultures as well as of cultural themes in recent years.

In language teaching, as in the teaching of all content areas, continuous LTPD is important. It is necessary for language teachers to continuously develop their target language proficiency as well as their own cultural knowledge and IC (Allen, 2010), because this development is an on-going process. However, the literature has indicated a lack in the development of language teachers' competence in teaching culture in in-country LTPD programmes (e.g., Harvey et al., 2010). L&CI programmes in which language teachers spend a period of time immersed in the target language and culture have been proved to have a positive impact on teachers' development of their language proficiency, cultural knowledge and ICC to various extents. However, such programmes have not yet seemed to have a satisfactory impact on student outcomes in terms of the development of ICC, even in the perceptions of the teachers (Harvey et al., 2011). This is mainly because these teachers neither had their awareness raised nor had relevant goals set prior to departure. Furthermore, on returning from the host countries, many of them have not been involved in well-structured debriefs nor received necessary professional support. Therefore, and as can be seen from various studies, there seems to be no professional support or training in terms of assisting the language teachers, after returning from the host countries, to integrate their newly gained knowledge and competences (especially intercultural) into their teaching practices in a way that can have a significant positive impact on their students' learning outcomes. This lack of further professional support and training may be seen as a factor that weakens the potential impact of such L&CI programmes on student outcomes, especially in terms of developing IC in pursuing the aim of training the intercultural speaker.

## **Chapter 4    Research design**

### **4.0    Introduction**

The present study examines how EFL teachers integrate culture into their teaching practices. It aims to construct knowledge about the integration of culture into university EFL teaching in the local context of Vietnam. This chapter describes the design of the study. The first main section (section 4.1) introduces the research theory the study adopted, i.e. social constructionism, and describes how this research theory informs the various levels of the research design: ontology, epistemology, methodology, as well as method. Section 4.2 is devoted to the description of the research design, beginning with a discussion and justification of the methodological issues relevant to the study. This is followed by greater detail about the design of the study, focussing on: the field site and participants, the methods of data collection and analysis employed to address the research questions, as well as the issues of trustworthiness and research ethics. The limitations of the study design are also discussed in this section. Section 4.3 provides a summary of the points presented in the whole chapter.

### **4.1    Research theory: Social constructionism**

This section provides an overview of social constructionism as the research theory within which the present study was conducted. It also presents the justification for the study to be situated within social constructionism, discussing how this theory informs the study design.

#### **4.1.1    *Social constructionism***

In their seminal work, *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) point out that human reality is socially constructed in interactions. Human reality is constructed by members of a society in their everyday life and subjective and inter-subjective in nature, and thus multiple realities exist in the world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It follows from this that, to social constructionists, “concepts, theories, scientific practices, and body of knowledge are all items which may [ . . . ] be socially constructed” (Hibberd, 2005, p. 2).

Social constructionism can be seen as a research movement, an approach, a theory, a meta-theory, and a theoretical orientation in research (Stam, 2001). The term, thus, has become “a broad church” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 6), including a wide range of forms of social constructionism (Elder-Vass, 2012). However vague the term is, there

are tenets that help to identify what it is, as various authors point out. For example, Burr (2003) explains four of these common tenets, as presented below.

- *A critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge*: It is necessary that social constructionists be critical about ways of understanding the world, especially ways of understanding human beings in general and the self in particular. Criticality also lies in the urge to question the claim about conventional knowledge that it is derived from objective and unbiased observation.
- *Historical and cultural specificity*: In this light, (social) knowledge is not time-less. Instead, all ways of understanding are specific to history and culture, and are thus relative.
- *Knowledge is sustained by social processes*: Social constructionists hold that knowledge of the world is constructed in human interactions. And thus, truth can only be seen as a product of social processes and interactions in which human beings are engaged with each other. It is not a product of objective and unbiased observation.
- *Knowledge and social action go together*: It follows from the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge and from the possible different social constructions of knowledge that each construction of knowledge is always accompanied by a certain kind of social action. (Summarised from Burr, 2003)

Similarly, Lock and Strong (2010) point out the tenets that characterise social constructionism. These tenets include: (a) centring on meaning and understanding in human activities; (b) stressing the social origin of meaning and understanding; (c) stressing the socio-cultural specificity of ways of understanding; and (d) rejecting essentialism, i.e. “people are self-defining and socially constructed participants in their shared lives. There are no pre-defined entities within them that objective methods can seek to delineate” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 7); and, (e) adopting a critical stance for the purpose of making change to the world.

Being “a broad church” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 6), social constructionism exists in different forms. According to Burr (2003), two broad forms of social constructionism can be distinguished from each other though one does not exclude the other: micro and macro social constructionism. Micro social constructionism,

sees social construction taking place within everyday discourse between people in interactions. [. . .] For micro social constructionism, multiple versions of the world are potentially available through this discursive, constructive work, and there is no sense in which one can be said to be more real or true than others; the text of this discourse is

the only reality we have access to – we cannot make claims about a real world that exists beyond our descriptions of it. (Burr, 2003, p. 21)

The macro form of social constructionism,

acknowledges the constructive power of language but sees this as derived from, or at least related to, material or social structures, social relations and institutionalised practices. The concept of power is therefore at the heart of this form of social constructionism [. . .]. Since their [social constructionists'] focus is on issues of power, macro social constructionists are especially interested in analysing various forms of social inequality, such as gender, race and ethnicity, disability and mental health, with a view to challenging these through research and practice. (Burr, 2003, p. 22)

Thus, while micro social constructionism focusses on constructing individuals' accounts and identities in interactions, macro social constructionism deals mainly with the power relations among cultural groups/discourses. Specifically, an important point is that the only assessable reality is what can be described about the diverse versions of the world people construct in their everyday life.

Central to constructionism is language, “a form of social interaction” (Burr, 2003, p. 8). In Burr's (2003) view, people's everyday use of language not only helps them to express themselves but also constructs the world, or reality. Language, in this sense, both provides a framework in which meaning is created and functions as a precondition for human thoughts. According to Elder-Vass (2012), social constructionism highlights the idea that ways of understanding the world depend on how people think about the world and communicate with each other about it.

To summarise, social constructionism, especially its micro form, focusses on historically and socio-culturally differentiated constructions of the world (i.e., experiences of one another and of the self) and of knowledge through human interactions, in which language plays a vital role. Furthermore, inherent to social constructionism is criticality.

#### ***4.1.2 Social constructionism and the present study design***

The present study investigates, as mentioned above, how Vietnamese university EFL teachers integrate culture in their teaching practices. Driven by its research questions and its overall objective, the study was designed within a social constructionist theory. Social constructionism informs all levels of the study design (i.e., ontological, epistemological, methodological, and method levels) as presented below.



#### *4.1.2.1 Ontology*

The present study involves the practices and context of a professional group, i.e. Vietnamese university EFL teachers. By nature, social reality is “an intersubjective construction that is created through communicative interaction” (Miller, 2005, p. 27), or is “socially constructed” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 13). It is the inter-subjective nature of reality that implies that multiple realities exist (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), for example, those of the researcher, the participants and readers of a study (Creswell, 2007). Lock and Strong (2010) stress that central to human beings’ activities are inter-subjective experiences. They argue that research on human activities needs to begin with these experiences, especially when examining professional practices.

These ontological beliefs form the basis of the present research project. That is, in this study the described practice of integrating culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching is understood as both a subjective and inter-subjective construction by the participants of the study, by myself as the researcher, especially in interactions (both in face-to-face interactions and via written texts) between the participants and readers of the study. Specifically, my participants’ perspectives and their everyday practices were seen as playing a vital role in this study.

#### *4.1.2.2 Epistemology*

Social constructionist ideas concerning epistemological issues (i.e., the nature of knowledge) are informative to the present study. Knowledge is socially constructed through human interactions and is intersubjective in nature (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Hibberd, 2005; Lock & Strong, 2010). Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that it is in social situations that human knowledge is constructed, maintained and transmitted among members of a society. Specifically, “common-sense ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘ideas’ must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 27). Put differently, it is the ways of understanding the world of the members of a society in their everyday lives that count, and their subjective and intersubjective experiences construct realities of the world. Similarly, Burr (2003) argues that everyday human interactions help to construct knowledge. Due to the socially-constructed nature of reality, knowledge must be constructed by experiencing the everyday life of social participants and/or interacting

extensively with them, as knowledge is subjectively constructed by them in specific situations (Miller, 2005).

Another key point to be made is that “knowledge is situated and relativistic” (Miller, 2005, p. 29); thus, instead of generalisations of knowledge, it is local understandings of social phenomena that can be gained. One common social constructionist assumption pointed out by Burr (2003) and Lock and Strong (2010) is that knowledge is specific to times, and cultures and/or places.

This means that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods of history, they are seen as products of that culture and history, and are dependent on the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that *our* ways of understanding are necessarily any better, in terms of being any nearer the truth, than other ways. (Burr, 2003, p. 4)

Because knowledge is socially constructed through interaction, it is necessary for the researcher to interact with the participants, the members of, say, a social or professional group, in constructing knowledge. Thus, in research knowledge is socially constructed by the researcher being “in contact, or in touch” (Shotter, 1993, p. 20) with members of a community. In particular, it is necessary for the researcher to work in collaboration with the participants, to spend extensive time with them and to become an insider of their social group (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, the researcher-participant relationship needs to be democratised (Burr, 2003). This means that the participants’ own accounts of their experiences need to be of, at least, the same status as the researcher’s (Burr, 2003), and, thus, as presented in the section above, the multiple realities of the participants need to be respected and acknowledged.

Thus, a social constructionist epistemology was adopted in designing this study. To achieve the overall objective of the study, construction of inter-subjective, contextualised and relativistic knowledge about the phenomenon under study, I interacted with the participants in their daily professional practices. This knowledge was constructed by and in my interactions with the participants as well as readers of the study.

#### 4.1.2.3 Methodology

Social constructionism informs the design of the present study at the methodological level: criticality and an ethnographic design (see also 4.2.2 for a further description of methodological issues).

First, as presented above, within social constructionism criticality lies in at least two aspects: a critical perspective to taken-for-granted knowledge, and knowledge as a factor to change the world. With the claim that reality is socially constructed, social constructionism “invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world” (Burr, 2003, pp. 2-3). For social constructionists, social reality is neither totally subjective nor completely objective (Miller, 2005). It is with the inter-subjective nature (through communicative interactions between people), not with the total subjectivity, that reality is constructed. Objectivity is impossible because any knowledge is gained by observing the world from a certain perspective and it addresses a certain interest. In other words, there are multiple ways of understanding the world, each serving particular interests (Burr, 2003). Thus, in research, reality is necessarily constructed inter-subjectively between the researcher and the participants.

The task of the researcher therefore becomes to acknowledge and even to work with their own intrinsic involvement in the research process and the part that this plays in the results that are produced. The researcher must view the research as necessarily a co-production between themselves and the people they are researching. (Burr, 2003, p. 152)

One common assumption held by social constructionists is that knowledge and social action are inseparable (Burr, 2003). According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), “knowledge is a social product *and* knowledge is a factor in social change” (p. 104); that is, these two are in a dialectical relationship. It is in this sense that social constructionism is critical in its nature. Knowledge becomes a factor in making change to the world. Therefore, the criticality of the present study enables the situated and relativistic knowledge constructed in it, alongside the provision of understandings about the phenomenon under study, to become a factor in making potential changes in professional practices in the context of the study.

Secondly, the study investigates the beliefs and practices of members of a community of practice in a specific socio-cultural context (i.e., EFL teachers in

Vietnamese universities). Its overall objective, as presented above, is to socially construct knowledge about Vietnamese university EFL teachers' professional beliefs and practices. Within social constructionism, knowledge is specific to times, cultures and places, and it can only be socially constructed through interactions (e.g., Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010). Furthermore, for a researcher to arrive at such knowledge, it is necessary for him/her to interact with the participants (i.e., members of the community of practice in this case), to be in touch with them (Shotter, 1993). Put more specifically, in terms of research methodology, knowledge is constructed by "inquiry from the 'inside' through ethnography and reports of social actors" (Miller, 2005, p. 29). All these factors point to an ethnographic design as the methodology for the present study so that it can achieve its overall objective of constructing knowledge about the beliefs and practices of the targeted professional group.

Therefore, a critical ethnographic methodology, informed by social constructionism, has been adopted in designing the present study. The critical ethnographic design of the study has the following characteristics (and will be discussed in greater detail in 4.2.2). Firstly, it has the key characteristics of: being with a group of people in their natural setting for an extended time; writing and theorising about them; the researcher being both an insider and an outsider as well as a data collecting tool (i.e., the researcher collects data using his/her own senses, observing, feeling and recording what is observed) and being reflexive (Madden, 2010). Secondly, the criticality of this social constructionist ethnographic study lies in constructing knowledge with the purpose of possibly enacting change in the world. In this case, it aims for "preferred futures" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 8) regarding the integration culture into university EFL teaching in Vietnam.

#### *4.1.2.4 Methods*

Social constructionism helps to inform the methods for collecting data, as well as analysing the collected data in the present study (see section 4.2.4 for more detail about the research methods employed in the study).

Firstly, social constructionism is embedded in the two principal data collection methods employed, namely: interviewing and observation. Interviewing is defined as "a conversation with a purpose" (Berg, 2009, p. 101). It can reflect the conversational, dialogical nature of understanding and help to construct knowledge via social interactions, as well as to understand the participants' lived experience and the meaning

made of that experience (Seidman, 2006). Thus, interviewing becomes “a knowledge-producing activity” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 47) in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewed participants. In this study I conducted in total 25 interviews with the participants as one form of participant-researcher social interactions for the purpose of constructing knowledge (see also 4.2.4.1). Furthermore, social constructionist research focusses on the daily social practices in which people engage (Burr, 2003). For example, to construct knowledge about the professional life of a group of teachers in an institution, these teachers’ classroom teaching practices can be considered a principal form of their daily social processes. It is also in these practices that knowledge is constructed about their realities. Therefore, observing the participants in their daily professional practices (e.g., teachers’ classroom teaching) in which they interact with other people (e.g., their students) helps to gain an understanding about their practices. In the present study, I observed my participants (i.e., Vietnamese university EFL teachers) twice per participant, in their daily classroom teaching practices (see also 4.2.4.2). What these participants did and the teaching activities they organised in these observations were recorded as field notes. The data that I collected from classroom observations, in triangulation with the interview data, helped to identify commonalities and differences among the targeted community of practices of Vietnamese university EFL teachers concerning knowledge about their realities.

In addition, teachers, in their social interactions in the classroom (i.e., teaching practices), commonly use teaching materials (e.g., textbooks, PowerPoint slides, and other supplementary materials) as one basis for their interactions with their students. In this study I collected copies of the teaching materials my participants used in the observed classes for analysis as mentioned in the previous paragraph (see also 4.2.4.3). This document analysis was the third source of information in constructing knowledge about the phenomenon under study.

Secondly, social constructionism informs the data analysis methods, preliminary and thematic, in this study. In research, accounts of a phenomenon (e.g., the integration of culture into EFL teaching practices) by the participants need to be respected and reported as what they are (Burr, 2003). An inductive qualitative analysis approach (Patton, 2002), therefore, became a principle for analysing the data that I collected in the present study. This means that the data set that I collected has the privilege and the right of speaking for itself, representing the multiple realities of the participants in their community of practice. Moreover, my own interpretation, for example, in discussing

and presenting the multiple beliefs and practices of the participants, reflects the inter-subjective nature of the socially constructed knowledge about the issue under study. Core meanings, in the form of themes emerging from the data and attained through thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibson & Brown, 2009) were presented and seen as central to the study. Furthermore, social constructionism requires reflexivity (Burr, 2003) and the researcher's own voice or interpretation must be made explicit. Thus, in acknowledging my own experience in and familiarity with the research area (EFL education) as well as the participants' professional context, I spelled them out explicitly when, for example, interpreting and discussing the themes concerning the participants' beliefs and practices.

Related to data analysis, the presentation of data is also informed by social constructionism. The participants' multiple perspectives, attitudes and opinions were presented in the form of quotes from interviews (see also the final paragraph in 4.2.5 for a discussion of a multilingual issue related to the provision of these quotes) and themes that emerged from the data. In addition, tables were also useful to summarise and aggregate participants' contribution of knowledge related to the phenomenon under study.

In summary, social constructionism stresses the social construction of knowledge through human interaction, typically through language, and the specificity to cultures, times and places of knowledge. These social constructionist beliefs are theoretically informative for the design of the present study at all levels, from ontological and epistemological assumptions, to methodological and method issues, as well as the presentation of data.

## **4.2 Research design**

This section provides a description of the design of the present study. It describes and justifies the methodology adopted in the study, the methods for data collection and analysis employed to address the research questions and to achieve the research objectives. It also discusses the issues of trustworthiness and research ethics. The section ends with a discussion of the limitations of the study design.

#### **4.2.1 Research questions and objectives**

The overarching question addressed in the present study (as presented in 1.3) has been formulated as: How do we currently understand Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their teaching practices? The sub-questions are:

- What are Vietnamese university EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching culture?
- How do they integrate culture into their EFL teaching practices?
- What do we know about LTPD regarding the integration of culture into EFL teaching in this context?

Thus, the overall objective of the study is, in a broad sense, to construct knowledge about the current beliefs and practices regarding the integration of culture into teaching practices of Vietnamese EFL teachers and the need for their professional development. The specific objectives of the study are to provide:

- An analysis and critique of Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching practices;
- An analysis of Vietnamese university EFL teachers' professional development needs which are to be addressed regarding the integration of culture into EFL teaching; and, thus,
- A source of critical information for EFL teachers in their teaching practices and for policy-makers regarding support for LTPD.

#### **4.2.2 Methodology**

This section describes critical ethnography as the methodology that informs the research methods employed in the present study. It begins with an outline of ethnographic methodology, which can be seen as an umbrella term that includes critical ethnography. The following section describes critical ethnography, focussing on more specific methodological issues that inform the research methods used.

##### **4.2.2.1 Ethnography**

Ethnography is seen as the science that describes a cultural group (Fetterman, 1998), or it focusses on “describing and interpreting a cultural and social group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 65). It is the description of a cultural or social group that is the focus in an ethnographic design. This group, in a broad sense of culture, can range from a tribal group to a classroom (Fetterman, 1998). Furthermore, in discussing ethnography, culture is a central term (Creswell, 2008) and is necessarily described (Walford, 2008).

Thus, a community of practice which shares beliefs and practices such as EFL teachers in a Vietnamese university in this study can be seen as a cultural group (see also 2.1 for a review of the term culture).

In studying a cultural group, ethnography “privileges the direct observation of human behaviour within a particular ‘culture’ and settings and seeks to understand a social reality from the perspectives of those involved in the observed interactions” (Starfield, 2010, p. 50). In greater detail, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) outline the methodological characteristics of ethnography, as summarised below.

- Being conducted in natural settings;
- Involving close, face-to-face interaction with participants;
- Reflecting participants’ own voices and behaviours;
- Building local theories from inductive, interactive and recursive data collection and analytic strategies;
- Employing multiple data sources;
- Framing human behaviour and belief within a social, political, and historical context;
- Interpreting the results through a cultural lens. (Summarised from LeCompte & Schensul, 1999)

Similarly, Walford (2008) describes ethnography with the following key features: studying culture, using multiple methods and diverse forms of data, researcher’s engagement (i.e., in connection with participants for a long period of time), researcher being research instrument, and participants’ accounts having high status. Stressing the central status of the human beings in the studied culture-sharing group, Madden (2010) characterises ethnography as including: writing about a particular group of people, being with them, theorising about them, the researcher as the primary tool in collecting data, involving both insiders’ (i.e., the participants’) and outsider’s (e.g., the researcher’s) points of view, and being reflexive. Regarding the ethnographer’s role, both Walford and Madden believe that the ethnographer needs to perform the function of research instrument, or tool. This means that in an ethnographic study, researchers typically collect data using their own senses to observe, hear, feel and record what is happening in the field and how it happens.

Thus, it might be seen that the key characteristics of ethnography include: defining culture and a cultural group; engaging with members of the group for an



extended time in their daily setting; interacting with these members and observing them in their interactions with others; collecting data from multiple sources; presenting the perspectives of the participants and the researcher's own voices; and being reflexive. It is with these characteristics that situated knowledge about the reality of the cultural group is constructed in an ethnographic study. These characteristics are presented in greater detail below.

One key characteristic of ethnography is the defining of culture and a cultural group. The term culture is multidisciplinary, and has been approached from various perspectives (Baldwin, Faulkner, & Hecht, 2006), and numerous definitions of the term have been proposed. Thus, a discussion of the term is necessary in ethnography and an ethnographic study such as the present study. In LeCompte & Schensul's (1999) view, "culture consists of group patterns of behavior and beliefs which persist over time" (p. 21). Fetterman (1998) comments that

Culture is the broadest ethnographic concept. Definitions of culture typically espouse either a materialist or an ideational perspective. The classic materialist interpretation of culture focuses on behavior. [ . . . ] The most popular ideational definition of culture is the cognitive definition. According to the cognitive approach, culture comprises the ideas, beliefs, and knowledge that characterize a particular group of people. [ . . . ] Both material and ideational definitions are useful at different times in exploring fully how groups of people think and behave in their natural environment. (p. 17)

It might be seen that in ethnography, culture has traditionally been defined in terms of its structural components (e.g., culture consists of components as behaviour – including language, way of life, beliefs, values, and norms) and of the shared-ness of these components among the members of a cultural group. Therefore, a community of practice (i.e., a collective of people who work together in, say, an institution and share certain beliefs, values and behaviour or practices) can be seen as a cultural group. As such, ethnographic definitions of culture, as described by Fetterman (1998) in the quote above, seem to be fairly restricted to a focus on the structural elements of culture such as beliefs and values from an ideational perspective or on observable behaviour and practices from a materialist perspective, or a combination of all these. They seem to reflect a static view of culture rather than a dynamic view one. (See also 2.1 for a review of the conceptualisations of culture.)

A second characteristic of ethnography is that the researcher conducts the research in the natural setting of a cultural group for an extended period of time.

Because knowledge is situated (e.g., Miller, 2005), and “the only plausible way to study social and cultural phenomena is to study them *in action*” (Murchison, 2010, p. 4), ethnographic research needs to be conducted in the research field, i.e. “a cultural setting” (Patton, 2002, p. 262) for the researcher. Fieldwork, then, is essential to ethnography, and “the most important element of fieldwork is being there” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 9). It is this element that requires the researcher to conduct research in the participants’ own natural setting (Madden, 2010). Once in the field to gather data, the researcher must avoid distorting or managing the everyday normal setting of the participants, and avoid asking them “to do things they normally wouldn’t do in a given circumstance” (Madden, 2010, p. 16). However, for such avoidance the researcher has to face and solve a conflict termed *observer’s paradox* (Labov, 1972). It is the conflict between the need to collect data to find out how the participants behave, use language, and interact with each other in their typical and natural ways when not being observed and that such data can only be obtained by observing them in action (Labov, 1972). This paradox also implies that observed participants are likely to change their typical and normal behaviour when they know that they are being observed. Thus, researchers, when observing their participants, need to be aware of this paradox and to take measures to minimise the effect of their presence on their participants’ behaviour. In the present study, in collecting data by observing my participants (EFL teacher) teaching in their classes, I took different measures to address this paradox such as building up rapport with participants, hence their trust, so that changes to their normal behaviour when I was observing them could be minimised (see 4.2.4.2 for a description of classroom observations). Furthermore, fieldwork has been traditionally longitudinal in an ethnographic study; that is, ethnography usually requires that the researcher spend an extended period of time observing the participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2007). Longitudinal fieldwork has its own values in helping the researcher to gain rapport with the participants. Rapport with participants is important for the researcher to collect valid data (e.g., participants’ natural behaviour and interactions in their setting as well as the sharing of their thoughts when they are being observed), minimising the problematic issue of Labov’s (1972) observer’s paradox. In addition,

Fieldwork often follows a typical pattern. The researcher spends time in the environment and builds a relationship with the participants. As trust develops the participants act more naturally and are more candid when they discuss issues or make decisions while the researcher is watching. (Willis, 2007, p. 236)

However, in Grbich's (2007) observation, there is a tendency for ethnographers to conduct fieldwork over a shorter time compared to the traditional process of, say, six months or a year. Particularly when ethnographers investigate a culture or a cultural group which they are familiar with or even members of (as I investigated the phenomenon of culture teaching in a Vietnamese context in the present study), fieldwork can become shorter compared to when they study an unfamiliar culture or cultural group. This is because when doing fieldwork in familiar fields, beside possible relationships, researchers' old habits, behaviour and attitudes may help them to a significant extent in quickly building and maintaining rapport with their participants (Madden, 2010). In addition, their familiarity with the field is useful in gaining a better understanding of it.

A third characteristic of ethnography is that the ethnographer interacts with the participants and observes them in their daily activities and interactions with others. Because knowledge is socially constructed through social interaction, particularly through language, between, for example, the researcher and the members of the cultural group (Shotter, 1993), it is necessary for the researcher to interact with the participants. Moreover, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue, it is the knowledge constructed through interactions between members of the cultural group with others and among them that is the focus of research. Thus, observation of the participants in interactions with others in their daily (e.g., professional, in this study) lives becomes central in an ethnographic study. By observing the participants in interactions with others, in addition, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the context in which the participants interact (Patton, 2002). This understanding facilitates the construction of knowledge about the participants' cultural context, or the field.

Another characteristic of ethnography is its diverse data sources. Due to the interactive nature of knowledge, the researcher interacts with the participants during fieldwork and collects evidence of such knowledge. Though, as a way of interacting with participants, "interviewing does remain one of the most important ways of knowing others" (Madden, 2010, p. 67), although, as a single source of information, it has its own limitation in providing a full description of the cultural group. Observation of participants in interactions with others, as presented above, is another source of evidence. Other sources, e.g., surveys and visual documentation (Grbich, 2007), are also common in ethnography. In ethnography, "data are gathered from a range of sources, including documentary evidence of various kinds, but participant observation and/or

relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

The last, but not least, characteristic of ethnography described in this section is concerned with multiple perspectives. It is the multiple perspectives socially constructed in the everyday activities of the members of a cultural group that are central to ethnography. Thus, ethnography involves both an emic (i.e., insider’s) perspective and an etic (i.e., outsider’s) one. On one side, an emic perspective is important in an ethnographic study because it “compels the recognition and acceptance of multiple realities” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 20). Participant’s perspectives are to be acknowledged. On the other side, an etic, or the researcher’s, perspective, can be seen as “the external, social scientific perspective on reality” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 22). It is the incorporation of these views that helps to holistically describe the cultural group (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, when acknowledging each perspective, particularly the etic perspective, the researcher needs to be reflexive. Reflexivity is commonly understood as the ability of researchers “to reflect on their own positioning and subjectivity in the research and provide an explicit, situated account of their own role in the project and its influences over the findings” (Starfield, 2010, p. 54). It also means “the equal status [. . .] of the researcher and their respondents, as well as of the accounts offered by each” (Burr, 2003, p. 156). Thus, emic perspectives, as well as an etic perspective, must be acknowledged.

#### *4.2.2.2 Critical ethnography*

As a form of ethnography, critical ethnography has all the characteristics of ethnography (as described in 2.2.1). Furthermore, in the light of social constructionism, a research theory in which criticality is inherent, critical ethnography is further informed by this theory. Critical ethnography means “critical theory in action” (Madison, 2005, p. 15), and researchers “are expected to function as intellectual advocates and activists” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 45). By nature critical ethnography focusses on culture and at the same time commits to making changes to the world (Patton, 2002). Critical ethnography aims at using the understandings about socio-cultural problems to make changes in a community, an institution or a cultural group (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Thus, critical ethnography is not politically neutral. Indeed, “critical ethnographers are typically politically minded individuals” (Creswell, 2008, p. 478). In a sense, criticality means bringing about change in a society or group via research.

With the overall objective set for the present study, the criticality lies in, first, its theoretical framework, social constructionism, which rejects objectivity but highlights inter-subjectivity in research. Second, it lies in the commitment, through research findings, to bring about change, or propose potential change, to the world in the form of providing alternative visions of “preferred futures” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 8). These visions, in this study, are concerned with Vietnamese university EFL teachers’ awareness of their role of teaching language and culture in an integrated way, their practices in integrating culture into EFL teaching and the need for professional development.

In summary, this study adopted critical ethnography as its research methodology. Within this methodology, the study has been designed with the following elements: discussion of culture and identification and location of a cultural group, longitudinal fieldwork, interaction with and observation of participants in their interactions, multiple sources of data, reflection of multiple realities (i.e., incorporation of insiders’ and outsiders’ perspectives), reflexivity and criticality.

#### ***4.2.3 Field site and participants***

The study involved a university in the North of Vietnam as its field site. In this university, there are 10 schools with approximately 100 Vietnamese EFL teachers across all these schools. Each school in this university offers a number of academic programmes, basically for undergraduate students. For example, the School of Teacher Education offers programmes to prepare teachers of school subjects in corresponding majors such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, physical education, geography, and primary teacher education. The School of Economics and Business Administration offers programmes in accounting, finance, and business administration. The School of Agriculture and Forestry trains engineers in, for instance, horticulture and forestry management. Thus, the university offers a vast array of academic programmes. The reason for me to select this university as the research field site was that this university represents a site that is a normal, not extreme, one, following Creswell’s (1998) advice, among the university system in Vietnam. It is seen as normal because it is a comprehensive university, providing a wide variety of programmes, while many other universities such as the Medical University, the Pharmaceutical University, the University of Foreign Trade and the University of Architecture in Vietnam provide a limited number of programmes and thus are seen as extreme sites. Another reason was that this university is also where I had been working before I started my doctoral

studies, and thus it was a familiar research site for me. This familiarity could also support my fieldwork as well as my rapport with the participants (see also 4.2.2.1 about the advantages of doing fieldwork in a familiar site).

In order to gain access to the research site, I first made an appointment to meet with a member of the presidential board, the highest management, of the university. In the Vietnamese culture, it is a normal practice to present in person when making a proposal to an authorised person. Presenting in person can be more effective compared to only sending a letter to, for example, the presidential board, in my case. In the meeting with the vice president who, on behalf of the presidential board, received me, I presented to him the purpose of the study and described what I would do in the university. The research activities that I told him that I planned to carry out in the university, as designed, included: recruiting EFL teachers as participants; interviewing participants; observing participants' classes; and collecting teaching materials participants used in the observed classes. I also presented him with a copy of the ethics approval of the study, issued by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1). In addition, I stated my commitment to protect participants in terms of ensuring the confidentiality of information and participants' names. The vice president was completely supportive of me conducting the research in the university and officially allowed me to carry out the study as I proposed. After gaining access to the research site, I began recruiting participants.

Participating in this study were 15 EFL teachers, forming the sample of the population of EFL teachers in this university. I employed the purposive strategy of "maximum variation" (Patton, 2002, p. 234), recruiting participants representative of the population. This strategy was used to identify, for example, patterned beliefs and practices among the population, thus maximising knowledge as well as keeping balance and variety (Stake, 1995). I believe that this number of participants (i.e., 15) was sufficient (Seidman, 2006) to represent the population of EFL teachers in the field site. Furthermore, my study also involved a second interview with the participants (though I did not interview all of them in the second round, see also 4.2.4.1) and other sources of information such as classroom observations and document analysis. The sampling in the present study was based on two criteria: (a) variety in teachers' teaching experience, which also reflects their age, (novice: teachers with less than five years of teaching experience; experienced: teachers with five years of teaching or more) and (b) gender (male and female teachers) so that they were representative of the population. In terms

of teaching experience, five participants had been teaching for less than five years (i.e., novice teachers), and 10 – for five years or more (i.e., experienced teachers). With regard to gender, four participants were male teachers, and 11 participants were female teachers. Table 4.1 provides demographic information about the participants.

Table 4.1 Demographic information about participants

| <i>Participant pseudonym</i> | <i>Teaching experience<br/>(in number of years)</i> | <i>Gender</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Hai                          | 1                                                   | Male          |
| Tur                          | 2                                                   | Male          |
| Hồng                         | 3                                                   | Female        |
| Sen                          | 3                                                   | Female        |
| Đào                          | 4                                                   | Female        |
| Năm                          | 5                                                   | Male          |
| Ban                          | 5                                                   | Female        |
| Chanh                        | 6                                                   | Female        |
| Cam                          | 7                                                   | Female        |
| Huệ                          | 7                                                   | Female        |
| Lan                          | 8                                                   | Female        |
| Cúc                          | 9                                                   | Female        |
| Ba                           | 10                                                  | Male          |
| Liên                         | 12                                                  | Female        |
| Mai                          | 14                                                  | Female        |

#### **4.2.4 Data collection methods**

In this study, I collected data over a period of three months, from September 2011 to December 2011. I collected data from three main sources: semi-structured interviews with the participants, observations of the participants’ classroom teaching, and copies of teaching materials used by the participants in the observed classes. Furthermore, field notes were also another source of information that helped construct knowledge about the issue under study. These data collection methods are described in greater detail below.

##### **4.2.4.1 Interviewing**

I used interviewing as one of the three main methods of data gathering, because interviewing can reflect the conversational and dialogical nature of understanding as well as because it helps to construct knowledge via social interactions and to understand the participants’ lived experience and the meaning made of that experience (Seidman, 2006). Furthermore, it can be seen as “the main road to multiple realities” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). That is, through interviewing the participants, a researcher can better understand

each participant's, as well as the researcher's, own meaning and experiences. Interviewing is also believed to be more advantageous than other data collection methods such as observation or questionnaire surveys in explicating deep understandings of the participants' experiences. Furthermore, interviewing allowed me to establish and maintain a close relationship with the participants during the research processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Among the three forms of interview (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), I chose the semi-structured interview because "it facilitates a strong element of discovery, while its structured focus allows an analysis in terms of commonalities" (Gillham, 2005, p. 72). The semi-structured interview has both structured elements and less structured ones. The structured elements, according to Gillham (2005), can be: the same questions asked of all the participants, questions ensuring topic focus, and prompts used in exploring sub-areas of interest. At the same time, the less structured elements are found in the use of open-ended questions and of probes for further disclosure (Gillham, 2005). This form of semi-structured, or "semistandardized" in Berg's (2009, p. 105) terms, interview allowed me, as the interviewer, to re-order the questions, to reword the questions, to adjust the language level, and to answer questions from the participants or make clarifications when necessary (Berg, 2009).

I conducted two series of semi-structured interviews: one before and the other after the classroom observations. For the first series, I interviewed each of the 15 participants. These interviews were all recorded using a digital voice recorder, with the permission of the participants as indicated in their informed consent (see Appendix 2). Although all the participants were EFL teachers and fluent in English, Vietnamese (i.e., the participants' and my native language) was used in order to let them (and myself) feel more comfortable during the process. During the interviews, there were points at which both the participants and I switched from Vietnamese to English (and then back to Vietnamese). These occurrences of language switching were noted in the interview transcripts. These switches helped us express ourselves more easily and comfortably when we were talking about the participants' beliefs about and practices in teaching culture in their EFL teaching context. Guided by the research questions, in the interviews, I asked the participants (with a designed interview guide, which is found in Appendix 4a) about (a) how they defined *culture*, or what they saw culture as, (b) what goals they aimed for in addressing culture in their EFL teaching, (c) how they perceived



their teaching materials and the cultural content in such materials, and (d) how they integrated culture into their EFL teaching practices. During the interviews, the participants also actively shared with me other ideas and experiences concerning their EFL teaching, for example, their past education, their concerns about LTPD and their students.

I conducted a second series of interviews with 10 of the total 15 participants. The reason I interviewed only 10 of them instead of all the participants involved in the first interviews, was because of the issue of “saturation of information” (Seidman, 2006, p. 55). Regarding the extent to which the participants addressed culture in their classes, I realised from my observations that in general several of the 15 participants addressed culture to a relatively greater extent compared to some others who were observed to hardly address culture at all. Therefore, I decided to alternately interview participants from these two “groups” until I reached a point of information saturation. That is, I interviewed one participant from the group that were observed to address culture to a relatively greater extent and then one participant from the group of those who were observed to teach culture to a very limited extent, and continued this alternate interviewing. Information saturation in the second round of interviews means that in my preliminary analysis of these interviews (see also 4.2.5 about preliminary analysis), I felt that no further points and meanings could be identified in my aggregation of such points and meanings after the ninth interview. That is I reached the point of information saturation after the ninth interview. However, I cautiously decided to interview another participant to ensure this saturation. The form of these second interviews was the same as that of the first interviews: semi-structured interviews in Vietnamese and recorded using a digital voice recorder. These interviews allowed me to follow up what I had missed in the first interviews (see also 4.2.5). Furthermore, these interviews focussed on (a) the participants’ meaning which they made of their observed classes in respect of culture teaching, (b) the professional development issues concerning culture teaching (e.g., the professional development programmes they had attended, their needs, and their recommendations from their own perspectives), and (c) other support forms they needed in terms of integrating culture into their EFL teaching context from their institution and the government (see Appendix 4b).

In total, I conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with the participants in two series (with a total length of time of over 20 hours). These interviews were conducted in places which were convenient for the participants in terms of travelling and where the

participants said they felt comfortable. All these interviews occurred without the presence of any other person. Table 4.2 provides information about these interviews.

Table 4.2 Interviews

| <i>Participant<br/>pseudonym</i> | <i>Series 1</i>            |                                     | <i>Series 2</i> |                                     |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                  | <i>Venue</i>               | <i>Time length<br/>(in minutes)</i> | <i>Venue</i>    | <i>Time length<br/>(in minutes)</i> |
| Hồng                             | Guest room                 | 25:05                               | Guest room      | 39:07                               |
| Hai                              | Staff room                 | 46:18                               | Staff room      | 40:53                               |
| Huệ                              | Guest room                 | 56:54                               | Guest room      | 30:40                               |
| Đào                              | Guest room                 | 61:37                               | x               | x                                   |
| Lan                              | Staff room                 | 61:53                               | x               | x                                   |
| Sen                              | Guest room                 | 61:12                               | Guest room      | 30:47                               |
| Liên                             | Guest room                 | 64:14                               | x               | x                                   |
| Cúc                              | Guest room                 | 59:57                               | x               | x                                   |
| Cam                              | Academic affairs<br>office | 61:08                               | Guest room      | 42:47                               |
| Chanh                            | Staff room                 | 59:17                               | Staff room      | 29:10                               |
| Mai                              | Participant's home         | 59:10                               | x               | x                                   |
| Ba                               | Café                       | 58:15                               | Café            | 38:11                               |
| Tur                              | Guest room                 | 69:30                               | Guest room      | 35:58                               |
| Năm                              | Staff room                 | 55:51                               | Guest room      | 40:50                               |
| Ban                              | Guest room                 | 53:33                               | Guest room      | 28:55                               |
| <b>Total</b>                     |                            | <b>850:54</b>                       |                 | <b>375:18</b>                       |

#### 4.2.4.2 Classroom observation

The second data collection method I used in this study was classroom observation, i.e. direct observation (Patton, 2002) of the participants' real time classroom teaching practices. Direct classroom observation was selected as a main data collection method in my study due to its value in addressing the research questions. According to Patton (2002), direct observation has numerous advantages. For example, it helps the researcher to gain a better understanding of the context and rapport with the participants. It also provides opportunities for the researcher to see practices that may "escape" (Patton, 2002, p. 262) the participants' awareness and to know what the participants may not be willing to talk about in interviews. Observation can also serve the purpose of triangulation of data collection methods as a step in increasing trustworthiness of findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) and conforms to the nature of multiple sources of evidence in an ethnographic study.

Driven by the research questions, my observations focussed on the teacher, not on the students. I had produced a classroom observation protocol to help me record what I could observe in participants' classes (see Appendix 5). I took the role of the

observer (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), not the role of the participant, during these observations. That is, I conducted “non-participant observation” (Harbon & Shen, 2010, p. 277) and produced descriptive notes on the participants’ classroom teaching practices. Furthermore, to address the observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972) I had met and talked with each of the participants several times (during the recruitment process and in the first interviews) prior to observations and discussed with them the issues related to observations such as where I should sit, who should introduce me and the purpose of observing to the students. In addition, from my own experience and knowledge of an EFL teacher in the same context with the participants, classroom observation by colleagues has been a common practice in the university where I conducted the study. Thus, I believe that my presence did not affect the participants’ classroom teaching behaviour and practices to an extent that prevented me from collecting valid data. Table 4.3 provides information about the observations I conducted for the present study.

Table 4.3 Classroom observations

| Participant | Observation | Date       | Focus (content, topic)                               |
|-------------|-------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Hồng        | 1           | 05/10/2011 | “Ice-breakers”, practising conversations             |
|             | 2           | 12/10/2011 | Foods and drinks; vocabulary, reading skills         |
| Hai         | 1           | 06/10/2011 | Listening; new student-mentor conversation           |
|             | 2           | 10/11/2011 | Listening; children’s craft workshop                 |
| Huệ         | 1           | 05/10/2011 | Speaking practice: option and supporting ideas       |
|             | 2           | 16/11/2011 | Speaking practice; giving opinions                   |
| Đào         | 1           | 07/10/2011 | Presenting on a topic                                |
|             | 2           | 18/11/2011 | Presenting on a topic: pair presentation             |
| Lan         | 1           | 17/10/2011 | Group presentation                                   |
|             | 2           | 14/11/2011 | Speaking: presenting on a topic                      |
| Sen         | 1           | 07/10/2011 | Reading skills: transitional signals                 |
|             | 2           | 18/11/2011 | Reading skills: completing summary tables, charts    |
| Liên        | 1           | 12/10/2011 | Speaking: talking for 1 minute about a topic         |
|             | 2           | 16/11/2011 | Revising speaking skills needed for assessment       |
| Cúc         | 1           | 31/10/2011 | Reading, vocabulary: jobs                            |
|             | 2           | 21/11/2011 | Vocabulary, reading: food                            |
| Cam         | 1           | 31/10/2011 | Vocabulary, reading: Food                            |
|             | 2           | 28/11/2011 | Grammar (past tense): Sea sports                     |
| Chanh       | 1           | 02/11/2011 | Vocabulary and reading: Traditional festivals        |
|             | 2           | 14/12/2011 | Vocabulary, reading: Vietnamese archaeology          |
| Mai         | 1           | 09/11/2011 | Grammar (present continuous tense)                   |
|             | 2           | 16/11/2011 | Grammar (past tense)                                 |
| Ba          | 1           | 04/11/2011 | Vocabulary, listening, reading: free-time activities |
|             | 2           | 18/11/2011 | Vocabulary, reading: Feng Shui                       |
| Tư          | 1           | 01/12/2011 | Vocabulary, reading, speaking: social interactions   |
|             | 2           | 08/12/2011 | Speaking: transport                                  |
| Năm         | 1           | 23/11/2011 | Listening and pronunciation, grammar                 |
|             | 2           | 25/11/2011 | Vocabulary; leisure activities; informal letters     |
| Ban         | 1           | 23/11/2011 | Vocabulary, reading: daily routines                  |
|             | 2           | 30/11/2011 | Vocabulary, reading and listening: favourite seasons |

I observed two of each participant's 50-minute classes, of which the second observation was two or three weeks after the first and with the same group of students. Totally, I observed 30 classes taught by the participants during my fieldwork over three months. In each observation, I found for myself a place to sit at the back of the classroom, trying to avoid interfering with the classroom procedures and activities. I recorded in the form of descriptive notes in an exercise book. I took notes, as far as possible, of the participants' classroom management and teaching activities. During these observations I tried to record, or take notes of all that the participants did in their management of the class, their instructions, their employment of teaching materials and other facilities, and the physical settings in which they taught, not merely what I was interested in (i.e., how the participants addressed culture in their EFL teaching). This is because I made attempts to overcome my own bias in taking these notes (see also 4.2.5 for the description of note-taking as preliminary data analysis).

#### *4.2.4.3 Collecting documents: Teaching materials*

Another source of data was the documentation provided by the participants. I collected copies of sections from the teaching materials the participants used in their observed classes as well as the PowerPoint slides and supplementary materials, if any. The most common form was copies of sections from the teaching materials; two participants provided their PowerPoint slides; and two other participants – supplementary materials. In their classroom teaching, the participants interacted with their students largely on the basis of the prescribed and supplementary teaching materials, which were typically commercially available English language teaching textbooks. Thus, these documents could provide information about the cultural content and the presentation of such content. They could help to gain insights into how the participants addressed culture in their EFL teaching. Furthermore, these documents served as a “primary source of data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 57) together with interviews and observations. These sources of data (i.e., interviews, observations and teaching materials) were triangulated in my data analysis (see also 2.4.5 about thematic analysis).

These collected documents enabled me to identify potentially available cultural content (e.g., cultural practices, expressions and vocabulary items that might need cultural exploration, explanation, comparison and contrast) in the teaching materials that the participants used in the observed classes. They also showed how instructions for teaching and learning culture were provided in the teaching materials the participants used. The analysis of these documents for cultural content (see also 4.2.5) contributed to

the construction of knowledge about the participants' culture teaching practices. For example, it showed possible opportunities for the participants to address culture in their classrooms using such materials. It also helped to produce critical comments about the cultural content provided in these materials.

The field notes that I wrote during the data collection phase served as another source of information. They were descriptions of what I observed related to the participants, their setting and practices, as well as the processes of data collection.

#### **4.2.5 Data analysis methods**

Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that in qualitative research the analysis should begin right after the first interview or observation; thus, my data analysis commenced during the fieldwork process. However, this "preliminary data analysis" (Grbich, 2007, p. 25) was limited to the following:

- *Transcribing interviews and checking them (i.e., the recordings and transcripts) against the research questions and interview guide:* In transcribing interviews, I used the form of "unfocused transcription" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 113), i.e. writing down what was said in the recordings. I selected this form of transcription because my analysis did not aim at a focus on any "particular sections or interactional aspects of the data" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 114), but it aimed at what the participants and I said in the recorded interviews. I myself transcribed all the interviews, 25 in total. Beside the value of addressing the confidentiality issue, transcribing the interviews myself assisted me to understand them more thoroughly compared to having them transcribed by another person. In addition, I was able to summarise these interview transcripts more effectively in the later phase of analysis (Forsey, 2008), as described below in this section. The transcribing and checking work also helped me to identify the areas and points of interest that I had missed addressing in the first interview. These areas and points were noted down and brought back to the interviews in the second series with the same participants, as well as to other participants. For example, when transcribing the first interview with one of the participants (Tur), I realised that he had mentioned the ideal distribution, for him, between language and culture in language teaching, and that this would be a point of interest. However, in the interview, I had not managed to follow up to ask him more about this issue and about his actual language-culture distribution in his own language teaching. Thus, I noted all these points down and brought them to the second interview with him to follow them up. I also brought these points to other

participants in the second series of interviews. Furthermore, the preliminary analysis of interviews also helped me to gain initial understanding of the points the participants made as well as of their meanings and experiences. Specifically, the preliminary analysis of the second series of interviews allowed me to identify the point of information saturation, which resulted in my decision to interview 10 instead of all 15 participants (see also 4.2.4.1 about the second interviews).

- *Writing field notes during and after classroom observations:* Writing field notes is a theme identifying process in which the researcher performs as a “theme filter” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 100). This means that fieldworkers might focus only on their own interests when observing the participants and would write down only what interests them. Therefore, they might overlook other happenings that can, later, be of significance to the construction of knowledge about the examined phenomenon. In this sense, the observation process is highly biased by the researcher’s own experience and familiarity with the phenomenon under study. In order to minimise the effect of my own bias on the observational data, I recorded , in the form of descriptive notes, as far as I could, all of each participants’ classroom teaching activities, such as classroom management and organisational activities in a chronological order in each observed class. That is, though my main research topic concentrates on my participants’ addressing of culture in their EFL teaching, I did not limit my recording to what cultural content the participants addressed and how they addressed this content. Instead, I tried to record all that I could about the participants’ classroom activities. These field notes were supplemented by other details from my memory after I had left the classroom.

- *Analysis of the cultural content in the collected teaching materials:* This was mainly biased by my own experience in this professional context (as being an EFL teacher myself) and by my own knowledge about and understanding of the research area. This identification of cultural content was also facilitated by the culture teaching moments (i.e., situations in which culture could have been addressed) that were observed in these observed classes. Furthermore, such analysis helped me to gain insights into the cultural content as well as the presentation of this content in the teaching materials the participants used. Thus, it provided further information for constructing knowledge about the participants’ integration of culture into their EFL teaching.

After the fieldwork, or data collection phase, came the main data analysis work in which thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibson & Brown,

2009) was applied. Thematic analysis was applied to all the sources of information in the present study. Thematic analysis aims at examining the commonalities, differences and the relationships among the aggregated themes generated from the data collected (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Specifically, it helps to identify and report, for example, patterned beliefs and behaviour shared among a cultural group. Thus, it would be best suited to achieving the objectives established for the present critical ethnographic study (see also 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). The themes emerging from the data represent important observations of the participants in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method of data analysis was chosen for the present study because, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), it is advantageous in many ways. The advantages of thematic analysis, among other advantages, include the following. Thematic analysis:

- Can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a “thick description” of the data set.
- Can highlight similarities and differences across the data set.
- Can generate unanticipated insights.
- Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.
- Can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97)

In order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study, I focussed mainly on the commonalities concerning the participants’ integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices and teacher development as well as the relationships among the themes that emerged from the three sources of information. During my data analysis, I focussed on searching for commonalities, and the participants’ thought and behaviour patterns, to serve the purpose of assuring the “ethnographic reliability” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 96) of the study. However, noticeable differences or contrasts were also aimed for.

Another reason for thematic analysis to be selected was that it “enables the researcher to use both manifest- and latent-content analysis at the same time [emphasis deleted]” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 16). For example, in the present study manifest-content analysis has helped to identify what the participants reported on the phenomenon under study, i.e. their culture teaching practices and their professional development, as well as to identify the cultural content that could be exploited in the teaching material used by the participants in the observed classes. The latent-content analysis has helped to generate observations and interpretations from what the participants reported and what I recorded in the observed classes. Furthermore, it is the latent-content analysis that helps to produce deeper interpretation of a phenomenon. That is, latent-content analysis “is

more interpretive than manifest-content analysis” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 16) and serves the overall research objective of attaining interpretation of an examined phenomenon. Moreover, for a study situated within social constructionism, using latent-content analysis “tends to be more constructionist” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85) compared to merely employing manifest-content analysis. This is because while manifest-content analysis focusses on the participants’ own accounts of their experiences (i.e., their subjectively constructed knowledge), latent-content analysis aims at theorising about the socio-cultural contexts of the participants’ accounts (i.e., inter-subjective construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, the product of latent-content analysis is knowledge that is socially constructed through interactions between the researcher and the participants in an intersubjective way, not just a report of the knowledge shared by the participants. Thus, employing both manifest-content analysis and latent-content analysis allowed me to conduct the present study within the theoretical framing of social constructionism. I respected and acknowledged the participants’ own accounts of their experiences and worked in collaboration with them to construct knowledge about the phenomenon under study.

The thematic analysis process in this study occurred in two phases. Phase one involved analysing the sources of data separately, i.e. interviews with the participants, classroom observations (with field notes taken during and after each observed class), and the teaching materials used by the participants in each observed class. Phase two consisted of the triangulation of the data sources which generated higher levels of themes to be analysed and discussed.

In phase one of the thematic analysis, I followed Boyatzis’s (1998) stages and steps for inductive qualitative analysis, adopting the “data-driven approach” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 41). Within this approach, my thematic analysis underwent three stages, of which the second stage consisted of five steps, and the third stage consisted of three steps. These stages and steps, suggested by Boyatzis (1998), are summarised as follows.

- Stage 1: Deciding on sampling and design issues
- Stage 2: Selecting subsamples
  - Step 1: Reducing the raw information
  - Step 2: Identifying themes within subsamples
  - Step 3: Comparing themes across subsamples
  - Step 4: Creating a code



- Step 5: Determining the consistency of judgments of the codes
- Stage 3: Validating and using the code
  - Step 1: Coding the rest of the raw information
  - Step 2: Validating the code qualitatively (by comparing the differentiation on each sample in relation to the themes in the codes)
  - Step 3: Interpreting results. (Summarised from Boyatzis, 1998)

More specifically, following is a brief description of the process for the first phase of thematic analysis applied to the three separate sources of information.

In thematic analysis (the first stage), participants' teaching experience, measured in number of years of being an EFL teacher in the research site, was selected as the criterion for the sampling of the subsamples. Teaching experience was also one criterion for recruiting participants in this study (i.e., novice teachers and more experienced teachers). Ten out of the total 15 participants participated in a second interview though all of the 15 participants expressed their willingness to participate in both interviews in their informed consents (see also 4.2.4.1 for a description of interviews). The second interviews involved follow-ups from the first interviews and discussions of further issues such as participants' comments on and suggestions for LTPD. Thus, the information from the 10 participants (i.e., interviews, observations, and teaching materials used in the observed classes), who were involved in both rounds of interviews, was selected to form the subsamples for the development of codes to describe the patterned beliefs and practices among the participants. That is, I used the information collected from three novice teachers and three experienced ones out of these 10 participants to form two subsamples (Subsample A and Subsample B) for the development of codes. This is because the development of a data-driven code requires "criterion-referenced, or anchored, material" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 41). Furthermore, this sampling in the present study served as a technique to manage the collected data in searching for commonalities, or patterns across the data set.

In the second stage, identifying themes and creating codes inductively, I followed the steps in Boyatzis's (1998) procedure. A good code, according to Boyatzis, includes five elements: label (the name of the code); definition of the theme; features to indicate the theme (i.e., indicators); description of features that qualify or exclude materials in identifying the theme; and examples. Among these elements I considered the first three (i.e., label, definition and indicators) essential in formatting the codes that I was creating. In reducing the raw material (the first step) in the two subsamples, I

summarised the information gained from each participant: interviews (in both series), observations (two classes each participant) and analysis of the cultural content provided in the teaching materials used in these observations. Because all the interviews (in both series) and interview transcripts were in Vietnamese while all the other sources of information were in English, there appeared a multilingual issue in this step and the following steps as well as the presentation of data. I read these interview transcripts and listened again to the interview recordings in Vietnamese and summarised them in English. Therefore, I had all-English material to work on in the following steps of identifying and comparing themes as well as creating codes (the second, third and forth steps). In order to determine the consistency of judgments in the drafted codes (the fifth step), I applied it to another subsample (Subsample C). At the same time I asked a colleague of mine to apply these drafted codes to the same material (i.e., interviews, observations with field notes, and teaching materials used) independently. In this step, these codes (in English) were applied to the interviews in Vietnamese (the teaching materials and my field notes were in English). I then compared the results of this double coding work with my colleague, and discussed the clarity of the codes. As a result, I revised these codes. For Stage three, I myself coded the rest of the raw data, using the codes that I had revised after double-coding (Boyatzis, 1998). Following are three examples (see Figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) of the codes that I built and used in analysing separate sources of information in which participant codes (e.g., participant VTA and participant VTB) were used (see also 4.2.7).

#### ***Code C1***

- *Label*: Minor status of culture in language teaching
- *Definition*: The participant reported a minor status for culture in their language teaching practice.
- *Indicators*: Code this when the participant reported on one of the following: (i) a low percentage of culture in language teaching (less than 30%), (ii) lack of attention paid to cultural content in language teaching, (iii) failure to design explicit culture objectives in lesson planning, (iv) culture teaching as additional to/ supportive of language teaching and learning, (v) dependence of cultural content on language content provided in the main teaching materials.
- *Differentiation*: participant VTA reported on (i, ii, iv, v); participants VTB and VTC reported on (i, ii); participant VTF reported on (i, iv, v); participant VTI reported on (i, ii, iii, iv); participant VTJ reported on (i, iii, v); participants VTD, VTE, VTK, and VTL reported on (v); participant VTM reported on (i, ii, iii, iv, v); participant VTN reported on (i, iii, iv); participant VTO reported on (i, v); participant VTG reported on (iii, v); participant VTH reported the opposite idea (i.e., giving culture importance, inclusion of culture in lesson planning)

Figure 4.1 Sample code used in analysing interview data

#### **Code E4**

- *Label*: Addressing culture only when a cultural point appeared in the main teaching materials
- *Definition*: The observed participant addressed culture only when a cultural point (e.g. vocabulary items that need cultural explanation, use of language units, ways of expressing an idea in English, cultural behaviours) appeared in their main teaching materials used in the class.
- *Indicators*: Code this when the observation of classes showed one or more of the following: (i) the participant explained/ provided cultural information about a cultural point appearing in the main teaching materials; (ii) the participant elicited from students for their reflection on / asked students to reflect on their cultural behaviour/ practices introduced in the main teaching materials; (iii) the participant compared/ contrasted cultural practices discussed/ introduced in the main teaching materials/ asked the students to do so; (iv) the participant provided language aids (i.e. English vocabulary items/ grammatical structures) to facilitate students in reflecting on/ discussing cultural practices; (v) the participant introduced/ provided culture-general knowledge (e.g., terms and concepts) to facilitate the students in discussing/ comparing/ contrasting cultures/ cultural practices/ cultural behaviour introduced in the main teaching materials; (vi) the participant did not address the cultural point provided in the teaching materials/ did not address culture; (vii) the participant organised a simulated intercultural situation for students to develop their intercultural skills. Put in brackets the number/numbers (e.g., i, ii, and iii) indicating each participant's way of addressing a cultural point in each class.
- *Differentiation*: Observations of classes taught by participants VTA and VTH showed (i, ii, iii, iv); by participants VTB and VTC showed (i, iii); by participant VTF showed (i) in 1 class hour and (vi) in the other; by participants VTI and VTL showed (i, ii, iii); by participant J showed (i, ii, iv); by participant VTM showed (i, ii, iii, iv, v); by participant VTN showed (iii); by participants VTG and VTO showed (i, ii) each, by participant K showed (vii); by participants VTD and VTE did not show this, giving comments on the performance of students, focussing on nonverbal behaviour.

Figure 4.2 Sample code used in analysing observation data

#### **Code F1**

- *Label*: Promotion of culture learning
- *Definition*: The cultural content in the main teaching materials used by the participant in the observed class hours could promote students' culture learning.
- *Indicators*: Code this when the (i) cultural topic, (ii) cultural content (e.g. culturally-laden vocabulary items, listening or reading texts providing cultural facts or discussing cultural issues), (iii) instructions/ tasks (e.g. discussion, presentation, interview, reflection) provided in the main teaching materials used by the participant in the observed class hours could promote/ enhance students' culture learning. Put in brackets the number/ numbers (e.g., i, ii, and iii) next to the cultural content or culture teaching instruction identified in the teaching materials used in each observed class.
- *Differentiation*: The teaching materials used by participants VTA, VTB, VTC, VTF, VTG, VTH, VTI (in one class hour), VTJ and VTL (in both class hours) showed (i, ii); by participant VTM showed (i, ii, iii); by participants VTK, VTN and VTO showed (i); by participant VTD and VTE did not show any, basing on topics for students to prepare to talk about.

Figure 4.3 Sample code used in analysing teaching materials

In the second phase of thematic analysis, triangulation of data sources, I triangulated the themes generated from interviews with the participants with the ones from field notes taken during and after classroom observations, and the themes from classroom observations with those from the analysis of the teaching materials used by the teachers in these observed classes, checking them against the research questions. This triangulation has helped to produce “metathemes” or “more overarching” ones (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 95), which will be then presented and further discussed in the following chapters (from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7) of the thesis. This triangulation also aimed at searching for relationships among the themes generated from the data collected. Furthermore, in this ethnographic work, triangulation of data sources is seen as being “at the heart of ethnographic validity – testing one source of information against another to strip away alternative explanations” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 93). Figure 4.4 is a sample code for triangulation of data sources.

**Code C3**

- *Label*: Status of culture in EFL teaching practice
- *Definition*: The participant granted a minor status to culture in his/ her EFL teaching.
- *Indicators*: Code this when the participant **BOTH** reported on one or more of the following: (i) a low percentage of culture in his/ her EFL teaching practice (less than 30%), (ii) a lack of attention paid to culture in his/ her EFL teaching practice, (iii) failure to design explicit culture objectives in his/ her lesson planning, (iv) culture teaching as additional to/ supportive of students’ appropriateness in target language use or development of target language knowledge and skills, (v) dependence of cultural content on language content provided in the main teaching materials, **AND** was observed to address culture only when a cultural point appeared in the main teaching material used in the observed class hours/ not to address culture.
- *Differentiation*: 14 participants reported on one or more than one of the five indicators (one participant, VTH) reported opposite ideas, stating that culture was as important as language knowledge and skills in her EFL teaching practice and including culture objectives in her lesson planning); and 13 participants were observed to address culture only when a cultural point appeared in their main teaching materials; two participants were observed commenting on students’ non-verbal behaviour in their classroom performance in presenting in English.

Figure 4.4 Sample code used in triangulating data sources

In presenting data (as seen in three chapters, from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7), I provided quotes representing my participants’ own voices and perspectives (see also 4.1.2) to show my respect for them. Regarding interview data, because all the interviews and interview transcripts were in Vietnamese, each of these quotes had to be translated into English (i.e., the language used for writing the thesis). However, to avoid distracting readers (in English) who do not speak Vietnamese, I decided to provide in text English translations, as close as I could in terms of meaning, of quotes presenting

the participants' own accounts from interviews with them. The original quotes in the participants' own words in Vietnamese are included in an appendix (see Appendix 6). This way of presenting data both helps readers to find it easier to follow the whole text in one language and allows me to show my respect for my participants' own voices and perspectives by ensuring that the original Vietnamese is part of the final thesis.

#### **4.2.6 *Trustworthiness***

Within a social constructionist paradigm, this study has been designed to increase its trustworthiness, rather than reliability or validity.

Reliability is the requirement that the research findings are repeatable, and therefore not simply a product of fleeting, localised events and validity is the requirement that the scientist's description of the world matches what is really there, independent of our ideas and talk about it. But social constructionist research is not about identifying objective facts or making truth claims. There can be no final description of the world, and reality may be inaccessible or inseparable from our discourse about it; all knowledge is provisional and contestable, and accounts are local and historically/culturally specific. The concept of reality and validity, as they are normally understood, are therefore inappropriate for judging the quality of social constructionist work. (Burr, 2003, p. 158)

In order to increase the trustworthiness of this study, I have applied different tactics aimed at ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Concerning credibility, I have created congruence among the different internal sections of the design: the research questions, the ontological and epistemological assumptions, the methodology, and the methods employed for data collection and analysis, as presented above. I have also used multiple sources of evidence in this ethnographic study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and had each participant review the transcript(s) of his or her interview(s) for accuracy, i.e. member checking (Stake, 2006). Concerning transferability, I selected a site that was a normal, not an extreme or abnormal one (Creswell, 1998). The university that I selected as the field site for the study is a comprehensive university offering undergraduate programmes across a vast array of majors, for example, accounting, economics, civil and industrial engineering, social sciences, teacher education, agricultural studies and foreign languages (see also 4.2.3 for a description of the field site). I also recruited participants who were representative of the population of EFL teachers in the site in terms of their teaching experience and gender. In presenting findings (from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7), I have provided thick description of data so that readers who are in a context

similar with that of the study may relate the findings to their own contexts. For dependability, I formulated clear research questions; I collected data from different sources and appropriate participants, through the sampling process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For confirmability, I have always been self-aware of the possible impact of my personal values and biases on the study procedures and findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I have been reflexive by explicitly acknowledging my participants' and my own perspectives in presenting the findings and discussions in the following three chapters (i.e., from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7).

#### ***4.2.7 Ethical considerations***

The ethics application for conducting this study was approved on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011 by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, numbered 11/195 (see Appendix 1). As the research site was outside New Zealand, the participants were Vietnamese living and working in Vietnam, and the data collection phase was conducted in Vietnam, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Auckland University of Technology, n.d) did not apply. However, the three core principles of the Treaty including partnership, participation and protection were important and useful to work with. Thus, I considered these principles in the following ways.

Firstly, concerning partnership between the researcher and the participants, mutual respect and benefit was encouraged first by my seeking the participants' willingness to participate in the study and then by giving them the right to choose to stay in or withdraw from the research at any time during the process. I also let them decide the venue and time for the interviews, and which classes I could observe. Furthermore, I provided the participants with information about the purposes of the study, discussed frankly with them the basis of faith to work on, and the possible risk concerning confidentiality. I explained the main benefit the participants could gain: a chance of raising their own voices concerning teaching practice and professional development, as well as of self-reflection on an aspect of their EFL teaching (i.e., addressing culture), especially via the second interviews and member checks. All these issues were presented in the participant information sheet (see Appendix 2) provided for each potential participant in the recruitment process. The participants also gave their consent (by filling and signing the informed consent form) for me to interview them, to observe their teaching activities, to collect teaching materials, as well as to use these sources of information in my study and in post-study academic work (see Appendix 3).

Secondly, regarding participation, the participants in my study played the role of sharing information (i.e., their beliefs, and practices), providing data for analysis. Their worldviews have been respected. The participants also provided me with the documents (i.e., copies of sections from the teaching materials they used, and in some cases, lesson plans, PowerPoint slides and supplementary teaching materials) as a source of data.

Thirdly, in terms of protection of participants, I have taken different measures to provide confidentiality. I used a code for each participant name (e.g., VTA and VTB) in processing and analysing data. I have been cautious in the presentation of data and discussions of findings when names were required by using the pseudonyms (e.g., Hai and Ba) that I had assigned to the participants, of which none coincides with any of the participants' real names. I conducted all the research processes myself: gaining access to the field; recruiting participants; collecting data; doing member-checks; analysing data; interpreting results; and presenting and discussing findings. For classroom observations, where there were also the participants' students in the classrooms, I asked the participants to explain to the students that I would only observe and take notes of the participants' (i.e., EFL teachers') teaching activities, not the students' learning activities.

#### **4.2.8 Limitations**

Aiming to construct knowledge about the phenomenon of integrating culture into university EFL teaching in a Vietnamese context, the design of the present study, as described above, had limitations. Following is a description of three main limitations.

Firstly, with the aim of constructing situated and contextualised knowledge as described above, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to other contexts of EFL education. However, the knowledge provided in the study might be useful to other contexts via its rich and thick descriptions of the data. These findings, as presented and discussed in the following three chapters (i.e., from Chapter 5 to Chapter 7), enable readers to capture the cultural context as well as the physical context of the participants' everyday professional life.

Secondly, though an ethnographic study requires longitudinal observations and I conducted the fieldwork over a period of three months, I could only observe each participant twice (in two classes). Thus, my classroom observation data, though obtained by repeated observations, did not cover all the features of the participants'

practices related to their culture teaching. Longer and continuous observations, for example, throughout a whole semester could help generate more detailed findings.

Thirdly, because the present study drew on only the following main sources of information: interviews with teachers, classroom observations, field notes, and analysis of teaching materials. It thus cannot generate a panoramic picture of the socio-cultural context in which the participants addressed culture in their teaching of English. Thus, further sources of information such as data collected from interviewing and/or surveying management of the university or of the different schools within the university, students and the world of work (i.e., the institutions that employ the graduates from the university) could have been gathered to better understand this socio-cultural context.

### **4.3 Summary**

The design of the present critical ethnographic study is theoretically underpinned by social constructionism. Social constructionism is typically characterised by criticality (in both the way of understanding the world and the use of knowledge in making change to the world), the specificity of knowledge to history and culture, and the social construction of knowledge via human interactions (Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010). The study aimed at socially constructing situated and relativistic knowledge about the integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching. This knowledge will inform Vietnamese EFL teachers and policy makers of possible positive changes that can be brought about in regard to the integration of culture into language teaching for the development of learners' IC.

As knowledge is socially constructed, I conducted the fieldwork over a period of three months interacting with my participants (i.e., Vietnamese university EFL teachers). I collected data from three main sources: semi-structured interviews with my participants, classroom observations, and analysis of the teaching materials utilised by the participants in the observed classes. I applied the methods of preliminary and thematic analysis to the collected data to identify the patterned beliefs and behaviours of the participants related to the phenomenon under study to answer the research questions. I also searched for the differences across the data as well as the possible links among the themes emerging from the data. That is, these data analysis methods helped with the understanding of this cultural group of Vietnamese university EFL teachers in terms of



their beliefs about teaching culture and practices in integrating culture into EFL teaching.

Regarding research ethics, I strictly followed the procedure described in my ethics application, which was approved on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011 by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, numbered 11/195. I respected and carefully considered the three principles of partnership, participation and protection in all the stages of the study (i.e., recruiting participants, collecting data, analysing data, discussing and presenting findings) because I found them useful principles for engaging with my research participants.

The design of the present study had its own limitations. The findings cannot be generalised to other EFL education contexts (because it aimed at constructing local knowledge). However, with rich data and description of data, these findings can be made transferable to other EFL teaching contexts in particular and language education contexts in general that are similar to the one investigated in the present study. The classroom observations were not conducted in ways that can yield longitudinal data about the participants' classroom teaching practices. Further sources of information (e.g., interviews with management of the university, students, or the world of work) could have been used to gain a better understanding of the participants' larger socio-cultural context. Such limitations will be addressed in discussing areas of further studies (see 8.5).

## **Chapter 5 EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching culture**

### **5.0 Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter 3, how language teachers address culture in their teaching practices depends on various factors. Such factors include: teachers' own view of culture; their goals in teaching culture; the type of teaching materials they deploy and the cultural content provided in such materials; the amount of time allocated for teaching culture; their training (both pre-service and in-service); and the form and content of examinations in assessing EFL students. In order to gain an understanding of how culture is addressed by EFL teachers in a Vietnamese university context, first and foremost, it is necessary to understand their beliefs about teaching culture, particularly how they view culture, as well as what their goals in addressing culture are.

Thus, this chapter presents and discusses the findings concerning the participants' views of culture and their beliefs about integrating culture into their EFL teaching. The findings are presented in forms of themes and sub-themes as they emerged from the data using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibson & Brown, 2009). The chapter begins with a description and interpretation of how the EFL teachers as participants in the present study conceptualised culture (section 5.1). It continues with a section that presents findings about and discussions of the participants' beliefs concerning the integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices. This section (section 5.2) covers such issues as how the participants viewed the status of culture in their EFL teaching, how they defined their role concerning the teaching of culture, and what they considered their culture teaching goals. Section 5.3 is devoted to the presentation of the main obstacles that the participants reported in their teaching of culture. The findings and discussions offered in this chapter will then be summarised in section 5.4.

### **5.1 Participants' conceptualisations of culture**

Thematic analysis of the data has indicated that the participants perceived culture as a pervasive concept, mentioning various facets of the term. However, most of them seemed to stress its behavioural aspect, especially in human communication, and to hold a static view of culture (Liddicoat, 2002) when they described how they thought of culture from their perspectives as EFL teachers. The themes concerning the participants' conceptualisations of culture that have emerged from the data, thus, included: culture as

a pervasive concept and a stress on the behavioural aspect of culture. These two themes are presented in detail below.

### ***5.1.1 Culture as a pervasive concept***

When asked about how they viewed culture, most participants (11 out of 15) mentioned various aspects of human life, both material and spiritual. The aspects mentioned included: human material life (e.g., houses, buildings, costumes, food and drink), human spiritual life (e.g., beliefs, religions, values, norms, traditions, music and dance), way of life, interactions among human beings, behaviour, customs and habits, and the relationships between humans and the environment. The following extracts from interviews with the participants illustrate this pervasiveness.

- (Ext #1): I think culture is a broad concept, denoting a shared basis of a group of people; it includes not only material values but also spiritual values.[. . .] Material can be the possessions of a community [. . .] buildings [. . .] It [the spiritual aspect] includes the beliefs of a community, or attitudes and viewpoints in evaluating an issue, I mean how they perceive an issue, seeing if it is right or wrong, rational or irrational. [. . .] I think that language is an important component [. . .] way of thinking, viewpoint, and behaviour. [. . .] There are things that we can't see such as values, beliefs and customs [...] systems of taboos that have been formed [. . .] religion. (Interview 1 with Sen; English translation)
- (Ext #2): When the word culture comes to my mind, I think of all the elements related to the material life and spiritual life of an individual person, a community, a society – I mean all the material values, spiritual values, beliefs and observable behaviour; it includes numerous elements. (Interview 1 with Hai; English translation)
- (Ext #3): When thinking of the word culture, I often think of the way of life and behaviour of an individual in a specific country. [. . .] That kind of thing, way of life, behaviour, way of thinking of, say, the Vietnamese. [. . .] Besides behaviour and way of life, I think culture includes also language, traditions and many other aspects of life, from costumes, means of transport, table manners, foods, or traditions, and customs and habits. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

As can be seen from the above extracts, the participants mentioned the various cultural elements that form the outer layer of culture (e.g., behaviour, costumes, foods, and language) as well as the middle layer (e.g., norms and values) in Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) terms. In other words, they described culture mentioning the elements that form the surface level of the onion (e.g., cultural artefacts such as

costumes), intermediate-level culture (e.g., customs and language) and deep-level culture (e.g., traditions, beliefs and values) as shown in Ting-Toomey and Chung's (2005) model. However, many scholars such as Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) argue that heroes (i.e., people whose characteristics are highly valued among a cultural group and who are considered as behaviour models) form a layer of culture, only one participant mentioned this layer in his description of culture. In this participant's view, cultural knowledge also includes knowledge, for example, about "a [famous] soccer player or politician such as president or prime minister" (Interview 1 with Ba; English translation).

Four other participants did not clearly express this theme. For example, Huê only mentioned the "visible and invisible parts" of culture and stated that "culture affects everything around us" (Interview 1 with Huê; English translation).

The participants described culture as a concept with various facets. Firstly, all of them mentioned cultural elements such as beliefs, norms, values, traditions, customs and habits, communication, and language in their describing of culture. These cultural elements were what came first to the participants' minds when they thought of culture, or what the participants mentioned first when they were asked what the term culture meant to them. Thus, these participants seemed to focus on describing the structural elements of culture in talking about the term; that is, these participants stressed the theme of structure/pattern in Faulkner et al.'s (2006) terms.

Secondly, many of the participants also perceived culture in terms of cultural products (Faulkner et al., 2006) or surface-level culture (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The cultural products that these participants named typically included food and drink, costumes, buildings, cultural objects (such as a bronze drum from the ancient Vietnamese culture), literature, dances, music, and festivals.

Thirdly, almost all these participants mentioned the functions of culture in human life. The most typical functions they mentioned included the functions of regulating human behaviours, creating norms for people in a group, linking members of a cultural group, and identifying cultural groups. In particular, one participant (Liên) talked about the function of linking individuals with their ancestors in terms of educating about traditions.

Fourthly, most (i.e., 11 out of 15) participants described the process of forming culture; i.e., culture is formed in the course of development of a community and via

interactions among members of a group. This means that these participants also thought of culture in terms of its process, in Faulkner et al.'s (2006) term. They also discussed the changes in cultural practices such as the inclusion of Western ideas in learning or Western festivals into Vietnamese social life. One participant described an aspect of such changes, as shown in the following extract.

(Ext #4): For example, in Vietnam five or seven years ago, students knew little about Halloween, because Halloween is a foreign festival; and they knew little even about Christmas, Christmas is for Christian people. However, now such special occasions, even the Valentine one on 14th February, have entered Vietnam. (Interview 1 with Ba; English translation)

Finally, almost all participants perceived culture in terms of its shared-ness, i.e. the common features shared among members of a group. According to these participants, this shared-ness means that culture is attached to, and thus identifies, a group of people such as a nation, a country, an ethnic group, and a professional community. In this sense, these participants conceptualised culture in terms of group membership (Faulkner et al., 2006).

Thus, culture has been regarded as a pervasive and multifaceted concept by the participants. They judged that culture could be influential in every aspect of human life (e.g., in coping with the environment and in behaving and communicating with each other) and that culture could be found in all the activities of humans (e.g., food and drink, costumes, houses, language, customs, beliefs and values). The following extract is from an interview with Lan, in which she summarised the ideas she had shared about her conceptualisation of culture, and it illustrates the various facets of culture in her description of the term.

(Ext #5): I think that culture is something related to human material and spiritual values, it is not something unchangeable, but it changes with the time so that it can suit people's life. It has such functions as regulating people's behaviour, attitudes, identifying groups of people or cultures, etc. [ . . . ] It has visible parts and invisible ones. It is a whole process of accumulation by humans. (Interview 1 with Lan; English translation)

It should be noted here that though mentioning various facets of culture, the participants seemed to focus on its structural elements and functions. This focus was shown in the number of participants who shared their ideas concerning these themes as well as in the fact that they all mentioned them as what came first to their minds when they thought of culture. In other words, describing culture in terms of its structure and

function, in Faulkner et al.'s (2006) terms, are the most common ways in which the participants conceptualised culture.

### 5.1.2 *A stress on the behavioural aspect of culture*

In interviews, seven of the 15 participants stressed human behaviour in interacting and communicating with one another in their conceptualisations of culture. Particularly, when relating culture with their EFL teaching practices almost all of the participants tended to limit culture to its behavioural aspect. They repeated the words “behaviour” and “behave” (“cách ứng xử/ hành xử/ hành vi/ lối cư xử” and “đôi xử/ cư xử/ ứng xử”, respectively in Vietnamese in their own words) during the process of sharing information in the interviews. The repetition of these words indicates that the participants attached special significance to this cultural element in their descriptions of culture. The participants also explicitly reported that the first thing that they thought of when the word *culture* came to their mind was people’s behaviour, communication and interaction with each other in a community. The following extracts exemplify the participants’ stress on human behaviour in their ideas of culture.

- (Ext #6): When mentioning culture, I associate it with many things, for example behaviour, eating and drinking, dressing, and as I have just said, how people behave towards one another. (Interview 1 with Đào; English translation)
- (Ext #7): I think of the way of life, the behaviour of an individual person, or of a collective of people, way of life, how people live, or how they behave towards one another in a collective. That’s what I think of first. (Interview 1 with Chanh; English translation)
- (Ext #8): For me, what is thought of first that associates with culture is behaviour, because life itself is communication. The first thing is how people behave. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

In interviews, six other participants mentioned behaviour as one of the components of culture, but they did not mention it as the first thing they thought of, nor did they repeat it. Two other participants, though not mentioning the noun *behaviour*, provided examples as their illustrations of this component. For example, Huệ gave an example of the table manners of younger people in the Vietnamese culture where they have to invite older people to eat before eating themselves.

- (Ext #9): For example, in the Vietnamese culture, at a meal – perhaps this can be a cultural difference – one has to invite the older people [to eat] before eating, starting from the oldest people. If someone [young] does not do this, other people will think that he/she is not well-behaved, for example. (Interview 1 with Huệ; English translation)

Thus, the participants placed a focus on observable behaviour in their conceptualisations of the term. However, other cultural structural elements, as well as other facets of culture, were also mentioned and talked about by the participants, as previously presented (see 5.1.1).

When interviewed, eight participants defined culture in relation to their professional area (i.e., EFL teaching) as people's use of language in communication, stressing the cultural differences comparing language behaviours. These participants either thought of culture as people's use of their language in communication in different cultures, or stressed cultural differences in language use. For example, Năm seemed to give priority to language behaviour of a community and differences comparing language use in communities or cultures in his thoughts about culture in the context of language teaching. The following extract illustrates his point of view.

(Ext #10): Specifically in teaching communicative English, culture seems to be how people in Britain use English and how this is different from how Vietnamese is used in Vietnam. (Interview 1 with Năm; English translation)

Cúc also shared a similar viewpoint with Năm when she began the description of her idea of culture by putting herself in the position of a foreign language teacher, and defined culture as people's use of their languages in different cultures. She also exemplified her point, mentioning cultural differences comparing greetings in English and Vietnamese. Cúc's stress on language behaviour is shown in the following extract.

(Ext #11): It may be that because I am a foreign language teacher, I pay attention to many aspects, such as language . . . . Yes, it [language] is clearly full of culture. It is seen very clearly in everyday English. For example, in Vietnam when meeting people show their consideration to each other and greetings tend to be in forms of personal questions, for example, "Have you eaten [your meal] yet" or "Where are you going". But, such questions should be avoided as greetings in a Western context, and such greetings as "Hi" or "Good morning" . . . are usually used. (Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

Thus, this conceptualising of culture as language behaviour in the context of language teaching as presented shows that these participants were aware of the relationships between language and culture, as well as of the importance of addressing such relationships and the differences in language use across cultures. In other words, these participants were, in line with Ho's (2011) and Luk's (2012) findings in a Vietnamese and Hong Kong context, respectively, aware of language-culture links, specifically at the level of pragmatics and interactional norms (Liddicoat, 2009).

All the participants also seemed to be aware of the relationships between language and culture regarding vocabulary items and the cultural differences in connotations of these items, especially in their professional context of EFL teaching. Many participants provided examples of idiomatic expressions (e.g., idioms and proverbs) from English (i.e., the target language) and Vietnamese (students' first language) with rich cultural content. Thus, these participants held a similar awareness of language-culture links in terms of using idiomatic expressions as those reported by Harvey et al. (2011). For example, Đào, a participant in the present study, talked about the richness of cultural content in idiomatic expressions and the possibility of identifying cultural differences at the deep level of beliefs and values in comparing such expressions. She illustrated her point analysing an example in the following extract.

(Ext #12): For example when talking about the topic of “love”, there is a saying that goes “Love me, love my dog” [in English]. In Vietnamese there is the saying “Yêu ai, yêu cả đường đi lối về” [“When in love of someone, you love the path on which he/she comes and goes”], but English people say “Love me, love my dog”. Why so? That’s because English people love dogs. Dogs are seen as close friends. That’s why they never kill dogs for food; meanwhile, in Vietnam it is quite the opposite. So, such comparisons between cultures can be made through foreign language teaching. (Interview 1 with Đào; English translation)

Another example in which the participants were aware of the interrelationships between language and culture is from the interview with Hai, as follows.

(Ext #13): For example, in English there is a fixed preposition in the expression “in the garden”, but in Vietnamese, we say “ngoài vườn” [literally, out the garden], “trên vườn” [literally, up the garden] or “trong vườn” [literally, in the garden] or “dưới vườn” [literally, down the garden]. I often provide such examples for illustration. (Interview 1 with Hai; English translation)

In this extract, Hai showed that he was aware of the relationships between language and culture in the use of particles, or at the level of linguistic units (Liddicoat, 2009). He also stressed the differences in using such particles in English (i.e., the target language) and Vietnamese. According to Hai, some cultural differences are worth mentioning in his EFL teaching context, such as the use of the preposition “in” in the English expression “in the garden” and the use of different prepositions in Vietnamese (e.g., “ngoài” [literally, “out”], “trong” [literally, “in”], and “dưới” [literally, “down”]). With my experience as a Vietnamese teacher of English, I believe that Hai’s comment could be explained as follows. In Vietnamese, there are several phrases expressing an equivalent idea as the English phrase “in the garden”, each using a different preposition



as shown in Hai's example. The use of each of these prepositions usually depends on the positional relationship between the speaker and the garden, but not on the relationship between the entity that is mentioned itself and the garden. For instance, in expressing the idea that the dog is in the garden, possible Vietnamese sentences are "Con chó ở *trong/ ngoài / trên / dưới* vườn" [literally, the dog is *in/ out/ up/ down* the garden, respectively], each with a different preposition depending on the positional relationship between the speaker and the garden, but not on the positional relationship between the dog and the garden as in English. This phenomenon in the use of Vietnamese prepositions indicates that Vietnamese people seem to be more egocentric than native English speakers, at least in describing the physical world. That is, Vietnamese people tend to use their own physical position as a referent point when describing such a positional relationship as between the dog and the garden in the above example, hence a high sense of egocentrism. For example, when a Vietnamese person is in the house, and the dog is in the garden, the sentence that describes the relationship between the dog and the garden is usually "Con chó ở *ngoài* vườn" [literally, the dog is *out* the garden]. However, when the speaker is inside the garden and the dog is also in the garden, the sentence will become "Con chó ở *trong* vườn" [literally, the dog is *in* the garden]. Similarly, when the speaker is in a place (e.g., on the top of a hill) that is higher than the garden (which is at the bottom of the hill) and the dog is in the garden, the sentence will be "Con chó ở *dưới* vườn" [literally, the dog is *down* the garden]. Meanwhile, in English the use of the preposition "in" in describing the positional relationship between the dog and the garden does not depend on where the speaker is as in Vietnamese. Therefore, exploring culture and cultural differences by digging deep into language behaviour in this way can help both the language teacher and students to touch on culture-language links, as well as the cultural values.

It is apparent that most of the participants focussed on the behavioural aspect of humans in interacting and communicating with each other in conceptualising culture. In particular, they related the aspect of language behaviour to their professional area of EFL teaching, seeing the interrelationship between language and culture as well as the necessity to address cultural differences in language use.

In summary, as presented above, the majority of the participants saw culture as a pervasive and multifaceted concept. They typically described it in terms of its elements, its products, and its functions. Most of them were also aware of and talked about culture in terms of the process of constructing and transmitting cultural elements, as well as the

change of culture, especially cultural practices. This means that these participants also conceptualised culture as process (Hecht et al., 2006), which indicates that the participants were aware of the dynamic nature of culture. However, as noted, in their conceptualisations, they mainly focussed on the structural elements and the functions of culture. The participants seemed to conceptualise culture in terms of its structural elements by naming these elements as what came first to their minds when they thought of culture and/or by repeatedly mentioning these elements during the interviews.

When relating their ideas of culture to their EFL teaching context, most of the participants seemed to limit culture to the cultural structural elements, typically the observable behaviour, especially language behaviour. Furthermore, as will be presented in section 5.2, all the participants described their goals in teaching culture mostly in terms of cultural knowledge (about the students' own culture and the target language cultures), of supporting students to use the target language more appropriately, and of developing positive attitudes towards other cultures. There were no goals in addressing intercultural skills or critical intercultural awareness.

Thus, it might be concluded that all the participants held a static view of culture most of the time rather than a dynamic one or a combination of both in their context of EFL teaching. In EFL teaching, culture for most of them was defined mainly in terms of cultural products and language behaviour rather than an engagement with it. Cúc was the only participant who had some ideas related to a dynamic view of culture. For example, in the interview, Cúc did acknowledge the important status of culture in her EFL teaching (see 5.2) and reported activities which she organised for her students to engage in (as presented in Chapter 6) to develop their intercultural skills. She said that she organised for her students to explore, discuss and participate in simulated festive activities, both Vietnamese and western, on occasions such as Mid-Autumn, New Year, and Christmas, using English. She also said that she sometimes invited a foreign teacher to her classes so that her students could have an opportunity to interact in intercultural communications in English (i.e., with the foreign visitor). That all the participants tended to hold a static, rather than dynamic, view of culture in their professional context would have a certain effect on how they addressed culture in their EFL teaching practices. This view might limit the participants' ability to develop their students' IC to, basically, cultural knowledge and attitudes, leaving intercultural skills and awareness unaddressed. To aim at the development of this competence, a combination of both static and dynamic views of culture is needed (Liddicoat, 2002; Schulz, 2007).

## **5.2 Participant's beliefs about the integration of culture into language teaching**

With the aim to develop language learners' IC, a component of ICC (Byram, 1997, 2012), culture must become a core element integrated into language teaching practices (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, 2000; Liddicoat, 2002; Newton & Shearn, 2010b) as presented in Chapter 3. The language teacher in such teaching practices thus has the integrated role of teaching both language and culture (Byram, 2009). However, the data collected in the present study indicated that the participants granted only a peripheral status to culture in their EFL teaching, and did not seem to fully realise their role of teaching culture. These findings are presented and discussed in greater detail below.

### **5.2.1 *Peripheral status of culture***

Participants were aware of the significant status of culture in language education in general and they talked about the importance for culture to be addressed in language teaching. However, they reported a minor supporting role of culture in their own language teaching and their students' language acquisition. Most of the participants stated that they gave culture less time and paid less attention to culture compared to language (i.e., linguistic knowledge and language skills) in their EFL teaching. They also reported that in planning lessons, language objectives overwhelmed the teaching goals. These ideas, as presented and discussed below, help clarify this peripheral status of culture in the participants' EFL teaching.

#### **5.2.1.1 *Language-culture distribution in EFL teaching***

Although language and culture can never be separated (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009), in the interviews, the participants were asked to describe an overall distribution between the time they devoted and attention they paid to language (i.e., teaching grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and skills) and to culture in their EFL teaching. Most of the participants were aware of the importance of culture in language education, and for them culture and language (though inseparable) should have equal status. However, in their own context of EFL teaching, culture was not granted such a desirable status in terms of time and attention. Table 5.1 describes the participants' viewpoints concerning the distribution of time and attention in what they saw as an "ideal" context and in their own EFL teaching context.

Table 5.1 Language-culture distribution in EFL teaching

| <i>Participant</i> | <i>Distribution in an ideal context</i> |                | <i>Distribution in own context</i> |                |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|                    | <i>Language</i>                         | <i>Culture</i> | <i>Language</i>                    | <i>Culture</i> |
| Hồng               | 50%                                     | 50%            | 90%                                | 10%            |
| Hai                | 50%                                     | 50%            | 80%                                | 20%            |
| Huệ                | 60%-70%                                 | 30%-40%        | 80%-90%                            | 10%-20%        |
| Đào                | No information                          |                | No information                     |                |
| Lan                | No information                          |                | No information                     |                |
| Sen                | 60%                                     | 40%            | 80%                                | 20%            |
| Liên               | Equal                                   |                | No information                     |                |
| Cúc                | Unable to separate                      |                | Attempts to integrate culture      |                |
| Cam                | 60%-65%                                 | 35%-40%        | 90%-95%                            | 5%-10%         |
| Chanh              | 50%                                     | 50%            | 70%                                | 30%            |
| Mai                | Priority to language over culture       |                | Priority to language over          |                |
| Ba                 | Priority to language over culture       |                | Priority to language over          |                |
| Tư                 | 70%                                     | 30%            | 80%                                | 20%            |
| Năm                | 50%                                     | 50%            | 70%                                | 30%            |
| Ban                | 80%                                     | 20%            | 80%                                | 20%            |

According to six of the participants, the ideal distribution between language (language knowledge and skills) and culture should be 50-50; that is, these two areas should both be the core elements in language education and of the same status in the classroom. “Equal distribution” constitutes one category of participants’ viewpoints. The second category is comprised of ideas in which both culture and language should be addressed, but language should be prioritised over culture. Among the six participants whose viewpoints were in the second category, four participants illustrated their distributions with figures, while the other two provided a qualitative comment. These four participants, with figures, reported that culture should be granted a status that was slightly behind the language element (i.e., from 60% to 70 % of language teaching and from 30% to 40% of culture teaching). Two other participants generally stated that language should be prioritised in language education. However, one participant (Ban) held the opposite view and thus formed a category by herself. She stated that language should be especially prioritised over culture, or should hold a share of 80% (whereas, only 20% should be culture teaching). The remaining two participants did not share their views on this, either because they did not mention this or because the question was missed in the interviews. The following extracts represent the three groups of opinion.

- (Ext #14): For me it [the ideal language-culture ratio] is 50% culture and 50% language. I mean we should focus on such things as how it affects language use, in what situation, with whom, and when so that it [language use] can be appropriately used. And, by language I mean pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and skills. (Interview 2 with Hai; English translation)
- (Ext #15): But, the ideal relation is equal in status, 50 [% language] and 50 [%culture]. I mean they are completely linked together, go parallel; we can't separate them or put an emphasis on either. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)
- (Ext #16): For me, language should always take a larger percentage, and culture is to supplement to the communicative situations. The ratio should be 60 [% language] and 40 [% culture], or 65 [% language] and 35% [% culture]. (Interview 2 with Cam; English translation)
- (Ext #17): It is not a culture course, but a language one, teaching English. We teach them language for them to learn about foreign cultures. Actually, I think the ideal ratio should be 80 [% language] – 20 [% culture]. (Interview 1 with Ban; English translation)

As can be seen in these extracts representing the three groups of viewpoints regarding the integration of culture into EFL teaching, most of the participants reported their awareness of the significant status of culture in language education.

However, when describing the language-culture distribution they allocated in terms of time in their own EFL teaching context, all the 13 participants who were asked reported a low percentage of less than 30% of classroom time given to culture, mostly from 5% to 20%. The highest percentage of time devoted to teaching culture was 30% and was reported by Chanh. She explained her position that she had to choose for herself in terms of defining her distribution between teaching language and culture. She reported that in her own as well as in her colleagues' EFL teaching, the language element was treated as the focus and given priority, and in most cases, at the expense of culture. She saw this as a sacrifice of culture to address the focus on language in the first interview and described in greater detail her distribution between language teaching and culture teaching in the second interview, as shown in the following two extracts.

- (Ext #18): In fact we teachers understand clearly that language and culture go hand in hand, and that they are interwoven and inseparable. But, usually in our teaching we have to highlight the focus [on language]; we sometimes have to sacrifice it [culture for language]. [. . .] We have to focus on practising skills first. (Interview 1 with Chanh; English translation)
- (Ext #19): Actually, the aim is to teach language to students, but culture is linked to language, inseparable. However, in my classes I must

prioritise teaching language, because examinations are to test language, not culture; so I must prioritise it. I have established a ratio of 70% language knowledge and only about 30% culture. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Cam, for example, explained the main reasons for her low percentage of culture teaching.

(Ext #20): The actual percentage of language in my classes is between 90% and 95%, and that of culture is only from 5% to 10%. [ . . . ] The main reason for this is that I focus more on language content, presenting grammatical rules or expressions, and putting the students in a certain cultural context. [ . . . ] That's the matter of time, and another thing is the pressure of language knowledge to transmit to the students. (Interview 2 with Cam; English translation)

Cam, thus, reported that the need for the EFL teacher to focus on language rather than on culture and time constraints were the main factors leading to their low percentage of culture teaching. These factors and others were named by the participants as the obstacles in their teaching of culture and will be presented in greater detail in section 5.3.

Therefore, in the present study the majority of participants tended to see culture as having a peripheral status in terms of time and attention devoted to addressing culture in their own EFL teaching contexts. This finding is in line with Sercu's (2005) research in the sense that more than half of her participants devoted approximately 80% of their teaching time to language, and only 20% to teaching culture. However, none of the participants in the present study reported a devotion of 30% or more time to teaching culture. Meanwhile, in Sercu's (2005) study nearly half of her participants spent roughly equal time teaching language and teaching culture, and eleven of the total 150 participants devoted more time to teaching culture than teaching language.

Most of the participants (i.e., 13 out of 15) reported that in their EFL teaching, they needed to focus mainly on the language element, i.e. language knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and language skills. Culture was not given much attention. The following ideas contributed by Hồng and Tư show this.

(Ext #21): I mainly focus on language, and about culture, I feel that, like most other teachers, I do not yet set a clear objective to include the cultural component or to emphasise culture, just aiming at developing language skills for my students. [ . . . ] As I am not clearly aware of the necessity of focussing on culture, it is not deeply discussed when culture is touched on or when it happens to be mentioned. (Interview 2 with Hồng; English translation)

(Ext #22): We do not separate teaching culture from teaching language, we just find ways to integrate it; I mean we focus mainly on language, and when necessary we will generalise, draw out, and enable students to generate cultural features from language activities, from language teaching. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

Two other participants (i.e., Cúc and Chanh) said that as they were aware of the importance of culture in language teaching and learning, and they attempted to integrate culture into their EFL teaching. However, as reported by Chanh, the time devoted to culture was only 30% in her own teaching, despite her attempts. It can also be noted from their description of this integration that they only focussed on the supportive role of culture to language use and acquisition.

#### *5.2.1.2 Explicit culture objectives in lesson planning*

All the participants who reported on whether they designed explicit culture objectives in lesson planning said that they seldom did so. For all of them, except Cúc, culture objectives would be integrated in the objectives of a lesson only when the content or topic of the lesson required such integration. That is, whether or not the participants would address culture depended on the pre-prescribed topic or content of the lesson they were going to teach. Most participants reported that they included cultural objectives as an added element in order to facilitate their students' learning of language knowledge and/or development of language skills. The following extracts illustrate the participants' description of their inclusion of culture objectives in lesson planning.

(Ext #23): If possible, yes. If I feel that there is some noticeable difference [I will include culture objectives in my lesson planning]. (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

(Ext #24): It depends on the content of the lesson. If a lesson has a cultural topic, it is obvious that culture objectives must be included in the overall objective of the lesson. But, if it does not have a cultural content or if it focusses on grammar or vocabulary, it is difficult to introduce culture objectives. (Interview 1 with Chanh; English translation)

Two participants stated that when they did design any cultural objectives they usually limited their culture objectives to be included within language ones; that is, culture teaching was to support students' target language use or to understand language units. According to them, culture objectives were hidden and not explicitly stated in lesson planning. They were certainly not seen as a core component in language teaching. For example, Tur and Cam shared this view:

(Ext #25): Cultural objectives are seen as communicative ones. For example, when the objective of a lesson may be for the students to gain this or that communicative skill, the culture objective hides behind it, but I do not say that it is a culture objective. [. . .] Actually we do not dare to aim at great communicative, culture objectives. So, in every lesson, every session, it is already seen as success if we can enable students to understand a certain cultural content or cultural aspect. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

(Ext #26): Normally, they are not culture objectives, but linguistic ones with a cultural component. I mean when I am planning a lesson which has some content related to cultural knowledge, I will make an inquiry into that knowledge so that I can explain to my students. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

Thus, for Tur and Cam, culture was not treated as having explicit goals in individual lessons. It was addressed as a resource that supported the students' language acquisition, and thus, culture objectives, if any, were subsumed into the language objectives in these participants' lesson planning. Because the participants did not tend to include explicit cultural objectives in their lesson plans, they were likely to address culture, if they did address it in their teaching, incidentally (see also 6.3.1). This random teaching of culture indicates a peripheral status of culture in their EFL teaching.

The participants in the present study were somewhat similar to Harvey et al.'s (2010) participants in terms of the lack of inclusion of explicit cultural objectives in planning lessons. The two groups of participants in these studies, i.e. the present one and Harvey et al.'s (2010), did not seem to plan their lessons on the basis of designing explicit culture objectives in an integrated way with language objectives. Thus, it is apparent that these participants from very different social and cultural contexts did not consider culture a core element in their language teaching. Rather, they saw it as having a peripheral status, supporting language, in designing the objectives of individual lessons.

### **5.2.2 *The role of teaching culture***

As presented in the previous section, most of the participants were aware of the importance of the culture element in language teaching, and reported that culture needed to be treated as equal to the language element in language education. In order to address IC development, the foreign language teacher needs to perform the integrated role of teaching language and culture (Byram, 2009). However, the participants in the present study did not state that they, as EFL teachers, needed to perform or performed this integrated role. Thus, the participants perceived the significant status of culture in



language education, but they were not clearly aware that as language teachers they needed to teach both language and culture in an integrated way (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Four participants even explicitly denied the role of teaching culture or saw it as someone else's responsibility, as shown in some interviews. For example, Ban said:

(Ext #27): But we are not teachers of culture, so we are not so ambitious as to teach a lot about culture, just how to behave in specific situations when we know about the relevant culture. (Interview 1 with Ban; English translation)

Nine other participants did not explicitly deny the role of teaching culture, but granted a minor status to culture, for example in terms of time devoted to it.

The remaining two participants, Chanh and Cúc, explicitly stated that they were aware of the importance of integrating culture into their EFL teaching and made attempts to do so (as presented in 5.2.1.1). However, one participant (Chanh) reported that she established for herself a distribution of 70% of time and attention to language, and only 30% to culture (as mentioned above) due to a number of obstacles (as will be presented in section 5.3). One reason for Chanh to make attempts in integrating culture was that when she was a language learner culture was not integrated much and she saw this as a weakness of her English programme. Therefore, she wanted her students to be knowledgeable about culture. The other participant (Cúc) stated that she made various efforts in integrating culture into her EFL teaching, and that one reason for her efforts was that she was herself interested in culture. These two participants seemed to link their role of teaching culture with their own interests in culture and own experience as a language learner.

### ***5.2.3 Participants' goals in addressing culture***

As EFL teachers, the participants were asked about the goals in addressing culture in their EFL teaching practices. They tended to define their cultural goals in one or more of the following four areas:

- Support for students' appropriate target language use
- Enhancement of effectiveness in intercultural communication
- A focus on cultural knowledge
- Development of students' positive attitudes towards other cultures.

Table 5.2 describes the commonalities and differences comparing the participants' goals in integrating culture in their EFL teaching practices, regarding the above mentioned

areas of focus. Each of these areas of focus in the participants' goals in addressing culture will be presented and discussed in greater detail (from 5.2.3.1 to 5.2.3.4).

Table 5.2 Areas of focus in participants' description of cultural goals

| Participant  | Appropriate target language use | Effective communication | Cultural knowledge |                               |                      |                |                 | Positive attitudes |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
|              |                                 |                         | About own culture  | About target language culture | About other cultures | Cross-cultural | Culture-general |                    |
| Hồng         |                                 | ✓                       |                    | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Hai          | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             | ✓                    |                |                 |                    |
| Huệ          | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Đào          |                                 | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 |                    |
| Lan          |                                 |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Sen          | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Liên         | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Cúc          | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             | ✓                    | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Cam          | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 |                    |
| Chanh        | ✓                               | ✓                       | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Mai          | ✓                               |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 |                    |
| Ba           | ✓                               |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 |                    |
| Tư           |                                 |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             | ✓                    | ✓              |                 | ✓                  |
| Năm          | ✓                               |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             |                      | ✓              |                 |                    |
| Ban          |                                 |                         | ✓                  | ✓                             | ✓                    | ✓              | ✓               | ✓                  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10</b>                       | <b>9</b>                | <b>14</b>          | <b>14</b>                     | <b>4</b>             | <b>14</b>      | <b>3</b>        | <b>9</b>           |

### 5.2.3.1 Support for students' future appropriate target language use

As can be seen in Table 5.2, most (i.e., 10 out of 15) participants stated that one of their main goals in addressing culture in EFL teaching was to prepare their students to use the target language (i.e., English) appropriately in communicative situations, avoiding interference from their mother tongue (i.e., Vietnamese) or source cultural background. They either explicitly mentioned this goal or stressed the importance of identifying cross-cultural differences to avoid such interference. The following extracts illustrate this goal.

(Ext #28): First, students understand the cultures of the countries whose language they are learning, in this case English-speaking countries. There are various aspects, but I mainly help my students to communicate appropriately in specific situations, avoid interference from their mother tongue into the use of the target language, and then avoid inappropriate behaviours in the target cultures.  
(Interview 1 with Sen; English translation)

(Ext #29): When they see differences they will seek to understand them. As learners of English, a Western language, they should work out how to express an idea in specific situations, or what they are allowed to

say in that situation, and what they should not or should never say, things that they can say out in the Vietnamese culture but must avoid in English-speaking countries. (Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

(Ext #30): The cultural knowledge that I want my students to gain is [what is needed for] communicative situations; I mean [knowledge about] how differently the English and the Vietnamese talk and communicate. That's what I want to make comparisons about and show the differences so that my students can understand and, thus, avoid errors caused by the influence of the Vietnamese culture and language in learning English. (Interview 1 with Năm; English translation)

It can be interpreted from these 10 participants, particularly in these three extracts, that many teachers tended to see their students' culture as a problem in language teaching and learning. These teachers aimed to help their students to avoid the interference from their own linguistic and cultural background in communicating with native English speakers. Furthermore, they seemed to believe that they were addressing culture to help their students communicate culturally appropriately with native speakers rather than potentially any speaker of English. Ideally, EFL teachers need to educate their students to become intercultural speakers, i.e. those who can communicate appropriately in interactions with native speakers as well as non-native speakers of the target language. This is particularly important when English is the lingua franca as it is spoken by so many culturally different people. From an ILT perspective, language education aims for a deeper understanding of both the self and the "other" as well as the development of critical intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997, 2012). Thus, it can be argued that students' own culture should be seen as an important component, rather than a problem, in the process of language learning.

The other five participants did not mention the goal of supporting their students' appropriateness in target language use as their main goal in integrating culture into their EFL teaching practices. Instead, they considered their cultural goals one or several of the areas discussed below.

#### *5.2.3.2 Enhancement of effectiveness in intercultural communication*

Another important goal in integrating culture into EFL teaching practices that was shared among nine participants was to enhance or promote the effectiveness in their students' future intercultural communication, avoiding misunderstandings in intercultural situations. These participants stated that this goal was for their students to communicate in intercultural situations more effectively and to avoid cultural behaviour

that might cause misunderstandings for culturally different others and/ or to understand others' cultural behaviour. For example, Huệ and Liên said:

(Ext #31): Thus, in teaching English or any other language to students, we have to provide them with a cultural basis, as much as possible, so that they can avoid misunderstandings, and can communicate more effectively. [...] So, I have to read more and transmit what I know about culture to my students so that they can use their language knowledge together with culture knowledge for better communication. (Interview 1 with Huệ; English translation)

(Ext #32): For example when communicating with British, American or Australian people, students should know about some of their basic cultural features so that the students will not behave in a way that shocks them; trying to be in harmony with them, and to be effective in communication. (Interview 1 with Liên; English translation)

The other six participants did not describe this goal in their EFL teaching, nor did they mention the effectiveness of mutual cultural understandings in intercultural communications.

#### *5.2.3.3 A focus on cultural knowledge in designing cultural goals*

As can be seen in Table 5.2, most of the participants focussed on cultural knowledge in describing their culture teaching goals. Twelve participants either described their cultural goals only in terms of cultural knowledge or mentioned the development of their students' cultural knowledge as the first goal. Among the three sub-areas of cultural knowledge – i.e. culture-specific, culture-general (Paige & Goode, 2009) and cross-cultural – culture-general knowledge was the aim of three of the participants, and was not included in the culture objectives by the other 12 participants. The reason for this exclusion of culture-general knowledge was that the participants thought that this sub-area of knowledge was difficult for their students and it was marginal to their language teaching (see also 6.2.3.2).

Regarding culture-specific knowledge, 12 participants mainly aimed at developing their students' knowledge about their own culture (i.e., the Vietnamese culture) and the cultures of English-speaking countries. Ten participants reported a priority for cultures of English-speaking countries over other foreign cultures. They either explicitly spelled out this priority, or mentioned only the cultures of English-speaking countries when asked whose cultures should be integrated in EFL teaching. Most of them reported that they only mentioned other cultures when these were introduced in the teaching materials. Three participants stated that they introduced other

cultures as well, because of the closeness of these cultures to their students' own culture (i.e., the Vietnamese culture) (see also 6.2.3.3). Following are three extracts that illustrate these different views.

- (Ext #33): I want my students to understand the customs and habits of people in the countries whose language they are learning, for example Britain or America. The students should understand their customs and habits – customs and habits are broad – including how they communicate, which words they use in specific situations. (Interview 1 with Đào; English translation)
- (Ext #34): In English language teaching, the aim for the students to know about the cultures of other countries than English-speaking ones is limited. That's because the focus is on, for example, the culture of Britain, America or Canada. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)
- (Ext #35): Mainly the cultures of English-speaking countries, and also examples about the cultures of the countries that are close to the students, so that they will see the variety of cultures, for example the Korean culture, which I am interested in. (Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

For Đào and Cam, culture was again limited to the behavioural aspect, especially language behaviour, and to such behaviour by native speakers of the target language in their EFL teaching context. Cúc, as shown in the above extract, though prioritising English-speaking cultures in her teaching of culture, would also introduce other cultures that were of interest to her students and/or herself. The example of other cultures she gave in the extract was the Korean culture, an Asian culture that her students might be interested in and similar to the Vietnamese culture and a culture in which she was herself interested. She also mentioned the necessity of addressing the diversity of cultures.

#### *5.2.3.4 Development of students' positive cultural attitudes*

Development of students' positive cultural attitudes was one culture teaching objective that nine of the interviewed participants stated. According to eight of these nine participants, they aimed at developing their students' positive cultural attitudes towards other cultures and culturally different behaviour. One participant also wanted to develop her students' willingness to accept other cultural values and practices. Following are examples of the descriptions of this culture teaching objective.

- (Ext #36): [I] help my students form appropriate attitudes, respect issues related to culture, and in spite of cultural differences, they should

have an attitude of respect. (Interview 1 with Lan; English translation)

(Ext #37): [I provide] knowledge, and at the same time, I help my students to develop a positive attitude toward that culture. (Interview 1 with Chanh; English translation)

(Ext #38): Firstly [I] orient my students in forming their attitudes in accepting [other cultures], and secondly help them, for example, giving them interesting examples to surprise them, and when they are interested, they will make their own further inquiry. (Interview 1 with Huệ; English translation)

The remaining six participants did not mention cultural attitudes in their description of culture teaching objectives.

Thus, concerning the designing of culture teaching goals, the participants tended to set for themselves relatively limited goals in addressing culture in their EFL teaching. It is apparent from the analysis of the participants' cultural goals that the most common goal is related to the sociolinguistic aspect of culture. That is, culture is addressed to support the students' target language use in intercultural communication. The second common goal deals with the transmission and exploration of cultural knowledge related to the students' own culture and the target language cultures. This culture-specific knowledge can help to develop cross-cultural knowledge, focussing on cultural differences, specifically in language behaviour. However, the participants did not recognise the diverse and dynamic nature of culture in their definition of their cultural goals. For example, few participants included in their cultural goals the exploration and understanding of foreign cultures other than the English-speaking cultures, especially cultures whose members the students were more likely to communicate with such as the cultures of ASEAN countries. In addition, neither did they include other IC elements such as intercultural skills and critical intercultural awareness.

The participants' descriptions of their goals in integrating culture into their EFL teaching in this present study are in many ways similar to those reported by Castro et al. (2004) in their Spanish study. Firstly, both these two groups of participants defined their cultural goals in terms of providing cultural information, especially information related to language behaviour, and of developing students' cross-cultural knowledge and positive cultural attitudes. These participants (in both groups) did not seem to regard the development of intercultural skills as important goals in their language teaching. Though the participants in Castro et al.'s study reported that they did not usually include in their cultural goals the development of their students' knowledge of their own

culture, the participants in the present study saw this as one important goal in terms of cross-cultural understandings.

The first two goals described by most of the participants in this Vietnamese EFL teaching context are similar to one of the three categories of cultural goals that the Finnish-Swedish EFL teachers in Larzén-Östermark's (2008) study aimed for in their teaching of culture. EFL teachers in both these two contexts considered the preparation for their students' future intercultural communication with native speakers of the target language (i.e., English in both cases) to be an important goal in terms of pragmatic and interactional norms. However, it should be noted here that most of these EFL teachers seemed to limit intercultural communication to the communication between the foreign language learner and the native speakers of the target language only. They did not consider their EFL teaching in a wider context of intercultural communication that included communication between the language learner and native and, importantly, non-native speakers of the target language. Only four participants in the present study perceived the necessity of preparing their students for communication with not only native speakers but also non-native speakers of English. Thus, it is apparent that most of these participants were not yet clearly aware of the goal of training the intercultural speaker in Byram's (1997, 2009) terms or the bilingual speaker in Crozet and Liddicoat's (1999) terms.

In summary, in the present study the participants tended to give culture a peripheral status in their EFL teaching context. For them, the cultural dimension in their language teaching was not as important as the linguistic goals, and this was in line with what was found among Danish and British foreign language teachers (Byram & Risager, 1999). Participants saw culture as playing a supporting role in their EFL teaching context. They reported that they gave little time (less than 30% of classroom time, usually from 5% to 20%) and paid little attention to culture in their EFL teaching, despite some of them believing that an equal distribution would be optimal. Instead, all of them prioritised linguistic knowledge and language skills. In planning their lessons, they did not usually include explicit culture objectives (or, aims). These objectives, if any, were either included only when a lesson contained a cultural topic or cultural point to be addressed as indicated in the instructions provided in the teaching materials, or subsumed into language objectives. Very few of these participants seemed to be aware that the language teacher's role has recently been defined as an integrated role of teaching both language and culture (Byram, 2009; Liddicoat et al., 2003). In fact,

several participants even explicitly denied the responsibility of teaching culture. In their own EFL teaching context, they tended to focus their cultural goals on four main areas. They reported on the areas of supporting their students' appropriateness in using the target language, enhancing students' effectiveness in future intercultural communication, developing students' cultural knowledge (basically about English-speaking cultures), and developing students' positive attitudes towards other cultures. The participants were aware and talked about the relationship between language and culture in their EFL teaching context (see 5.1.2). However, when discussing their cultural objectives and culture teaching activities, they seemed to separate culture from language (see 5.2). There was thus a mismatch between teachers' beliefs about culture as well as language-culture links and teacher's beliefs in teaching culture. These participants were not yet aware of their responsibility to teach culture and integrate it into their EFL teaching as a core element though they saw the importance of culture in language education. The participants talked about various reasons leading to such beliefs. The following section will describe and discuss the obstacles in teaching culture as reported by the participants.

### **5.3 Main obstacles in teaching culture**

As presented in the section above, the participants tended to define limited cultural goals in their EFL teaching practices. Moreover, they reported a heavy focus on cultural knowledge, providing cultural facts and making comparisons of cultural behaviour in language use when they did include culture in their lessons. In the interviews, 12 of the 15 participants talked about the obstacles that they faced in teaching culture. The other three participants (i.e., Cúc, Đào, and Lan) did not mention any obstacles. For Cúc, she reported that she considered culture important in language teaching and learning, and thus tried to integrate it into her EFL teaching practices. In the interview, she seemed to be satisfied with how she addressed culture in her EFL classes. These 12 participants pointed out various reasons for defining such limited culture teaching goals. They named the following obstacles in their teaching of culture:

- Students' low target language proficiency
- The need to develop students' language knowledge and skills to meet the demands of tests and assessments
- Time constraints
- Students' motivation



- Large class sizes
- Participants' own limited cultural knowledge and IC
- Curricula/ teaching materials that are not supportive of the integration of culture

Table 5.3, below, describes the commonalities and differences among the participants' reported obstacles in teaching culture.

Table 5.3 Main obstacles in teaching culture

| Participant     | (1*)        | (2*)        | (3*)        | (4*)        | (5*)        | (6*)        | (7*)        |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hồng            | ✓           |             |             |             | ✓           |             |             |
| Hai             |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |             |
| Huệ             | ✓           |             |             | ✓           |             | ✓           | ✓           |
| Sen             |             |             | ✓           |             |             |             | ✓           |
| Liên            |             |             | ✓           |             | ✓           |             |             |
| Cam             | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             | ✓           |
| Chanh           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |
| Mai             |             |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Ba              | ✓           |             | ✓           | ✓           |             | ✓           |             |
| Tur             | ✓           | ✓           |             | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Năm             | ✓           |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Ban             |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Total/12</b> | <b>7/12</b> | <b>5/12</b> | <b>9/12</b> | <b>5/12</b> | <b>3/12</b> | <b>3/12</b> | <b>4/12</b> |

\*Notes: 1- Students' low target language proficiency; 2 - The need to develop students' language knowledge and skills to meet the demands of examinations; 3 - Time constraints; 4 - Students' motivation; 5 - Large class sizes; 6 - Participants' own limited cultural knowledge and IC; 7 – English courses/ teaching materials that are not supportive of the integration of culture

These obstacles for teachers in teaching culture are presented in greater detail in the following sections.

### 5.3.1 *Students' low target language proficiency level*

As reported by seven of the participants, because of their students' low target language proficiency level, they focussed more on the development of language knowledge and skills, thus giving culture a marginal status. This obstacle, as perceived by the participants in the present study, is similar to what Ho's (2011) participants considered one of the constraints on their culture teaching in an EFL teaching context in Vietnam. In the current study, the participants, for example Huệ and Chanh, explained this obstacle in the following extracts.

(Ext #39): For example, when teaching reading, writing, listening or speaking, because the students' level is rather low [. . .] and they still make errors in grammar and word use, I need to focus on language, and

then a little bit on styles, and on structures. (Interview 2 with Huê; English translation)

(Ext #40): For example, the classes are very large, and there are multiple levels of students' English, or their English is at a very low level. So, if cultural information is expressed in the target language, they will find it difficult to acquire the target language or to achieve language objectives. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

For Huê, it was the low level of her students' target language proficiency that limited her teaching of culture. Thus, she gave priority to the development of her students' linguistic knowledge and target language use. Huê's and the other six participants' viewpoints as mentioned above indicate a tendency to separate culture from language in their EFL teaching practices. Chanh, as shown in the extract above, not only identified the large class size and diversity of her students' target language proficiency but also stressed their low level of proficiency as the factors leading her to address culture to a limited extent. It can be understood with Chanh's use of the phrase "multiple levels of English" that there were some students in her classes who were better at and more knowledgeable in English than many others in the same class. She also stressed that the low level of English of her students was the reason for her to limit addressing culture. It is implied by Chanh that though culture needs to be addressed in language teaching, addressing culture (in the target language) will affect the achievement of the main language goals, especially when the students' target language proficiency is low. However, as Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) stress, in aiming to develop IC, the norm in language teaching should be the bilingual speaker, or intercultural speaker in Byram's (1997) terms, and thus the students' first language (in this case, Vietnamese) is necessarily allowed in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, I argue that even when the students' target language proficiency level is low, culture needs to and can be addressed either in the target language or in the students' first language. In fact, many of these participants were observed to use Vietnamese at times in their English classes. Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) and Newton and Shearn (2010b) also point out that in order to develop IC it is necessary for culture to be integrated right from the beginning stage of language teaching and learning.

### ***5.3.2 The need to prioritise the language element for assessments***

Another obstacle in teaching culture identified by the participants was the need to develop their students' language knowledge and skills to meet the demands of assessments. Five participants stressed this obstacle, considering it one of the chief

constraints to teaching more culture. They perceived that the form of the final examinations, decided by the management of each university school or by their university, had an effect on how they taught and how their students learned. Chanh, for example, explained the priority of language concerning the aims of examinations, the only form of student assessment, in the following extract.

(Ext #41): However, in my classes I must prioritise teaching language, because examinations are to test language, not culture; so I must prioritise it. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Similarly, Cam mentioned this effect on her teaching practice and her students' learning, as well as the action she and her colleagues were taking as an attempt to change the situation.

(Ext #42): For example, now we [EFL teachers in the school] are proposing to the management to assess students in oral examinations [. . .]. Now they do their tests only on computers, mainly with multiple-choice questions; and this makes them rather lazy in learning. Even some students believe that they can, by ticking the answers at random, gain some points enough for them to pass the exams. It [passing exams] is already their objective. This also leads to the fact that their language skills become poorer [than expected]. The motivation for them, and their learning objectives, will change due to the change in the form of examination. [. . .] And it is a fact that teachers' teaching methods will have to be changed to suit their students' examinations. If students are assessed in oral exams which require them to make inquiry into a certain issue, for example, there will be more chances for them to be exposed to culture. For example, when they get to understand a certain sport, they will have to search for information about it on the internet; and that will be related to the history of the sport. And that is culture. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

Concerning the content in the tests for the students, Ba said:

(Ext #43): The criterion [for designing a test] is the knowledge taught to the students. The knowledge content in the end-of-semester test is based on the [knowledge in] the teaching materials; for example, if the students have learned seven units in the textbook KnowHow, the knowledge in the examination will be what is introduced in these seven units, it can't get beyond it. (Interview 2 with Ba; English translation)

Thus, it can be interpreted from these participants' views that when examinations focus only on the language element and on the assessment of students' linguistic knowledge, teachers give priority to language. As a result, the culture element is not considered as important as the language one in language teaching. Therefore, it is important that the management of educational institutions, and especially language

departments, be aware of the importance of culture and the need to address the development of IC in language education and language assessments. This awareness is necessary for consequent policies and support, for example at the institutional level, for teachers in their language teaching practices and student assessments. The topic of policies and support for language teachers' professional development will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

### **5.3.3 Time constraints**

Most of the participants referred to the lack of time as one obstacle in their teaching of culture. Nine participants, though aware of the importance of addressing culture in language teaching and learning, reported that they integrated culture to a limited extent because the allocated time for the course they taught was not enough for them to integrate more cultural content. They stated that the amount of time allocated was only enough for them to cover the language content they had to cover. They reported that if they integrated more culture than what they were doing they would slow down their students' language learning process. Thus, their priority was focussing on accomplishing the teaching workload assigned to them and helping their students to progress in language learning. The following extracts from interviews illustrate this view.

(Ext #44): If we add more culture learning activities or [cultural] knowledge, the students' learning process will be slowed down, because it will take more time, and we can't finish the content that we have to teach. (Interview 2 with Hai; English translation)

(Ext #45): I think this [adding cultural content] is necessary. [. . .] However, the addition can't be much, because the time allocated for teaching from a textbook is fixed. We can't have time for students' further activities. Within the 45 class hours we can only cover the content in the textbook; and if there is more time, we can only supplement to such language knowledge. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

(Ext #46): Actually, if we mention culture too much, linguistic knowledge will be limited. Culture has a positive effect to make language [learning] activities more interesting and closer. But, if there is too much of the culture component, overwhelming the language one, it will limit the learners in acquiring knowledge of the course. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

However, not all the participants shared this position. Lan, for example, held a different viewpoint, arguing for the possibility of integrating culture into classroom

language use and practice without reducing the quality and quantity of language teaching. She said:

(Ext #47): I think it [addressing culture] depends on individual teachers' preparation of lessons. If teachers are active in introducing it [cultural content], then it does not depend on whether they have little or a lot of time; they just need to integrate it into lessons, not necessary to talk a lot about that at times and then neglect it at other times. It depends on teachers' preparation and planning of lessons. [. . .] Yes, it [addressing culture] involves language use, and it is still within the scope of the lessons. (Interview 1 with Lan; English translation)

Thus, most of the participants considered the lack of time a main factor leading to their limited integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices. This means that they still considered culture an additional element having a certain supporting function to the teaching and learning of the target language. Time constraints were also named as a main reason for limited culture teaching activities reported by EFL teachers in Castro et al.'s (2004) and Ho's (2011) studies.

#### **5.3.4 *Students' motivation***

When describing the obstacles in their integration of culture into EFL teaching, three participants mentioned their students' motivation. For these participants, students' lack of motivation for learning English was a factor leading them to integrate culture only minimally in their language teaching, as shown in the following extracts.

(Ext #48): The students are not much interested in it [an English course], because English is one of the foundation courses, they do not learn much, totally 100 class hours in two semesters, so it is just necessary for them to have certain very basic knowledge in communication using English. (Interview 1 with Mai; English translation)

(Ext #49): My students are non-English majors and they don't concentrate on the course I teach, so they do not pay much attention to those cultural features. For me, when there are cultural differences I will show them, but I don't go deep into these features. (Interview 1 with Nãm; English translation)

Apparently, because these EFL teachers judged that a number of their students (who were from various majors and were in numerous undergraduate programmes) were not motivated enough to learn English, they would only focus on completing the quantity of language teaching assigned to them. These participants believed from their observation and feelings that many of their students were only learning English because

they had to do so as part of their programmes, and thus devoted minimum time and effort to the course. The participants stated that this situation, to some extent, affected their EFL teaching practices, including their integration of culture into it.

### **5.3.5 Large class sizes**

Another obstacle in teaching culture, the large size of EFL classes, was reported by three participants. For example, according to Hồng, because her EFL classes were large, with too many students, the classroom work for her increased; and thus, her classroom culture teaching activities were limited. She explained this obstacle in the extract below.

(Ext #50): Another reason is that there are too many students in a class, so it is impossible- when I correct work for this group, I can't explain to others, or integrate other content; there are too many students whose work needs correcting . (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

Most of the participants' classes were large, normally around 45 students in each (see also section 6.1 that describes the actual sizes of the classes). The participants explained that they addressed culture to a very limited extent because they had to spend more time working with more students, either in group-work activities or with individual students, focussing on the language element.

Large classes may cause difficulty for teachers in their language teaching activities as there are more individual students for them to work with compared to a smaller class. Large classes may affect the amount of time the teacher spends with each student or each of the small groups divided into certain individual and group-work activities. However, I argue that large classes do not, in themselves, affect how culture is integrated with language in these activities. This is because, such individual and group-work activities can provide students with numerous opportunities to explore, interpret, compare, reflect on and evaluate, for example, cultural practices, cultural beliefs and values (Byram, 1997; Newton & Shearn, 2010b) (see 6.4.2 for an example of organising such activities). Thus, the participants' idea that the large language class size was an obstacle in their integration of culture into language teaching indicates that they considered culture only an additional element to language and that language was prioritised (see also 5.2, 6.3, and 7.2).

### 5.3.6 *Participants' own limited cultural knowledge*

In interviews, four participants pointed out their own limited cultural knowledge as one of the obstacles in their teaching of culture. One participant, Chanh, described this obstacle in detail, as shown in the following extract.

(Ext #51): First, beside the knowledge I have gained from books, my education, and self-study, I have never had chances to participate in any courses or workshops on culture, or chances to engage with other cultures; most [of my cultural knowledge] comes from my self-study, not formal education. Even in my past education, cultural knowledge was not treated as an important element, and I feel that my cultural knowledge is limited. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Although Chanh, in this extract, explicitly mentioned her limited cultural knowledge as an obstacle hindering her from teaching culture in her EFL classes, she might mean her IC in general. This is because she said that she had not had any chances to “engage with other cultures,” which could mean chances to be immersed in other cultures (which, in most participants' view, would usually be cultures of English-speaking countries as presented in section 5.2.3 above). Engaging with a culture is linked not only to cultural knowledge but also to other IC elements such as intercultural skills and awareness. Furthermore, Chanh's relating of her own cultural knowledge with her past language education in terms of the integration of culture and language signifies her awareness of the importance of culture in language education. This awareness is important in making positive changes in language teaching practices that support the development of students' IC as discussed in section 7.3.1.

In particular, Huê and Ba stressed their limited culture-specific knowledge. When asked about introducing foreign cultures other than the cultures of English-speaking countries, the majority of the participants (i.e., 11 out of the total 15) reported that they seldom did this (except when there was information about these cultures in their teaching materials). They explained that it was because of their lack of knowledge about these cultures. Huê and Ba said, respectively:

(Ext #52): In general I feel that the difficulty [in teaching culture] lies in my own knowledge, in my own understanding of the cultures I would like to talk about. (Interview 2 with Huê; English translation)

(Ext #53): I have seldom integrated other cultures [cultures other than the students' own and target language ones]. That's because in fact I understand little about those cultures, so I don't dare to. (Interview 1 with Ba; English translation)

Thus, identifying their own limited cultural knowledge as an obstacle in integrating culture in their EFL teaching practices, the participants in the present study shared the same explanation for their limited integration of culture into EFL teaching with the participants in a similar context reported by Ho (2011). However, it should be noted that the idea of seeing teachers' own limited cultural knowledge as an obstacle in teaching culture also indicates a static view of culture in language teaching. This is because culture teaching involves not only knowledge about its structural element but also engagement with it, i.e. both static and dynamic views of culture (Liddicoat, 2002; Schulz, 2007). Furthermore, from a social constructionist point of view concerning knowledge (Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010), students' cultural knowledge (as a component of IC) is constructed in their interactions with, for example, their teachers, their classmates, and others. Thus, the main issue is how teachers can organise for their students to construct this body of knowledge, but not what knowledge teachers can transmit to their students (see also 6.3.3 for a discussion of the participants' approach to teaching by transmission of knowledge).

### ***5.3.7 English courses/ teaching materials***

In interviews, four of the participants (Huê, Sen, Cam, and Chanh) explained that the English courses they were teaching or the teaching materials they were using were not supportive of the integration of culture, which was one obstacle for them. According to these participants, it was more difficult for them to integrate culture in an English-for-Specific-Purposes course than in an English-for-General-Purposes (i.e., communicative) one. In this Vietnamese context of EFL teaching, an English-for-Specific-Purposes course refers to the English courses designed especially for students of a specific major other than English; thus there are English courses for history students, geography students, civil engineering students, and physics students, for example. In contrast, an English-for-General-Purposes course is for students from all majors; that is, these courses deal with everyday English. According to Chanh,

(Ext #54): It would be easier to transmit a certain amount of cultural knowledge linked to language in a general communicative English course than in an English-for-Specific-Purposes one. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Several participants, for example Cam, commented on this obstacle using the selected textbook:



(Ext #55): Actually, for me though the textbook *Inside Out* is orientated to communicative purposes in the stated aims, I find that it focusses more on the language aspect. The communicative activities based on the textbook are mainly to be designed by the teacher, and there are not many specific everyday situations. (Interview 2 with Cam; English translation)

As will be presented in Chapter 6, the participants' EFL teaching in this study depended on their set teaching materials, normally commercially available English language textbooks. They tended to teach to their students from the content provided in these materials, and sometimes with certain supplementary input (see also section 6.2.1 that discusses this). This dependence may affect the extent to which culture is integrated because current internationally distributed English language textbooks do not seem to integrate culture and language as two elements of equal status (see also 3.3). These textbooks also seem to present culture in a biased way both in terms of the cultural content (i.e., focussing on the culture of English-speaking countries) and how the cultural content is presented (i.e., focussing on provision of cultural knowledge). Furthermore, they tend to separate culture from language in the sense that the cultural information is introduced in separate sections (Shin et al., 2011). Therefore, in order to introduce culture as a core element, efforts to develop new materials or supplementary materials that can integrate culture and language would be necessary for the participants.

#### **5.4 Summary**

With the aim of addressing the development of IC in language teaching, language teachers, as well as other stakeholders, need to hold both a static and, importantly, a dynamic view of culture (Liddicoat, 2002; Schulz, 2007). In the present study, the participants, Vietnamese university EFL teachers, showed that they considered culture a pervasive and multifaceted concept. However, they tended to conceptualise it with a focus on its structural elements, typically the observable behaviour shared by members of a cultural group and especially the behaviour in language use, in their own context of EFL teaching. In this context, despite many of them holding a wide interpretation of culture, this interpretation was not translated into their classroom teaching.

In their EFL teaching context, the participants gave culture a peripheral status. They reported that they addressed culture to a limited extent and gave little time and paid little attention to culture. For example, the participants would typically devote only from 5% to 20% of the classroom teaching time to address cultural issues, while the

other 80% or more would be for linguistic knowledge and basic language skills. Most of the participants were aware of the inseparability of language and culture and of the important role of culture in language education, especially for communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds. However, they did not seem to realise the integrated role of language teachers for teaching both language and culture. A few participants even explicitly denied the role of teaching culture as belonging to EFL teachers, and saw culture teaching as someone else's responsibility. The participants mostly considered culture to have a supporting role in their EFL teaching. Thus, they reported that they did not usually include explicit cultural objectives/aims in their lesson plans, except when there was a cultural topic in the lesson materials they were planning to teach.

With these relatively restricted conceptualisations of culture and its role in their EFL teaching context, the participants described four broad goals of integrating culture into their EFL teaching practices. The first one was developing the appropriateness of their students' target language use. The second goal was to enhance the effectiveness of their students' future intercultural communication using the target language. Most of the participants designed these two goals to serve the purpose of preparing students for future communication with mainly native speakers of the target language. Only a few participants aimed to prepare their students for intercultural communication with both native and non-native speakers of English. Thus, most participants did not seem to see the intercultural speaker as the norm in their EFL teaching, at least at the moment of conducting the study. For all of them, they aimed, as a third goal, to develop their students' cultural knowledge, especially their students' knowledge of their own culture and English-speaking ones, as well as understanding the differences across these cultures. A fourth goal was to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures in their students.

Most of the participants reported that there were various obstacles in teaching culture in their own context, explaining why they would address culture only to a limited extent. They named seven main obstacles. Most of the participants agreed on the following four common ones: the low target language proficiency level of their students; the need to focus on linguistic knowledge to meet the demands of student assessments; time constraints; and, a lack of motivation in learning English in a number of students.

It might be concluded that though aware of the multifaceted and dynamic nature of culture, the participants seemed to hold a static view of culture in their EFL teaching context. As EFL teachers, they seemed to limit culture to observable behaviour, particularly language behaviour, in their professional context. They did not seem to realise the role of teaching both language and culture, preferably in an integrated way, in developing their students' IC. Thus, the goals they established for themselves for the integration of culture into EFL teaching were limited to the development of their students' cultural knowledge, preparation for students' future use of the target language with, mainly, native speakers in specific situations, and the development of positive attitudes towards other cultures. Their static view of culture and their relatively limited conceptualisations of culture in their EFL teaching context, as well as their limited goals in addressing culture would affect how they integrated culture in their EFL teaching practices. The findings about the participants' integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices will be presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 6 EFL teachers' integration of culture into language teaching**

### **6.0 Introduction**

Chapter 5 has presented findings about and discussions of the participants' beliefs about teaching culture, focussing on their views and conceptualisations of culture and its status in language teaching, their goals in addressing culture and what they saw as the obstacles in teaching culture. The present chapter is devoted to describing and discussing their practices in integrating culture into their EFL teaching. It deals with three issues related to the participants' teaching practices: the physical settings in which they taught English, the teaching materials they employed, and how they addressed culture in their EFL classrooms. Section 6.1 describes the commonalities and differences of the classrooms in which observations of the participants' EFL teaching practices occurred. This helps give an understanding of the physical contexts in which the participants taught English and gain further understanding about their teaching practices. Section 6.2 is devoted to the issue of teaching materials as a resource for EFL teaching and learning in the participants' context. This section provides a description of the common types of materials the participants used to teach English as well as to address culture. It also discusses the presentation of culture in the materials that the participants used in the observed classes. Section 6.3 presents the themes that describe how the teachers addressed culture, especially in their classes that were observed. Following this section is a description and analysis of further opportunities to integrate culture more extensively that were missed in these observed classes (in section 6.4). The description shows how the participants might have addressed culture more robustly in such classes to develop their students' IC or its specific components. This chapter ends with section 6.5, a summary of the key findings and discussions that have been presented from section 6.1 to section 6.4.

### **6.1 Physical settings: classrooms, class sizes, and equipment**

All 15 participants were observed teaching English in the classrooms shared for all courses in a programme, which means there were no special classrooms exclusively for language teaching and learning in the university. In these rooms, there were 15 to 20, or so, long desks and benches arranged in two or three rows, each seating from two to four students. The facilities provided included a chalkboard, normally in a green colour, and a desk or a speaking stand for the teacher; some classrooms were equipped with a projector and screen for the teacher to show documents from his/her laptop that he/she

brought to the classroom (i.e., no desktop computers were installed). The participants used chalk and the chalkboard for various teaching activities (e.g., introducing vocabulary items and grammatical points, checking students' answers and work, and giving instructions in the written form) and a number of participants were observed to show language input, exercises, and instructions on the screen from their laptops. Five participants (i.e., Hồng, Hai, Liên, Cam, and Ban) used their laptops for the purpose of playing recordings in listening activities (not for the purpose of showing documents on the screen) with connected loudspeakers they brought to the classrooms.

The class size varied. In seven of the observed classes, there were from 30 to 50 students. There were three classes with over 50 students (i.e., classes taught by Hồng, Mai, and Ban). In five of the classes there were from 25 to 30 students. As presented in section 5.3.5 regarding the large class size, in the interview Hồng stressed that there were too many students in her classes. She stated that she therefore had to work with more groups and individual students and could only use the allocated time (i.e., 50 minutes per class) for addressing the language element in her teaching. There were over 50 students (exactly 52) in Hồng's observed class. In many participants' view, this number of students represented a large class. Thus, it can be said that most of the participants had to teach English to large classes. The participants saw this as one of the factors leading to their limited integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices (see also 5.3.5 for an argument against this view).

## **6.2 EFL teachers' teaching materials**

This section describes a common practice among the participants in their use of teaching materials in their EFL teaching context, namely dependence on set teaching materials. It continues with a description of how the participants viewed the cultural content provided in these teaching materials and of their use of supplementary culture input, if any, in their teaching practices. The final issue dealt with in this section concerns the presentation of culture in the teaching materials the participants used in the observed classes.

### **6.2.1 *Dependence on set teaching materials***

The participants relied heavily on the topic, content and instructions provided in the set teaching materials for their classroom teaching practices in general and for addressing culture in particular. The word *set* refers to the teaching materials that had been agreed upon by the group of EFL teachers in the school to teach English from. The participants

used these set teaching materials as the main materials in their EFL teaching practices with or without supplementary input from other sources (e.g., websites and teachers' own knowledge and experience).

In the participants' description of their teaching materials and observations of their classroom teaching practices, there were two types of set teaching materials that the participants used. The first and most typical type consisted of internationally distributed and commercially available English language textbooks (or, a series of textbooks) that had been previously selected by the EFL teachers. The commonly selected textbooks and textbook series used by the participants in different schools varied, and they included *Inside Out* by S. Kay, V. Johns, and P. Kerr, *New Headway* by L. Soars and J. Soars, *English KnowHow* by A. Blackwell and T. Naber. The second type included sets of teaching materials that had been compiled from existing English language textbooks by one EFL teacher or a group of EFL teachers. The participants compiled sets of teaching materials from existing English language textbooks and books for preparation of IELTS and TOEFL tests for the teaching and practice of language skills. However, in the classroom observations, the participants' use of self-designed PowerPoint slides (e.g. instructions, pictures and images, exercises, and diagrams) based on or extracted from the main teaching material was not counted as evidence of other main resources for teaching and learning. This is because these PowerPoint slides were only based on the content provided in these set teaching materials without much adaptation in terms of content. Rather, they were supplementary to the main teaching materials, attracting the students' attention to the same content shown in the materials.

All 15 participants reported that they used set teaching materials as the basis for their classroom EFL teaching practices, including cultural content. The interviewed participants expressed this dependence:

(Ext #56): Actually, I only use a single textbook, *Inside Out*. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

(Ext #57): We select some language and culture content suitable for the learners from standard textbook series such as *Inside Out* or *New Headway* [for English-for-General-Purposes], and *Head for Business* for English-for-Specific-Purposes courses. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

(Ext #58): I use textbooks that teach language skills, focussing on the TOEFL preparation format, as the main material. (Interview 1 with Liên; English translation)

This dependence on ready-made materials, especially commercially available English teaching textbooks, could also be found in the participants' discussion about changes of textbooks, i.e. selecting and using another textbook to replace the one they had been using. Tu and Nãm mentioned the negotiation of textbook use and change during EFL teachers' meetings in their schools. According to Nãm, EFL teachers in his school were discussing the possibility of changing their currently used textbooks. In addition, Tu said that during the meetings,

(Ext #59): [We English teachers] focus on the development of the textbook and on its limitations, and provide supplementary teaching materials to each unit. [ . . . ] And we decide whether to continue using that textbook or change to use another one. (Interview 2 with Tu; English translation)

In their classroom teaching practices, the participants displayed their dependence on pre-prescribed teaching materials in one or more of the following ways. Firstly, they designed and organised their teaching activities heavily relying on the topic and/ or content provided in the materials for an individual lesson. Secondly, they followed strictly all the teaching instructions provided in the materials, one by one. During the instruction, they gave further learning tasks (e.g., discussions and questions and answers) and explained the points that they thought were important or difficult to their students to facilitate their understanding of the content and learning tasks. Thirdly, they covered all the sections and parts intended for a lesson, from page to page, without providing any further tasks or learning activities; that is, they seemed to teach from the materials, aiming for the completion of the teaching workload (e.g., covering two pages from a textbook) for a specific class.

Most of the participants (13 out of 15) were dependent on their set teaching materials in one or more of the above ways, especially the first two, in the observed classes. Two participants (i.e., Hai and Nãm) were observed, in one of the two classes, to teach from the materials without further or additional activities or tasks (i.e., teaching in the third way described above). The other two participants (i.e., Đào and Lan), in the observed class hours, based their teaching activities on the list of topics provided in the teaching materials. These two teachers had required their students to prepare to talk about the topics at home and to present these topics in the following classes for the development of speaking skills. These two participants organised for individual students to speak about the topic in front of the class, asking other students to give their comments on the speakers' performance, and giving their own comments. The

participants provided their comments on the student speakers' grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary item use, fluency, and features of nonverbal communication such as eye-contact and hand gesture. They did not give their comments on the content of their students' speeches.

Specifically, teaching from textbooks seemed to be one striking feature of the participants' teaching practices that they reported. They talked about the workload they had to cover in a semester, normally a whole set prepared for that semester or a number of units from a textbook. Describing this workload allocation, Ba reported that in the first semester he had to finish the first seven units from the textbook *English KnowHow* (which consists of 14 units in total), and the remaining seven units in the second semester in an academic year. Similarly, Nãm also stated this in the second interview. He reported that in his university school, EFL teachers had to cover all the content in the textbook *New Headway (Elementary)* within three continuous semesters, each with 45 class hours. Hai explained his priority for the accomplishment of the workload set for him, using the set teaching materials. He said that what was important for him as a teacher was to finish a certain number of units in a pre-prescribed set of materials within, say, a semester. Other teachers in his university school, teaching the same level and using the same set materials, would do the same. Hai explained that if he provided further cultural content or topics, it would take more time and thus would slow down the students' learning process, and he could not finish the set teaching workload assigned to him.

It is noticeable that how the participants addressed culture heavily depended on the topic and content provided in the main teaching materials. That is, whether or not the participants addressed culture was dependent on what was provided or required in the materials. Hai, Mai and Nãm showed this dependence in their first observed classes, and Sen displayed this in her second class. For example, Mai did not address culture in any classroom teaching stages or activities in her second observed class. The published teaching material covered in that class provided no explicit culture teaching instructions or cultural content that could be detected by the participant. The sections in the teaching materials (i.e., a textbook) that Mai used focussed on grammatical issues (i.e., introduction and practice of the present continuous tense and the Verb-ing form of several English verbs). Another example that indicates this dependence is Sen's second observed class. In this class, Sen only dealt with developing her students' reading skills (i.e., scanning a text for main ideas and skimming it for specific details). She first



introduced and explained the targeted reading skills. Then she distributed copies of the reading texts (in the form of academic English writing, one about the dung beetle with the tasks of completing a summary table and chart, the other about the concept of health for the practice of scanning and skimming skills) to her students for them to practise these reading skills. In this class, Sen's only concern was the students' answers and/or how to find the correct answers to the questions in the reading tasks. The reason why Mai and Sen did not address culture in their observed classes, as described above, might be that in these classes they exclusively focussed on language (i.e., grammar in Mai's class and reading skills in Sen's class).

Furthermore, the dependence on pre-prescribed teaching materials, as presented above, also reflects the participants' understanding of curriculum and the curricula they were teaching. Many of the participants (e.g., Cam, Hai, Ba, Mai, Sen, Nãm and Tũ) simply understood curriculum as the set teaching materials whose content they needed to complete. For example, in the second interview Ba reported that he only taught English with the textbook selected by the group of EFL teachers in his university school. He had no idea about what a curriculum was. Similarly, Nãm reported that he and his colleagues in his university school, after achieving consensus on selecting a certain textbook, would have to design the outlines for teaching and learning on the basis of the content in the textbook. Nãm said that such outlines normally included the objectives to aim for, skills to be developed among the students, and linguistic knowledge for the students to master. These outlines, as described by Nãm, can thus be understood as a teaching plan for the whole textbook. Therefore, many participants (such as Ba and Nãm) saw curriculum simply as the set teaching materials they were using and a general teaching plan.

In another Vietnamese university EFL teaching context, Ho (2011) also found a similar practice to the finding presented above. His participants tended to treat culture separately from language and their culture teaching was dependent on the topic provided in the teaching materials they used. Though Ho did not make an explicit claim concerning the dependence of his participants' EFL teaching practices on their main teaching materials (i.e., the course books) they used, his descriptions of how his participants addressed culture (i.e., culture teaching was topic dependent) would imply this dependence. It is apparent that Ho's participants' practices were similar to the EFL teachers participating in the present study. Therefore, dependence on set teaching

materials might be seen as a common practice among the cultural community of Vietnamese university EFL teachers.

One interesting and important issue in understanding the integration of culture into the EFL teaching context in the present study is how the participants perceived the cultural content presented in the set teaching materials they employed. Following is a description of the participants' own perceptions of the sufficiency of cultural content in their teaching materials, as well as their descriptions of other resources for culture input for their students.

### ***6.2.2 Sufficiency of cultural content in the main teaching materials***

As presented above, one feature that has been observed in the “culture” of Vietnamese university EFL teachers in their teaching practices is the dependence on set teaching materials. Another issue is the participants' views of the cultural content provided in their teaching materials.

Among the 15 participants, two did not mention or were not asked about how they viewed the cultural content presented in their main teaching materials, the other 13 participants held various views. Seven participants stated that the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials was sufficient to teach to their students and it was not necessary to supplement further cultural topics or content. These participants shared the idea that their teaching materials provided adequate cultural content, but culture teaching depended on individual teachers' detection of cultural points to address. The following extracts from interviews with the participants show this idea.

(Ext #60): The integration of culture is not rigid for teachers. I think that during the teaching process, when teachers feel that it is suitable to integrate culture, they integrate it. [. . .] Teachers can integrate it to a greater or lesser extent depending on specific situations.  
(Interview 1 with Liên; English translation)

(Ext #61): I don't think it is necessary [to add cultural content to the teaching material], because it is already enough for the students, at their level, to understand the most basic issues in communicative situations so that they can avoid inappropriate use [of the target language]. (Interview 1 with Năm; English translation)

Six other participants held the opposite view. They said that the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials was insufficient, and it was necessary for the teacher to provide supplementary culture input. For example, when asked about the

adequacy of cultural content in the main teaching materials, Cúc shared the following idea.

(Ext #62): The textbook we are using, *Inside out*, to some extent satisfies our needs. It provides typical characteristics of English-speaking countries. If there were activities for students to choose language items in cultural contexts, the cultural content would be more highlighted. So, the supplementary exercises that I design are for the students to compare cultures, and to choose appropriate language items [in a cultural context]. (Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

In Cúc's opinion, the textbook she was using, though providing the teacher with culture input, needed to be supplemented in terms of cultural content. One way in which she was not satisfied with the presentation of culture in this textbook was its inadequate provision of activities for the students to select appropriate language items such as words and expressions in a certain socio-cultural context. Cúc was also dissatisfied with the lack of opportunities for comparing cultures in the textbook she was using. She reported that she therefore supplemented her main teaching materials with further culture input and activities to integrate culture into her EFL teaching. This supplementation was also noted in her observed classes, as described in section 6.3.3.1.

Concerning the resources of culture input in addition to the cultural content provided in the main teaching materials (e.g., cultural facts, explanation of cultural points, exemplification of cultural traits/ features, behaviours and practices), seven participants reported that they used both their own knowledge which they had accumulated as well as materials they retrieved from websites. For six other participants, the resource was mainly again their own cultural knowledge which they had accumulated; and the other two – materials retrieved from websites. For most of the participants, their own cultural knowledge and intercultural experience seemed to be the primary culture input that they provided their students with. In terms of intercultural experience, these participants mentioned mainly encounters with their former foreign teachers of English and their foreign colleagues working in their university schools. These foreigners, according to the participants, were typically from English-speaking countries. Concerning the resources of further culture input, Liên stressed these two most common types, i.e. her own cultural knowledge and experience.

(Ext #63): [The culture input is] from what I have learned and accumulated during my education. I transmit it to my students, from my own cultural experience and knowledge, but I do not state from what specific source I have got it, when it is appropriate. [. . .] Yes, I

provide it for them from my own experience. (Interview 1 with Liên; English translation)

The participants also named websites on the internet as a second source of culture input. All 15 participants reported in the interviews that they usually searched for information and gained cultural knowledge from websites for the purpose of either enriching their own cultural knowledge or using it as a source of culture input for their students. For example, Cúc described these two purposes as follows.

(Ext #64): I often use the internet to search for materials. For example, Asian Journal is one of the websites I often visit to read about cultural issues, and there I can find a lot of articles by scholars from various cultures such as Chinese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, etc. They have published their research works and I learn from them. [ . . . ] Beside research articles, there are so many other cultural materials. [ . . . ] It is a channel that supplies students with lots of cultural knowledge. (Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

Cam provided an example of how she used the internet to support her culture teaching, as well as her concern about the correctness of information gained from websites. Furthermore, Cam seemed to advocate the idea of integrating culture right at the beginning of the language learning process. In her view, she would integrate culture when teaching very basic language such as greetings. She said:

(Ext #65): For example, even in the first or the second lesson, which mentions the differences comparing greetings in languages, or currencies, or in which countries in the world people drive on the left. I mainly search for information about such things on the internet, fast and convenient, but sometimes I am not sure about the correctness of the information. (Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

However, participants, in addition to their own accumulated cultural knowledge and information gained from websites, also talked about other resources of culture input such as books and people from other cultures who they knew, as expressed by Hai.

(Ext #66): For the course that I teach, I gain, compile and then provide the cultural knowledge that I have accumulated for my students. [ . . . ] Normally it is a combination, I mean I get it from the books that I have read, if it is suitable with the content that I am teaching to my students, also I get it from some sources on the internet, and it is now very fast. [ . . . ] Or, sometimes when I find something difficult, I have to resort to a network, actually, it's not a network, but I know some people who are foreigners and I e-mail them or ask them in person. [ . . . ] For example, I know a person in the US. He was my English teacher for a short time, and then he came back to the US, but we still keep in touch. Sometimes I ask them if necessary. (Interview 1 with Hai; English translation)

Most of the participants (i.e., 13 out of 15) used either their own cultural knowledge or materials and information they retrieved from websites in the observed classes. Among these 13 participants, 10 resorted to their own cultural knowledge in addressing culture, typically providing cultural facts or explaining a cultural point appearing in the materials; while the other three participants used materials collected from websites. For example, in one observed class hour in which the topic was “social interaction” Tur had retrieved a cultural quiz concerning the American culture from a website and he used it as supplementary culture input to introduce to his students how Americans would behave in different situations. Of the remaining two participants, one used his own knowledge and information from another book he brought to the class, the other did not provide any culture input in either of the two classes, except for a pair-work activity, in one class hour, for the students to interact in a simulated intercultural situation. Thus, it is worth noting that the participants’ own accumulated cultural knowledge and information or materials retrieved from websites seemed to be the chief sources of supplementary culture input for the participants in addressing culture in the EFL classroom.

At this point, it can be seen that more than half of the participants who were asked about how they perceived the sufficiency of cultural content presented in their main teaching materials held a common idea that, in their own EFL teaching context, such content was sufficient, and thus there was no need to provide supplementary culture input. This perception might result from their view of culture and of its status in their EFL teaching context (see also Chapter 5). Meanwhile, other participants saw that the cultural content in their set teaching materials was insufficient and they needed to and did provide their students with further culture input. The main resources of culture input, for these participants, were their own cultural knowledge and cultural information or documents they gained from websites on the internet.

In order to gain a deeper understanding about how the participants perceived the cultural content in their main teaching materials, a closer investigation of the cultural content presented in the materials the participants used is necessary. Following is a description of the findings from an analysis of such materials.

### ***6.2.3 Presentation of culture in the participants’ teaching materials***

This section is devoted to a description of how the main teaching materials used by the participants in the observed classes were supportive of the teaching of culture. Copies of

the sections from the main teaching materials were collected for an analysis of the cultural content that could be addressed. It is noted that this analysis has been biased by my own knowledge and understanding in the area under study (i.e., integration of culture into EFL teaching practices) as well as my experience as an EFL teacher. That is, I put myself in the observed participants' positions, teaching the same classes of students and using the same materials, to identify the cultural points that could be addressed from my own perspective. Three broad themes emerged from this sort of data, namely: providing culture input; supporting students' target language acquisition and practice; and providing explicit instructions for culture teaching. Each of these three themes will be presented as follows.

#### *6.2.3.1 Introducing culture input*

The teaching materials the participants used in the observed classes assisted the participants to provide culture input in one or more of the following ways: introducing cultural topics, introducing aspects of language-culture links, and introducing cultural facts. Each of these will be described in greater detail, and summarised in Table 6.1 (next page).

Table 6.1 Culture input provided in participants' teaching materials

| <i>Participant</i> | <i>Class</i> | <i>Cultural topics</i>          | <i>Language-culture links</i>                                       | <i>Cultural facts</i>                                                                                                    |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hồng               | 1            | Conversation ice-breaker        | Discussion on cultural differences in language use                  | Starting a conversation with a stranger                                                                                  |
|                    | 2            | Food and drink                  | Vocabulary: hotdog, apple pie, French fries                         | Eating with only the right hand (in Morocco)                                                                             |
| Hai                | 1            | Overseas study                  | Vocabulary: homesick, emergency loan                                | Factors in selecting a university, paying rent (in England)                                                              |
|                    | 2            | Workshops for children          | Vocabulary: Special/ super-save train ticket                        | Booking/ organising workshops                                                                                            |
| Huệ                | 1-2          | X                               | Vocabulary: same-sex school, backpacker                             | x                                                                                                                        |
| Đào                | 1-2          | X                               | X                                                                   | x                                                                                                                        |
| Lan                | 1-2          | X                               | X                                                                   | x                                                                                                                        |
| Sen                | 1            | Spirituality, beliefs           | Vocabulary: animism                                                 | Religions in Russia                                                                                                      |
|                    | 2            | Health                          | X                                                                   | Concepts of health                                                                                                       |
| Liên               | 1-2          | X                               | X                                                                   | x                                                                                                                        |
| Cúc                | 1            | Jobs                            | X                                                                   | Doing 2 jobs at the same time                                                                                            |
|                    | 2            | Food & drink                    | Vocabulary: cereals, pasta                                          | Eating habits, table manner                                                                                              |
| Cam                | 1            | Food & drink                    | Vocabulary: cereals, pasta                                          | Eating habits, table manner                                                                                              |
|                    | 2            | Sea sports                      | Expressions: go scuba diving/shopping, play sports                  | Leisure activities/ sports                                                                                               |
| Chanh              | 1            | Traditional festivals           | Vocabulary items: ways of decorating houses, dishes                 | New Year festivals in China, festive activities                                                                          |
|                    | 2            | History of Vietnam              | X                                                                   | Historical facts (about Vietnamese past dynasties)                                                                       |
| Mai                | 1            | X                               | Vocabulary: sandwich                                                | x                                                                                                                        |
|                    | 2            | Daily routines                  | Vocabulary: corner store                                            | Eating at one's desk (at work)                                                                                           |
| Ba                 | 1            | Free-time activities            | Vocabulary: going out                                               | Staying out until 4.00 am                                                                                                |
|                    | 2            | Feng Shui                       | X                                                                   | Facts about Feng Shui principles                                                                                         |
| Tur                | 1            | Social interaction, hospitality | X                                                                   | Behaviours in social interactions; Facts about showing hospitality in Moldova, Russia, England; Welcoming & being guests |
|                    | 2            | Transport and environment       | Vocabulary: means of transport (e.g. horse cart, tram, underground) | Transport forms and their effects on the environment                                                                     |
| Năm                | 1            | Daily routines                  | X                                                                   | x                                                                                                                        |
|                    | 2            | Leisure activities              | Vocabulary: skiing, sailing, sunbathing                             | x                                                                                                                        |
| Ban                | 1            | Daily routines                  |                                                                     | Buying all the food for a week                                                                                           |
|                    | 2            | Seasons & leisure activities    | Vocabulary: holiday home, go sailing, ice skating, sunbathe         | x                                                                                                                        |

- *Introducing cultural topics:* The analysis of the collected teaching materials that were used by the participants in the total of 30 observed class hours indicates that the

materials in most of these class hours (21 out of 30), introduced or mentioned cultural topics. These materials covered various areas and aspects of culture such as food and drink, meal habits, traditional festivals, (changing in understandings of) health, history, free-time activities, transport, leisure activities, language use in conversations, and cultural practices in showing hospitality. Cultural topics appeared in the teaching materials used in both of the observed classes taught by eight of the participants, and in one of the two observed classes taught by four participants. For example, the materials used in Tur's first observed class introduced two cultural topics (i.e., social interaction and forms of hospitality). Tur's teaching materials in the second class introduced the broad cultural topic of transport, which was then divided into sub-topics such as forms of transport, advantages and disadvantages of each form, and transport and the environment. There were no cultural topics included in the teaching materials used by the remaining three participants in their observed classes. Their six classes focussed on the development of language skills (e.g., reading and speaking skills), and/or linguistic knowledge, especially grammar.

- *Introducing language-culture links:* The teaching materials that the participants used could also enable them to introduce the relationships between language and culture, typically introducing culturally-laden vocabulary items, i.e. culture in linguistic structures (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). These vocabulary items appeared in the teaching materials used by the participants in 11 of the total 30 classes observed. These items were typically words inviting a cultural explanation from the teacher or related to cultures. For example, the verb "sunbathe" (which appeared in the materials used by Nãm and Ban) in the target language (i.e., English) needs certain explanation or linkage to culture in the Vietnamese setting. This is because in a tropical country such as Vietnam, where direct exposure to sunlight should generally be avoided for health and beauty reasons, "sunbathe" is mostly uncommon and unfamiliar to the Vietnamese students, whereas it is a common practice in, for example, some Western countries which have short summers. These items were also expressions describing cultural practices (in cultures other than the students' own) that may be unfamiliar to the students or cause difficulty for the students in understanding. For example, "eating at his desk" (i.e., at the workplace or in the office) which appeared in the teaching materials in Mai's second observed class describes a cultural practice of eating that is uncommon in the Vietnamese culture but not so uncommon in some Western countries.



Furthermore, the teaching materials used by several of the participants in their observed classes also introduced and enabled teachers to address the interrelationships between language and culture, for example, at the level of interactional norms (Liddicoat, 2009). Hồng's teaching materials used in her first class introduced and provided instructions for an exploration of language use in starting a conversation with a stranger in English, as well as comparisons between these English ice-breakers and those in the students' first language.

○ *Introducing cultural facts*: The main teaching materials used by the participants in seven of the observed classes provided culture-specific knowledge, i.e. introducing cultural facts. These facts included various cultural areas as listed below.

- Eating customs in the Moroccan culture (in Hồng's materials)
- Organisation of arts and crafts workshop, some issues concerning studying abroad in England (in Hai's materials)
- Daily activities and leisure activities in English-speaking countries (in Cam's, Mai's, and Năm's materials), and in other countries such as Japan and Portugal (in Ban's materials)
- Religions in Russia and changing understandings of health (in Sen's materials)
- Preparation for New Year festivals in the Chinese culture and historical facts, i.e. dynasties in Vietnam (in Chanh's materials)
- Feng Shui principles, e.g. arrangement of furniture for reasons of health and well-being, in the Chinese culture (in Ba's materials)
- Showing hospitality in the Moldovan, Russian, and English cultures (in Tu's materials)

These cultural facts all appeared in forms of information provided in reading passages. For example, "guests are expected to eat as much, or as little, as they like" in the English culture, is from the teaching materials used by Tu in his first class hour. This cultural fact, the way of welcoming guests in the English culture, needs to be addressed by explanation because it is quite different in Vietnam. Thus, it also needs to be compared to the Vietnamese culture for students to see the difference. Students can also develop their critical intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997, 2012) by relativising the different cultural practices in welcoming guests or eating with guests in different cultures as introduced in the materials and those in their own culture.

The materials used in 12 of the observed classes also introduced and/or discussed cultural behaviour and practices. For example, Hồng's materials used in her first class introduced and provided instructions for discussing the language used in starting a conversation with a stranger (i.e., language behaviour, as discussed above). The materials Hồng used in her second class introduced and provided information about the eating customs of using only the right hand to take food to eat in the Moroccan culture. Another example is the introduction of the practice of buying all the food for the whole week (in Ban's materials), which is uncommon in the Vietnamese culture where people tend to do their shopping (i.e., buying food) every day.

Thus, to assist teachers to introduce culture, these teaching materials mainly provided cultural topics, vocabulary items related to each cultural topic, and cultural facts, mostly in the form of culture-specific knowledge. They did not usually provide suggestions or instructions on how to compare these with the students' own culture. Neither did they help teachers organise activities for students to further explore, say, similar cultural topics, to reflect on students' own culture, to engage with cultures, to develop their critical intercultural awareness. These activities are important in addressing IC in language education (Byram, 1997, 2012; Liddicoat et al., 2003). Furthermore, these materials seemed to present culture mainly as static cultural information. In most cases, the cultural material appeared in separate sections from the language sections (e.g., in Chanh's, Hong's, and Ba's teaching materials). This way of presenting culture would cause difficulty for teachers, using the materials, to address culture in an integrated way with language.

#### *6.2.3.2 Supporting students' target language acquisition and practice*

The cultural content in the main teaching materials used by the participants in the observed classes (i.e., topics, vocabulary items, culture-specific knowledge, cultural behaviour and practices) enabled teachers to support their students' target language acquisition in one or both of the following two ways.

- *Introducing target language units for students to acquire:* The cultural content in the main teaching materials used by the participants in the observed classes introduced target language units for the students to acquire. These language units were typically vocabulary items (i.e., words and phrases or expressions) and grammatical constructions (for more detail, see Table 6.1). Culturally laden vocabulary items surrounding a cultural topic introduced were the most typical form of provision of target language

units. The teaching materials used by the participants in 11 of the 30 observed classes provided the students with such items. A second form of language unit introduced in these teaching materials was unfamiliar grammatical constructions employed to describe a certain cultural practice or behaviour in the target language (e.g., go sailing, book a workshop [for a child], eating at one's desk, and providing a temporary room [for a new student]).

○ *Providing tasks and input for students to practise the target language skills:* The cultural content presented in the main teaching materials not only introduced language units for the students to learn, but also provided them with language tasks (e.g., discussion, presentation, reflection, and comparison) and input (e.g., cultural topic, cultural practices and behaviour) for them to practise the target language skills. These tasks, on the basis of such culture input (e.g., cultural content), offered a variety of opportunities for the students to develop their target language skills. Such tasks appeared in the teaching materials used in 20 of the 30 classes. These teaching materials created opportunities for the students to practise the following macro language skills and sub-skills.

- Speaking skills: conversation (e.g. in Hồng's and Năm's materials), discussion (e.g. in Chanh's, Liên's, and Tư's materials), and presentation (e.g. in Huệ's materials)
- Reading skills: scanning for specific details in a reading text (e.g. in Chanh's materials), skimming for the gist of the reading text (e.g. in Sen's materials), identification of meta-language units (i.e. discourse markers in Huệ's and Sen's materials)
- Writing skills: writing an informal letter (e.g. in Năm's materials)
- Listening skills: listening for gists, listening for specific information (e.g. in Hai's, Ba's and Ban's materials)

Following is a description, as illustration, of how the teaching materials used in three observed classes offered language practice tasks.

Firstly, Ban's material (in her second observed class) provided the students with three reading passages (in four to six sentences each) about different people from Canada, Portugal, and Japan describing their favourite season and leisure activities in that season. These passages also contained culturally-laden vocabulary items (e.g., holiday home, go sailing, and sunbathe) that might need a cultural explanation or

discussion. The language skill development tasks included reading for details and listening to the spoken language from the recording accompanying the textbook.

Secondly, the topic of the lesson in Ba's material that he used in the first observation was leisure activities, and the tasks included, among others, the following: (a) matching expressions of activities (e.g., go out dancing, get together with friends, and listen to live music) with pictures, (b) talking about the students' own leisure activities, (c) writing sentences from suggested words and phrases, and (d) making conversations in pairs of students practising the grammatical constructions introduced with suggested activities. These tasks offered the students various language practice activities in developing their speaking and writing skills.

A third example is the material used by Tu in the first observation. This class introduced the topic of "social interaction" and provided the students with opportunities to practise their speaking skills in the form of group discussion and pre- and post-reading activities. The discussion questions were for the students to talk about and reflect on their own attitudes and cultural practices in meeting new people and people from other countries, and in welcoming guests or being a guest. The reading text was on the topic of "different forms of hospitality" in different cultures. It provided cultural facts about behaviour in showing hospitality to a guest in different cultures (i.e., Moldovan, Russian, and English). All the above tasks created opportunities for the students not only to increase their language skills (especially speaking and reading) but to practise intercultural awareness as well.

While cultural information was provided to support language learning and practice in the materials in some cases, overall there was insufficient integration of culture and language. This situation could become an obstacle for teachers who use these materials in addressing IC in the classroom because addressing IC comprehensively ideally requires materials that integrate culture and language (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Furthermore, these materials did not provide teachers with sufficient instruction on how to integrate such cultural content into language teaching to develop their students' IC (see 6.2.3.3).

#### *6.2.3.3 Providing explicit instructions for teaching culture*

Explicit instructions for teaching culture are understood as the instructions (provided in teaching materials) that explicitly direct the activity to addressing a certain cultural topic or cultural issue. The activity, in addressing culture, favourably for the development of

IC, can be one of the following: teaching and learning about cultures, comparing cultures, exploring cultures (or, intercultural exploration), and mediating between cultures (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2002).

The main teaching materials used in one third of the total 30 classes provided explicit instructions for culture teaching activities: in Hồng's and Sen's first class, and in both of Huệ's, Liên's, Chanh's and Tu's classes. It should be noted that in four of these 10 classes, however, the culture teaching instructions only involved the introduction and practice of certain discourse markers in the target language (in Huệ's and Liên's materials). As such, in Huệ's and Liên's teaching materials, language-culture links were discussed to the extent of raising students' awareness of the necessity of using discourse markers for cohesion in English texts. For example, for the students' practice of orally presenting their preference of one option over another with reasons and details, Huệ's materials introduced and provided instructions for this feature in target language (i.e., English) use. The discourse markers that were introduced included words and expressions such as "better", "prefer ... because", "furthermore", "another (reason)", "most importantly", and "lastly", which were to facilitate the students' presentation of their option. Other explicit instructions were provided in the main teaching materials the participants used in only the remaining six classes. For example, the instructions in Hồng's teaching materials included those for the teacher to organise group discussions to identify what to say to a stranger and to a familiar person in different situations (e.g., in an elevator, the first day of the class, and when seeing a tourist who needs help). Another introduction was for the students to reflect on how to create a good impression on other people in the first encounter in the students' own culture.

A further example of explicit instructions for culture teaching is in Chanh's material on the topic of "traditional festivals". The students had to read a text on the Chinese New Year festival. The pre-reading tasks included instructions for students to discuss in groups any traditional festivals in the world that they knew and what people would do in those festivals. The reading tasks were for them to identify different cultural practices in celebrating New Year in the Chinese culture (e.g., preparation for the festival, decoration, and festive activities during the festival). Further post-reading activities were also indicated in explicit instructions. These post-reading tasks were for the students to compare festivals in the world that were known to them, and to express

their opinions about the conservation of traditional festivals in their own country (i.e., Vietnam).

The teaching materials the participants used in the other 20 observed classes did not provide any explicit instructions for culture teaching and learning.

In summary, it is apparent that the main teaching materials the participants used provided explicit instructions for teaching culture to a very limited extent. These materials also presented culture principally in terms of culture-specific knowledge when a cultural topic was introduced, mostly concerning the target language cultures. This presentation of culture, as found by Shin et al. (2011), seems to reflect a static view of culture, as well as indicating a bias towards presenting surface-level culture and cultural information in relation to English-speaking cultures. Thus, if teachers only taught English from such pre-prescribed teaching materials, as discussed in section 6.2.1 above, culture would seldom be integrated into their EFL teaching. In most cases when these materials did introduce culture, they simply provided culture input and seldom provided explicit culture teaching and learning instruction. There were almost no instructions on how teachers could help their students notice the culture input, reflect on cultural differences, and modify their cultural practices in the output in the form of, say, language use in their IC developmental process (Liddicoat, 2002).

In addition, for many of the participants, as presented in section 6.2.2, culture teaching depended on how individual teachers identified the cultural content presented in the teaching materials and on how they addressed it. For some others, who saw that the cultural content provided in the materials was inadequate and that more culture input was needed, they had to introduce supplementary culture input and integrate it into their EFL teaching. These participants held a similar view of the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials to that of the participants in Young and Sachdev's (2011) study, who believed in the necessity of supplementing current EFL textbooks with further culture input. This indicates that the teaching materials that the participants in the present study used did not integrate culture and language in ways that addressed the development of their students' IC. Therefore, teaching materials that support the development of language learners' IC need to introduce culture as a core element and demonstrate ways of how to integrate culture and language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Liddicoat et al., 2003; Newton & Shearn, 2010b).

### **6.3 EFL teachers' integration of culture into language teaching**

In the present study the participants seemed to teach culture incidentally in their EFL teaching practices. They addressed culture mainly as a response to the cultural content introduced in their main teaching materials. Their teaching of culture could be seen as supporting their students' target language use and understanding. When they did touch on culture in their classes, they tended to merely teach cultural knowledge. These themes are presented in greater detail below.

#### ***6.3.1 Teaching the cultural content in published materials***

The participants reported and were observed to address culture only when a cultural point (e.g., vocabulary items that needed cultural explanation, use of language units, ways of expressing ideas in the target language, cultural behaviour or practices) appeared in the main teaching materials in a specific class, or when it was indicated by the instructions provided in the materials. Thus, such culture teaching practices also reflected the participants' dependence on the main teaching materials, teaching what was provided in their set materials as discussed in section 6.2.1 above.

In interviews, 13 out of the total of 15 participants demonstrated this approach to addressing culture, i.e. addressing culture as a response to a cultural point appearing in the teaching materials. These participants either explicitly stated this approach or reported that their culture teaching depended on the topic and content of the lesson. Three participants said that they addressed culture when a cultural issue appeared in the teaching materials they used. For example, Hồng explicitly stated her approach to addressing culture in the following extract.

(Ext #67): Actually in my teaching, the culture element is only what emerges when I explain certain [language] phenomena or a certain language unit appearing in the lesson. (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

Năm commented on his culture teaching, stating:

(Ext #68): In English language teaching I only show the differences between the British and Vietnamese cultures. I don't go deep, just making my students understand the features of each culture so that they can compare them. (Interview 1 with Năm; English translation)

Furthermore, all these 15 participants reported their dependence of their culture teaching on the topic or content provided in the teaching materials they used. They said that typically they addressed culture only when a cultural topic (e.g., food and drink, life

style, and traditional festivals) or cultural content (e.g., culturally-laden vocabulary items, pragmatic issues, and cultural behaviours or practices) was introduced or included in their teaching materials. Otherwise, they focussed on teaching language knowledge and skills. For example, when asked about how they addressed culture in their EFL teaching practices, Hồng and Hai stated:

(Ext #69): It depends on the topic of the lesson. For example, one day the students learn about foods and drinks, I will then talk about Western and Vietnamese culture, or when they learn about transportation means. So, it depends on the theme of the lesson. (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

(Ext #70): In my teaching, I mainly focus on the development of language skills and knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and there is not much related to cultural issues, especially intercultural ones. (Interview 1 with Hai; English translation)

Two participants (i.e., Cúc and Chanh) reported a different point of view, stating that they were aware of the importance of culture and tried to integrate culture into lessons and include it in their lesson plans.

The participants also gave an indication of the approach of addressing culture as a response to the cultural content provided in the teaching materials in their observed classes. Among the participants, 13 were observed to address culture (in one or more ways listed below) on the basis of what was provided in the main teaching materials they used in these classes, and the other two participants – on the topics given to the students prior to the times of observations. These two participants addressed culture when a cultural issue emerged from the classroom situations. That is, they had assigned homework for their students to prepare to talk about a topic as a language speaking practice, and on the day of observations, they asked individual students to speak in front of the class and then elicited comments from the rest of the class and commented on the speakers' performance. These participants' comments focussed on the speakers' speaking content, organisation of ideas, grammar, vocabulary use, and non-verbal behaviours. It was the comments on the speakers' nonverbal behaviours that could be seen as a way of addressing culture that was observed in these two participants' classes. For example, Đào and Lan reminded their students of keeping eye contact with the audience, the other students sitting in rows and lines in the classroom. This reminder could be understood as training for students' future intercultural interactions in terms of non-verbal behaviour, avoiding the students' own habit of avoiding direct eye contact in normal interactions in the Vietnamese culture.



The ways in which the participants treated culture or a cultural point appearing in the main teaching materials in the observed classes included the following:

- Providing cultural information about/ explaining the cultural point introduced in the teaching materials, or asking students to search for information about it;
- Asking students to reflect on their own cultural behaviour/ to talk about it based on the situation introduced;
- Comparing/ contrasting cultural practices discussed/ introduced, or asking students to do so;
- Providing language aids (i.e. English vocabulary items/ grammatical structures) to facilitate students in reflecting on/ talking about the cultural practice introduced;
- Organising a simulated intercultural situation for students to develop their intercultural skills based on the content provided in the materials; and,
- Not addressing culture or neglecting the cultural point(s) introduced.

The ways in which the participants addressed culture or a cultural point in each observed class hour varied. Table 6.2 summarises this variety.

Table 6.2 Ways of treating cultural points appearing in teaching materials

| <i>Participant's observations</i> |       | <i>(i)<br/>Information</i> | <i>(ii)<br/>Reflection/<br/>talking</i> | <i>(iii)<br/>Comparing</i> | <i>(iv)<br/>Language<br/>aids</i> | <i>(v)<br/>Simulation</i> | <i>(vi)<br/>No<br/>addressing</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Hồng                              | Ob. 1 | ✓                          | ✓                                       | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          | ✓                                       |                            | ✓                                 |                           |                                   |
| Hai                               | Ob. 1 |                            |                                         |                            |                                   |                           | ✓                                 |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Huệ                               | Ob. 1 |                            |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Đào                               | Ob. 1 |                            | ✓*                                      |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            | ✓*                                      |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Lan                               | Ob. 1 |                            | ✓*                                      |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            | ✓*                                      |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Sen                               | Ob. 1 | ✓                          |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            |                                         |                            |                                   |                           | ✓                                 |
| Liên                              | Ob. 1 | ✓                          |                                         |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            | ✓                                       |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Cúc                               | Ob. 1 | ✓                          | ✓                                       |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         | ✓                          | ✓                                 |                           |                                   |
| Cam                               | Ob. 1 | ✓                          | ✓                                       | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         |                            | ✓                                 |                           |                                   |
| Chanh                             | Ob. 1 | ✓                          | ✓                                       | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Mai                               | Ob. 1 |                            |                                         |                            |                                   |                           | ✓                                 |
|                                   | Ob. 2 |                            |                                         |                            |                                   | ✓                         |                                   |
| Ba                                | Ob. 1 | ✓                          |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          | ✓                                       |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Tư                                | Ob. 1 | ✓                          | ✓                                       | ✓                          | ✓                                 |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Năm                               | Ob. 1 |                            |                                         |                            |                                   |                           | ✓                                 |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          |                                         | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
| Ban                               | Ob. 1 |                            | ✓                                       | ✓                          |                                   |                           |                                   |
|                                   | Ob. 2 | ✓                          | ✓                                       |                            |                                   |                           |                                   |

(\* Notes: Đào and Lan had provided students with topics (in the set of materials) for them to prepare to talk about prior to the times of observations. The observed culture teaching practice, emerging from classroom situations, was commenting and getting other students to comment on the student speakers' non-verbal behaviour, notably eye contact, when presenting in English.)

It is shown in Table 6.2 that the most common ways in which the participants addressed culture included the first three: providing information, talking about cultural behaviour, and comparing cultural behaviour. That is, most of the participants, when addressing a cultural point, would provide information about it, and/or ask their students to talk about their own cultural behaviour, and/or organise comparison activities. For example, in one class (the one summarised in Figure 6.1), Năm addressed the cultural content of introducing how to write an informal letter in English to his students in two of the ways mentioned above. He first informed his students of this cultural point by describing the layout of an informal letter in English, stressing important issues such as beginning the letter with "Dear". He then asked the students to make a quick

comparison between the sample letter provided in the material and informal letters that the students had been familiar with in Vietnamese (i.e., the students' mother tongue). He also provided a cultural fact on how to end such an informal letter in English before assigning the homework for the students (writing an informal letter to a penfriend). It is notable that four participants did not address culture or the cultural point(s) appearing in the materials throughout the whole class. That is, in the observed classes there were situations where opportunities to further address culture were missed (see 6.4 for an analysis of such situations).

Therefore, the participants' limited teaching of culture is apparent in their observed classes. As presented in Chapter 5, the participants did not usually include explicit cultural objectives in their lesson plans (see also 5.2.1.2). As a result, culture was only addressed incidentally in their EFL classroom teaching practices. When they did address culture, it was either because there was a cultural point to address in the teaching materials or because they wanted to help their students understand a language element (e.g., a vocabulary item or an expression of an idea) introduced.

For the majority of the observed participants, the following summary of a class taught by Nãm (see Figure 6.1) could be regarded as typical to describe the commonalities in how the participants addressed culture in their EFL teaching.

OBSERVATION 2 (25/11/2011 – Năm)

**1. Physical description:** Medium-sized classroom, with: 18 long desks and benches arranged in rows, 48 students, a long green chalkboard, teacher's desk

**2. Materials**

- From a selected English teaching textbook, *New Headway* (Elementary), Unit 4 (continued): Take it easy – Vocabulary and Speaking section (Leisure activities), and an exercise in the workbook (an informal letter)

- Cultural content provided in the main teaching material that promotes culture teaching: Leisure activities (culturally-laden vocabulary items such as skiing, sunbathing, sailing, and expressions of likes and dislikes); writing an informal letter in English (layout, addressing the receiver, ending)

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

- Introducing the meaning of “leisure activity” and organising an individual work activity of matching words and phrases with appropriate pictures (in the textbook), matching 1 activity with its picture as an example to show to the students

- Writing all the words and phrases denoting activities from the textbook on the board and then check the students' answers and write them on the board

- Introducing the construction “like/ love + V-ing” by asking the students to look at the words and phrases and identify the similarity among them (the form), and giving an example using the structure (e.g. I like watching TV in the evening)

- Asking the students to guess which of the activities the teacher likes doing

- Organising a pair-work activity for the students to ask and answer questions about their leisure activities and hobbies

- Calling on some students to report on what they have found out about their partners, correcting their pronunciation and grammatical errors

- Asking the students to add some more leisure activities, especially things that they personally like doing but are not on the list, and writing these on the board

- Making conversations with some individual students by asking them questions about their hobbies and leisure activities

- Moving to another task: writing a letter to a pen friend

- Asking the students to look at the sample letter in the workbook and study it, saying that it is an informal one

- Describing the layout of the letter, stressing the important things to remember when writing such a letter (e.g. after the address and date, the letter begins with “Dear ...”), asking the students to compare this sample letter to one written in Vietnamese, and showing how to end the letter

- Setting homework, asking the students to write an informal letter to an imagined pen friend

**4. Observation comments**

- Focus of the class hour: As indicated in the different tasks provided in the material (vocabulary, conversations on leisure activities, introduction to writing an informal letter in English)

- Following the instructions for the parts and sections in the materials (student's book and workbook), covering all the tasks required

- Only one culture teaching moment observed: comparing the layout of formal letters in English and Vietnamese, and assigning homework of practicing writing an informal letter in English

Figure 6.1 Sample summary of classroom observations

### ***6.3.2 Addressing culture as a support to students' language use and knowledge***

The majority of participants reported that they addressed culture mainly aiming either for the students to use the target language (i.e., English) appropriately or to support their acquisition or understanding of the language units introduced. As shown in section 5.2.3 about the participants' descriptions of their goals in teaching culture, most of the interviewed participants shared the view that their culture teaching aimed to support their students' target language use in their future intercultural communication and their understanding of language units such as vocabulary items and grammatical structures.

Most of the participants (i.e., 13 out of 15), in one or both of the observed classes, addressed culture only when a cultural point or a cultural topic appeared in the main teaching materials they used in the class hours. Among them, two participants (i.e., Ba and Tr) used further materials retrieved from a website and from a book to supplement the cultural topic and content introduced in their main teaching materials. Four participants, in one or both of the observed classes, were not observed to address culture. They did not touch on culture even though their teaching materials introduced several cultural points. For example, the materials that Hai used in his first observed class introduced the topic of "overseas study" and several vocabulary items (e.g., "homesick" and "emergency loan") as well as the cultural practices of paying rent (in the British culture). However, Hai did not address any of these cultural issues in his class. He only focussed on the listening skill development tasks set for the class. Thus, Hai could have addressed these cultural issues to develop his students' IC in a more comprehensive way (see also 6.4.1). The remaining two participants addressed culture to the extent that they elicited from students and gave their own comments on individual students' non-verbal behaviours in target language speaking performance. These observations were presented in section 6.2 above.

Participants' most common culture teaching activities included: (a) cultural explanation and exemplification of the use of culturally-laden vocabulary items appearing in the language input (e.g., reading texts and listening texts) or instructions, (b) provision of language aids (i.e., vocabulary items and grammatical structures) for the students to talk about or to reflect on their cultural behaviours, and (c) comparison of cultural behaviours appearing in the materials (e.g., ways of expressing ideas, use of language items, language use in communication, and cultural practices). For example, in a class, when dealing with a listening/ reading text which introduced the cultural practice of staying in a night club until 4.00 AM, Ba explained this practice in some

Western countries, and then asked the students to relate it to the Vietnamese cultural environment and to evaluate it from their point of view. In four other classes, when the language content provided in the materials was centred on the topic of food and drink, all these four participants were observed to provide vocabulary items to facilitate their students to talk in English about their own cultural meal habits and English names of typical Vietnamese dishes.

### **6.3.3 Focussing on cultural knowledge in teaching culture**

The participants reported and were observed to mainly focus on the development of their students' cultural knowledge rather than on addressing the development of intercultural skills or critical cultural awareness in their culture teaching. They seemed to limit their culture teaching activities to the enrichment of their students' cultural knowledge instead of other IC components. The categories of cultural knowledge that the participants reported on or stressed in the interviews and that were observed in their classroom teaching included the following: developing students' culture-specific knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and culture-general knowledge. Each of these categories will be described in greater detail.

- *Developing students' culture-specific knowledge:* One common idea that was shared by most of the participants (14 out of 15) is that culture-specific knowledge was a primary area to focus on in their culture teaching practices. For these participants, this knowledge area included knowledge about cultural elements (e.g., customs and habits, traditions, language and speech, behaviour, and cultural practices) of the students' own culture, the target language cultures (e.g., British, American, Australian, and New Zealand), and other cultures in the world. However, participants' points of view in this category varied concerning whose culture(s) should be integrated in their EFL teaching practices. Most of the interviewed participants reported that they organised activities for students to talk about or reflect on their own cultural behaviour, thus gaining further knowledge about and awareness of their own culture. However, Hồng did not see this as part of her responsibility. The following extracts show these culture teaching activities and opposite ideas.

(Ext #71): I also include the Vietnamese culture. [ . . . ] There are many situations for the students to reflect on their own culture, via various exercises, for example talking about their families or each member in their families, and that's a form of self-reflection on culture.  
(Interview 1 with Cúc; English translation)

- (Ext #72): One example is that students take turns to talk about the customs in their localities. (Interview 1 with Ba; English translation)
- (Ext #73): As the students should have learned a course, if I remember correctly, named *Foundation of the Vietnamese culture*, I don't ask my students to make specific inquiry into it [the students' own culture], I just integrate it into lessons if appropriate. (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

While all 15 participants reported that when addressing culture they focussed mainly on developing their students' knowledge about the cultures of English-speaking countries (i.e., target language cultures), four of them (i.e., Hai, Đào, Lan, and Chanh) said that they also introduced other cultures in the world. The participants who prioritised English-speaking cultures and marginalised other cultures provided various reasons for this.

- (Ext #74): I think it [including cultures other than the target language cultures] is interesting, but in practice this is limited. It is not because I consider it as limiting, but it is due to the curriculum and time, and sometimes I have the feeling that it is somewhat marginal; so, I do not include much. (Interview 1 with Sen; English translation)
- (Ext #75): As the language knowledge load is heavy, the cultures of the nations other than English-speaking ones are rarely mentioned. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)
- (Ext #76): As I mentioned above, it [the inclusion of other cultures] depends on the situations. For example, in a lesson that mentions some typical Western and Eastern countries, such as India and China, I take the chance to talk about culture; I mean it depends on the lesson content. But actually, cultural knowledge is very broad; we can't be ambitious to integrate all this. We can only include big countries or English-speaking countries, and our neighbouring ones; we can't get too far. [. . .] When we learn English, we just mention the cultures of the countries in which English is the main language. (Interview 1 with Ban; English translation)

Thus, time constraints, teachers' own limited knowledge about specific cultures, and the diversity of cultures, as well as the bias about whose culture should be introduced seemed to be the main reasons for these participants to ignore cultures other than English-speaking ones in addressing culture.

Explaining why they included knowledge about cultures other than the students' own and the target language ones, Hai and Tur said:

- (Ext #77): There are people who speak English, perhaps, as a foreign language or as a second language. Thus, it is necessary for us to provide students with such knowledge. [. . .] The main reason is that in this era of globalisation, we all come into contact with various people,

not only those from English-speaking countries. (Interview 1 with Hai; English translation)

(Ext #78): I think it is necessary to integrate other cultures as well. Cultural variety helps students to a large extent in conceiving the beauty, the good in the cultures of different nations, avoiding a one-sided perspective. (Interview 1 with Tur; English translation)

Hai, in the above extract (Ext #77), seemed to be aware of the status of English as a lingua franca for his students, in stating that his students would use English in communication with not only native speakers but also non-native speakers of the target language. However, as presented in section 6.3.1 above, he admitted that he did not usually address culture, especially intercultural issues, in his teaching practices. Seeing the diversity of culture, Tur, as shown in the extract above (Ext #78), stated that foreign cultures other than English-speaking ones would need to be introduced. He also seemed to be aware of the value of developing ethno-relative attitudes for his students.

The participants, in interviews, reported on the types of activities that they organised for their students to develop their culture-specific knowledge. The most common type, teachers' transmission of culture-specific knowledge or facts to their students, was reported by the majority of participants. Ten participants said that they often resorted to this activity, or mentioned this as one of the first ways to develop their students' cultural knowledge. Many participants said that when they addressed culture, they usually organised activities for their students to discuss a cultural point or topic in pairs or groups of students and to talk about or to reflect on their own cultural behaviour or cultural elements (e.g., customs and habits). Three participants reported on explaining cultural practices or behaviour as another way of developing students' culture-specific knowledge. Two participants reported on their use of the technique of elicitation, in which they asked their students questions concerning culture or asked their students to make such questions for other students to think about and to answer them. Assigning work for students to search for cultural information or facts was reported by three participants.

Thus, the participants considered the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to students the most typical and common type of activity to address cultural knowledge. Describing this type, the participants used verbs such as "provide" (by five participants), "transmit" (by four participants), "tell" (by two participants), and "explain" (by two participants); some of these participants used more than one verb. The extracts from interviews with Liên (Ext #63) and Hai (Ext #66) as provided in



section 6.2.2, as well as Ban (Ext #79, below) are some examples. This indicates that these participants seemed to follow the traditional view of teaching, at least in their teaching of culture, that “teaching consists of telling, or instructing, and that the learner is treated as ‘an empty vessel’ to be (inertly) filled with knowledge” (Fox, 2001, p. 25). From a social constructionist point of view, knowledge is socially constructed in interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010). Thus, I argue that in classroom language teaching and learning, the learner’s knowledge (e.g., cultural knowledge) is constructed inter-subjectively, for example, between the teacher, the learner and other learners. In this sense, although the teacher’s knowledge is important, the learner’s prior knowledge is no less important in the process of constructing knowledge. The learner cannot simply be considered a passive “empty vessel” for the teacher to pour in with his/her own knowledge. This model (traditionally known as the “empty-vessel” model) of teaching culture has also been observed in other language teaching contexts in which teachers mainly aimed to transmit cultural knowledge to their students and/or did so in their teaching practices, for example, the teachers in Castro et al.’s (2004), Sercu’s (2005) and Ho’s (2011) studies. Moreover, addressing IC does not merely involve knowledge, especially the transmission of cultural knowledge (Newton & Shearn, 2010b). Instead, it involves various IC elements such as the intersubjective construction and development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness (see 2.4.2) and learners’ activities in, for example, exploring, comparing, reflecting on and engaging with languages and cultures (see 3.1.1).

However, several participants said they organised different activities, depending on the cultural content or topic addressed. For example, Ban said:

(Ext #79): The [culture teaching] activities are varied. For the knowledge that I feel my students do not know yet, I will tell them; for the issues related to culture that are known to the students, I may arrange for them to work in pairs or groups to discuss them. Then I may ask them to present their understandings about these issues in groups or pairs in front of the class. (Interview 1 with Ban; English translation)

In particular, Chanh reported on her culture teaching by organising for the students to gain knowledge in culture projects:

(Ext #80): Actually, in recent years I have been assigning for my students to do culture projects when there is some relation with a certain cultural aspect. For example when the students learn about a festival, I split them into groups and each group will have to write about a festival of the Vietnamese or a foreign one. The product can

be in the form of a presentation in front of the class or of a magazine. (Interview 1 with Chanh; English translation)

In their classroom teaching practices, 12 participants were observed to organise activities, to various degrees, to develop their students' culture-specific knowledge in one or both of their observed classes, while the remaining three participants were not. These culture teaching practices could be seen as a continuum. This continuum ranges from a single moment when the participant raised a question to relate a foreign cultural practice introduced in the material to the students' (i.e., Vietnamese) context to a series of activities for the students to talk about their own culture/cultural practices and to gain knowledge about English-speaking cultures and/or other cultures. One class taught by Hai, for example, illustrates one end of the continuum. In this class hour, when Hai was dealing with a listening task which introduced the vocabulary item "arts and crafts workshop" (for children) in the context of the British culture, he explained what it was and then asked his students whether such workshops were organised in Vietnam. However, throughout the rest of the class, he did not address culture. Both classes taught by Cúc were among those that could be seen as at the other end of this continuum. For example, in one class, with the topic of "work", Cúc asked her students to talk about questions that could and could not be asked in conversations with colleagues in the American cultural context (e.g., questions about the boss and questions about salary). She then provided them with the cultural fact about what questions could be asked and what questions should be avoided in this cultural context. She also asked her students to discuss in groups to find out which questions, among a list of questions she had provided them with, could be asked and which could not be asked in a conversation with a foreigner. However, the word "foreigner" that she used did not address the diversity of cultures. This is because a foreigner (to her students) could be from any of the cultures around the world. Among all the foreign cultures to her students, some (e.g., Chinese) might share similar practices on the topic of work with her students' own, while others (e.g., New Zealand) would not.

Among the opportunities the participants provided for their students to gain culture-specific knowledge, the students' own culture was addressed by seven participants; English-speaking cultures were addressed by eight; and, other cultures – by five. However, it should be noted that among the five times when other cultures (e.g., the Moroccan, African, Japanese, and Chinese cultures) were mentioned, four of them were introduced in the main teaching materials. For example, during one class, Hồng taught a reading text on the topic of Moroccan eating habits which introduced a cultural

fact about the Moroccans using only their right hands to take and eat food, she, at the end of the class, assigned a task as homework for her students to search for information to explain this practice of the Moroccans.

It should be noted that the participants, though reporting that they addressed deep-level culture elements such as traditions, beliefs and values, seemed to introduce only cultural products and observable behaviour of language use as shown above. They did not address the deep-level cultural elements such as beliefs and values in their observed classes when they did integrate culture in their EFL teaching.

○ *Developing students' cross-cultural knowledge:* Most of the interviewed participants (14 out of 15) reported that when addressing culture, they usually either made comparisons of cultural points or asked their students to make comparisons so that the students could see cultural differences. The participants stated that these comparing activities helped develop their students' cross-cultural knowledge, forming one of the categories of their culture teaching activity. One participant (i.e., Hai) admitted that he seldom developed his students' knowledge in this area. For example, Cam commented on her provision of opportunities for her students to gain cross-cultural knowledge, and Ba exemplified his teaching activities in the following quotes.

(Ext #81): I am not certain whether or not I often do this [comparing cultures]; I just know that with certain lesson content I often compare the Vietnamese and British culture [. . .] or, any other countries that the students know about. And, I encourage my students to do so.  
(Interview 1 with Cam; English translation)

(Ext #82): For example, we can compare eating habits in one country to those in another. (Interview 1 with Ba; English translation)

Providing cross-cultural knowledge or comparing cultural practices seemed to be the most typical culture teaching activity for Hồng and Năm, as shown in the following extracts.

(Ext #83): [My culture teaching activities are] limited to my comparison and contrast or discussion between my students and me for the purpose of comparing and contrasting cultures. (Interview 1 with Hồng; English translation)

(Ext #84): In English language teaching, I only show the differences between the British and Vietnamese cultures. (Interview 1 with Năm; English translation)

Organising activities for students to compare cultural practices, with cultural knowledge input, appeared to be a common way in which the participants were

observed to address culture in the observed classes. Seven participants, in one or both classes, either elicited from their students' comparisons of cultural practices (e.g., eating habits, typical dishes in festivals, and traffic) by asking questions or asked their students to make their own comparisons. Four participants transmitted their own cross-cultural knowledge to their students and made quick cultural comparisons. For example, Sen provided a quick comparison of the direct writing style in English to the circular one in Vietnamese. The remaining four participants did not provide any opportunities for their students to develop their cross-cultural knowledge in any of the two observed classes.

○ *Developing students' culture-general knowledge:* When asked about the integration of culture-general knowledge in EFL teaching practices, most participants reported that they did not usually introduce such knowledge; four participants said that they tried to incorporate to a limited extent this knowledge in their teaching. For most participants, this area of knowledge seemed to be less relevant to their professional context. The participants gave various reasons for not integrating this knowledge into their lessons, as shown in the following quotes.

(Ext #85): In my teaching I focus on the main content and language input of the lesson, I seldom use cultural terms, because there are not many chances to talk about them. (Interview 2 with Hai; English translation)

(Ext #86): Honestly speaking, I seldom mention it [culture-general knowledge], because it is rather general, and rather marginal, and thus, it is seldom mentioned. (Interview 2 with Huê; English translation)

Four participants said that they introduced this knowledge to their students to help them understand more about culture and compare cultures. However, this introduction was limited, as Sen described:

(Ext #87): I mention some [culture-general knowledge], but if I feel that it is difficult to understand for my student at a certain time, I won't mention. Perhaps, I use such terms as collectivism or individualism; they are easier for my students to understand. (Interview 2 with Sen; English translation)

The participants did not address culture-general knowledge in their observed classes. There was only one moment in all the 30 observed classes where this knowledge was introduced, to a limited extent. This moment occurred in Tur's first class, in which he facilitated his students to reflect on non-verbal behaviour in interactions in the Vietnamese culture. In this reflection activity, he first provided prompts (vocabulary items such as "eye contact" and "punctuality" and expressions

such as “care about” and “shake hands with one hand/ both hands”). Then he explained the task in which the students were to work in pairs discussing, commenting and reflecting on at least one of the aspects he mentioned (i.e., personal space, hand-shaking, eye contact, and punctuality), answering the question: What do Vietnamese think about each of the above aspects in encounters? In none of the other 29 classes was culture-general knowledge addressed (see also 6.4.1).

In summary, when addressing cultural knowledge in their EFL teaching practices the participants seemed to limit this area to culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge about English-speaking cultures. Moreover, within this sub-area of knowledge, the participants focussed mainly on the cultural elements, typically cultural products and observable behaviour of language use. Most of the participants seemed to follow the traditional “empty-vessel” model of teaching in addressing cultural knowledge, in which they aimed mainly at transmitting cultural knowledge to their students and did so instead of organising for them to construct knowledge in interactions. However, several other participants (e.g., Chanh) reported that they organised activities for students to do to actively gain the necessary knowledge. For example, they set study tasks such as culture projects or searching cultural information related to a particular topic. Deep-level cultural elements such as beliefs and values were seldom addressed. The participants’ focus on cultural products and observable cultural behaviour in addressing culture is similar to that found in the teaching practices of teachers reported in many previous studies. Such studies, in different language education contexts, include Castro et al. (2004), Sercu (2005), Harvey et al. (2010), Ho (2011), and Luk (2012). Several participants in the present study addressed cross-cultural knowledge by making comparisons of cultural practices and/or organising for their students to make such comparisons. However, none of the participants seemed to be willing to introduce culture-general knowledge to their students. The participants explained that this area of knowledge was difficult and only marginally interesting for their students.

#### ***6.3.4 Developing students’ awareness of language-culture links***

As presented in Chapter 5, most of the participants defined culture in relation to language and language use in their EFL teaching context, and thus the relationship between language and culture was one of the foci of the participants. Being language teachers and being aware of these links, they reported that they aimed to develop their students’ understanding of the inter-relationships between language and culture. Most

participants reported that they addressed such relationships in order to develop their students' cultural appropriateness in target language use in communication with native English speakers (see also 5.1.2). The participants described these relationships mainly in terms of cultural content in vocabulary items (e.g., culturally-laden words), constructions (e.g., with a preposition), and norms in language use and in interactions. In other words, they focussed on the interrelationships between culture and language at the levels of linguistic form and of pragmatic and interactional norms (Liddicoat, 2009).

However, nine of the participants did not provide opportunities for their students to develop their knowledge and awareness of language-culture links in their observed classes where they could have done so. Six participants were observed in one or both of the classes to address these links; five addressed these links in one class; and one (Huê) – in both. For example, in the first class, Huê talked to her students about the connotations of “cheaper” (which may carry some negative connotation of poor quality or craft when describing a product, for example) and “less expensive” when talking about prices of products. She then related these ways of talking about prices to the context of using Vietnamese, in which there is one expression that means both “cheaper” and “less expensive”. Through her analysis, she aimed to stress the fact that the Vietnamese equivalent word did not carry the same connotations as in English. In the other class, she implicitly introduced how to express a negative comment when she realised that one of the students had used the word “terrible” to talk about a classmate’s performance in English speaking practice. She said to the student, “You say that. I’d say ‘It’s not very good.’” (Field notes, observation 2, Huê)

One participant, Cúc, was observed in one class organising for her students to be aware of the questions (e.g., questions about salary) that should not be asked in conversations with people from other cultures though they are common in conversations in the Vietnamese culture and several other Asian cultures. Another participant, Sen, reminded her students of the importance of looking for transitional signals (e.g. of cause/ consequence, purpose, contradiction, and spatial order) in reading texts, and to provide a quick comparison between the circular writing style in Vietnamese to the direct one in English. Tu, with supplementary culture teaching material (an American culture quiz he retrieved from a website), explained to his students the pragmatic meaning of the question “How are you?” in English and the culturally appropriate and expected reply in the situation where the listener has just found out that his/her mother is sick. He also explained the pragmatic meaning of the utterance “Come over anytime”

by one's neighbour in the American cultural context, so that his students could select from the provided multiple-choice answers the appropriate one describing the expected behaviour towards the utterance.

Thus, in the participants' EFL teaching practices, language-culture links were addressed mainly in the form of explaining, exploring or exemplifying the cultural content of vocabulary items in the target language. This way of teaching reflects the characteristic of addressing culture by Vietnamese EFL teachers as a support to the students' acquisition of the target language, as presented in section 6.3.2 above. Several participants also addressed language-culture links in terms of the pragmatic and interactional norms in using the target language.

#### **6.4 Further opportunities to integrate culture into EFL teaching practices**

On the basis of the classroom observations and the cultural content provided in their teaching materials, I will describe how these participants might have addressed culture in a more robust way. In other words, this section exemplifies situations in which the participants missed opportunities to integrate culture in ways that could address the development of their students' IC. I will, first, point out how one further specific element of IC might have been addressed in a situation (in 6.4.1). This shows one further step that the participants could have made to integrate culture in addressing a specific component of IC. I will then provide, for exemplification, a description of a specific situation in which the participant might have addressed the development of his students' IC more extensively and explicitly. The description of the following exemplifying opportunities accompanied by analysis aims to provide a more satisfactory alternative regarding the development of EFL students' IC in the context of the study.

##### ***6.4.1 Addressing specific elements of intercultural competence***

The participants were observed to miss various opportunities to integrate culture on the basis of the cultural content provided in the teaching materials they used. If more efforts had been made to increase the integration of culture into language teaching, the participants could have addressed culture in ways that helped, to a certain extent, develop their students' IC with the cultural content provided in these teaching materials. Such opportunities can be categorised into areas of culture teaching activities and are summarised in Table 6.3. These areas include:

- Developing culture-general knowledge;
- Addressing a cultural point introduced in the materials;
- Developing culture-specific knowledge;
- Developing cross-cultural knowledge (i.e., via cultural comparisons);
- Developing awareness of language-culture links;
- Developing intercultural skills;
- Developing critical cultural awareness.

Table 6.3 Further opportunities to integrate culture into EFL classes

| <i>Participant</i> | <i>Culture-general knowledge</i> | <i>Addressing a cultural point provided</i> | <i>Culture-specific knowledge</i> | <i>Cross-cultural knowledge</i> | <i>Language-culture links</i> | <i>Intercultural skills</i> | <i>Critical cultural awareness</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Hồng               | ✓                                |                                             | ✓                                 | ✓                               | ✓                             |                             | ✓                                  |
| Hai                |                                  | ✓                                           | ✓                                 | ✓                               | ✓                             | ✓                           |                                    |
| Huệ                | ✓                                |                                             | ✓                                 |                                 |                               | ✓                           |                                    |
| Đào                | ✓                                |                                             |                                   | ✓                               |                               | ✓                           |                                    |
| Lan                |                                  |                                             |                                   | ✓                               |                               | ✓                           |                                    |
| Sen                | ✓                                |                                             |                                   | ✓                               |                               | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Liên               | ✓                                | ✓                                           |                                   | ✓                               | ✓                             |                             |                                    |
| Cúc                | ✓                                |                                             | ✓                                 | ✓                               |                               |                             | ✓                                  |
| Cam                | ✓                                |                                             |                                   |                                 | ✓                             | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Chanh              | ✓                                |                                             |                                   |                                 |                               | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Mai                |                                  | ✓                                           | ✓                                 | ✓                               | ✓                             |                             |                                    |
| Ba                 | ✓                                |                                             |                                   |                                 | ✓                             | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Tư                 | ✓                                |                                             |                                   |                                 |                               | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Năm                | ✓                                |                                             |                                   | ✓                               |                               | ✓                           | ✓                                  |
| Ban                | ✓                                |                                             | ✓                                 |                                 |                               | ✓                           |                                    |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>12</b>                        | <b>3</b>                                    | <b>6</b>                          | <b>9</b>                        | <b>6</b>                      | <b>11</b>                   | <b>8</b>                           |

As can be seen in Table 6.3, all the participants could have integrated culture to a greater extent, and addressed the development of various IC elements. They could have addressed culture more substantively utilising the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials and the situations emerging in these observed classes. Most participants missed opportunities to address cultural knowledge (especially culture-general knowledge and cross-cultural knowledge), intercultural skills, and critical intercultural awareness. It should also be noted that three participants did not address the cultural points introduced in their teaching materials; i.e. they seemed to neglect these points in the observed classes. These areas of missed opportunities to integrate culture into the class hours are presented and exemplified in greater detail below.

- *Developing students' cultural knowledge:* In the observed classes, opportunities to address culture-general knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and culture-specific



knowledge were missed by 12, nine and six participants, respectively, while it was possible to do so with the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials.

Regarding culture-general knowledge, such observed situations were related to cultural terms, explanation of terms and discussion of phenomena involved in intercultural communication. This knowledge could also be generalised from discussions or comparisons of cultural practices. For example, in Hồng's first observed class hour, when she was dealing with the cultural differences in questions that could be asked to a stranger in the target language cultures and in the students' own culture, the concept of *face* (e.g., *positive face* and *negative face*) could have been introduced to the students. Personal questions, for instance, though accepted in the Vietnamese culture in these encounters, may not be appropriate in many other cultures. The introduction of such concepts can facilitate the students in gaining a better understanding of the cultural basis for these differences that Hồng and her students had been discussing. That is, with such an introduction students can see how cultural values and norms affect cultural behaviour and practices.

There were further missed opportunities for students to develop their cross-cultural knowledge, as facilitated by the cultural content provided in the teaching materials. For example, in Hai's first class, various issues concerning studying overseas were introduced in the materials (i.e., a conversation between a new foreign student and a student mentor). His teaching materials introduced cultural issues such as paying rent and selecting a university to attend. Alongside the culture-specific knowledge about practices such as paying rent weekly or applying for a study programme at a university in, say, England as described in the teaching materials, cross-cultural differences could have been addressed. Thus, Hai could have organised further activities for his students to explore, compare and evaluate, for example, the cultural practice of paying rent, usually, monthly in Vietnam and weekly in some other countries (e.g., New Zealand). Such activities can assist the students to develop not only their cross-cultural knowledge but also their critical intercultural awareness as well as to touch on deep-level culture.

The participants also missed opportunities to further address culture on the basis of the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials. Omissions were observed in six participants' classes. In Cam's second observed class hour, for example, her teaching materials introduced the cultural topic of sport and leisure activities and past holidays with the use of the past simple tense. She addressed this cultural content to the extent that she explained the meaning of culturally-laden vocabulary items (e.g.,

“sailing” and “scuba diving”), and provided English vocabulary items for the students to talk about their own favourite sports and leisure activities (e.g., “play badminton” and “go shopping”). When dealing with the topic of past holidays, Cam could have explained to the students a common practice of people (e.g., co-workers, friends, and neighbours), in some cultures, having a brief conversation about their past holiday or weekend in encounters. Another example is Ba’s second class, in which the topic was Chinese Feng Shui (e.g., the Chinese principles in arranging furniture in a room for health and well-being). Ba could have elicited from his students or provided facts about the typical types of furniture and typical arrangement of furniture in a room or a house in the Vietnamese culture compared to another culture.

○ *Addressing a cultural point introduced in the main teaching materials:*

Opportunities to address a cultural point introduced in the main teaching materials used were missed by three of the observed participants (i.e., Hai, Liên, and Mai) in one or both of the observed classes. For example, in a class with the topic of overseas study (a listening lesson with listening tasks in which the materials introduced a conversation between a new foreign student and a native English-speaking student mentor at a university in England), Hai’s teaching materials introduced vocabulary items such as recreation, accommodation, rent, finance, and travel. However, Hai did not mention any such cultural issues related to the topic of the lesson. Instead, he only mentioned them as unknown words, providing his students with denotative meanings. These issues might be potentially useful cultural points to be addressed. However, the whole class hour focussed on the listening tasks the students had to accomplish, which included listening for details of the conversation. Another example of the missed opportunities was identified in Mai’s second class. The topic of this class was the simple past tense in describing a previous day. The cultural content appearing in the main teaching materials through particular vocabulary items (e.g., “sandwich” and “corner store”) and cultural practices (e.g., the lunch habit of eating at one’s desk [in the office]) which are uncommon in the students’ culture was not addressed by the participant.

○ *Developing students’ awareness of language-culture links:* Further opportunities to address language-culture links were missed by six of the participants while the teaching materials they used suggested such links. These links were at various levels, such as culture being expressed in interactional norms, pragmatic norms, and linguistic structures (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). For example, a missed opportunity to develop the students’ awareness of language-culture links was observed

in Mai's second class. The section in her teaching materials provided several culturally laden vocabulary items (i.e., new/unknown vocabulary items) such as "sandwich" and "corner store" for students to acquire. She only provided the Vietnamese translations of these items, but did not address their cultural content. These items, to a certain extent, are culturally strange to Vietnamese students and thus need addressing.

- *Developing students' intercultural skills:* The participants missed numerous opportunities to address the development of their students' intercultural skills. With the cultural content provided in the teaching materials they used, the participants could have organised more activities for their students to acquire cultural knowledge as well as to develop their intercultural skills. Such activities can help students to identify possible misunderstandings of cultural behaviour introduced in the materials in intercultural encounters (Byram, 1997). Following are examples that illustrate these two main types of further opportunities in terms of developing intercultural skills. First, in Cam's second class, which introduced the topic of favourite water sports and past holiday activities (using the simple past tense), a simulated intercultural situation could have been provided after the participant's provision of culture and language input. This situation and task could be for the students to imagine coming from different cultures and to ask and talk about previous holidays using English. Second, after the provision of culture input (in the form of cultural facts about questions that should be avoided in talking about work, and a comparison of these facts to those in the Vietnamese culture), Cúc, in her first class, could have organised an activity to facilitate the development of her students' intercultural skills. This might be in the form of a group discussion activity for the students to work out possible misunderstandings in a conversation on the topic of jobs between a Vietnamese and a native English speaker, for example. The discussion could focus on possible misunderstandings that a Vietnamese might cause to a native English speaker by asking him/her about income (e.g., asking the question "How much do you earn a month?" which is a culturally common question asked among Vietnamese when talking about jobs). She could also have organised for her students to discuss why such personal questions might or might not be appropriate in another culture.

- *Developing students' critical intercultural awareness:* A number of opportunities for the participants to develop their students' critical intercultural awareness, as suggested by the cultural content in the main teaching materials used, were missed. The participants could have organised for their students to identify cultural

values underlying cultural practices introduced and to evaluate others' cultural practices from their own perspective and their own cultural practices from others' perspectives (Byram, 1997). They, where appropriate, might also have assisted their students to research into the social, political and historical reasons for such practices. For example, in Hồng's first class hour, with the input of a reading text describing and providing cultural facts about the eating customs and table manners in the Moroccan culture, activities to address students' critical cultural awareness might have been organised. One activity could be for the students to identify the cultural values in, say, table manners in their own culture and in Western cultures or African cultures. She might have introduced cultural terms such as *collectivism*, *individualism* and *hierarchy* for the identification of cultural values underlying the different practices in table manners. The introduction of such terms can help students see the stereotypes about cultures that have traditionally been discussed. Another activity could be for the students to evaluate the meal practices introduced in the reading text from their own cultural perspective, as well as to evaluate their own table manners (e.g., younger people inviting older people to eat before eating themselves, sharing a bowl of dipping sauce among eaters, or serving all dishes at the same time on a round tray) from, for example, the perspective of the English-speaking cultures.

In summary, the participants in the present study, despite a variety of beliefs about culture and practices of teaching culture, did not seem to fully exploit the cultural content provided in their teaching materials. Even the participants who held the view that there was inadequate cultural content in their teaching materials (see also 6.2.2) seemed to miss numerous opportunities to address this content in ways that could help their students to develop their IC. In other words, they seemed to lack competence, particularly skills, to address the development of their students' IC in their language classes. This confirms Sercu's et al.'s (2005) finding that language teachers were not yet sufficiently competent enough to teach IC in the language classroom particularly regarding their skills. All the participants in the study bypassed opportunities to address more than one element of IC in their observed classes. They typically omitted opportunities to attend to specific IC components such as cultural knowledge (mainly cross-cultural and culture-general knowledge), intercultural skills, and critical intercultural awareness.

#### **6.4.2 Addressing intercultural competence more extensively**

None of the participants were observed to address IC thoroughly and comprehensively; instead, when addressing a certain cultural point they only touched on one or two elements of this competence, basically cultural knowledge. Following is an example to illustrate how one participant (i.e., Tur) could have addressed IC more extensively on the basis of the cultural content introduced in his teaching materials.

Tur's materials in his first observed class introduced the topic of showing hospitality in welcoming guests. This topic was introduced with cultural information about the showing of hospitality to guests in different cultures, for example, the Russian, Moldovan and English cultures, in a reading passage (see 6.2.3). Tur addressed this cultural topic to the extent that he helped his students understand the information provided in the reading passage. He then followed the instructions in the teaching materials to organise for the students to discuss questions about welcoming guests and being guests from their own perspective. In addition to providing information about this cultural practice in different cultures, he could have addressed IC in a robust way, as described below.

Firstly, Tur could have organised comparison activities for his students. One might be comparing how hospitality is performed in the students' own culture (possibly in the Vietnamese culture generally or in different minority regions in Vietnam) with another culture introduced in the teaching materials or in a culture known to them. The activity could include the language of hospitality in both cultures (e.g., what hosts say to their guests to show hospitality) as well as the practices of hospitality (e.g., what hosts do to take care of their guests). Part of this activity might involve students comparing the table manners of hosts continually putting the best (in their opinion) pieces of food or food from the best dishes into their guest's bowl to show hospitality in the Vietnamese culture compared to a common help-yourself-to-this-or-that practice in many Western cultures. They could also compare the cultural practice of hosts spending as much time as possible with their guest during his/her visit to their home in the Vietnamese culture to how people in some other cultures respect the privacy of their guests. By organising such additional comparison activities Tur could have helped his students to make connections between cultures and see the diversity of cultures and cultural practices.

Secondly, a further activity could have been for the students to explore why there are such differences regarding the same cultural practice, for example, of showing

hospitality across cultures. This deep cultural exploration could help the students touch and reflect on deep-level cultural elements of beliefs and values that drive such different cultural behaviours. Such exploration might open various opportunities for the students to understand other aspects of human life in the socio-cultural contexts of interest such as traditions and economies.

Thirdly, intercultural skills could have been addressed by organising for students, in small groups, to figure out possible misunderstandings in intercultural situations being or welcoming guests. For example, several small groups of students could discuss how, say, a guest from an English-speaking culture might make sense of, or feel about, his/her Vietnamese hosts' showing hospitality to their guest by the practice of continually putting food into his/her bowl during a meal or accompanying him/her most of the time. At the same time, other groups might discuss how they would understand the practices of respecting guests' privacy during their visit in many cultures. These discussions could also help the students be more aware of different behaviours in showing hospitality in other cultures, and thus enable them to adjust their own behaviour when needed in intercultural situations.

Furthermore, Tur could also have organised for his students to develop their critical intercultural awareness. Tur could have asked his students to discuss and evaluate their own cultural behaviour in showing hospitality from others' perspectives and, vice versa, to evaluate practices in showing hospitality in other cultures from the students' own perspective. It might also be helpful for the students to relativise (i.e., visually put one next to others) these cultural practices mentioned in the reading text and the practices in their own culture in terms of showing hospitality and other cultural customs. By making such an evaluation, the students could further develop their positive cultural attitudes towards cultural behaviours that are different from their own, and would thus grow more ethno-relative.

## **6.5 Summary**

I have presented and discussed the findings concerning how the participants in the study integrated culture into their EFL teaching in this chapter. The participants in the present study taught English in classrooms which were used for all courses and to large classes with approximately 45 students on average. This class size, together with other factors, reportedly caused them to address culture to a limited extent in their EFL teaching. Although they had more students to work with in a large class, this did not necessarily

prevent them from integrating culture and language in individual and group-work activities.

In their EFL teaching, the participants depended heavily on their set teaching materials, either a selected internationally distributed English language textbook or a set of materials compiled from existing textbooks. Many of these participants used their pre-prescribed teaching materials as a single source to teach English. The dependence on their main teaching materials could be a factor leading to how these participants addressed culture. Several participants perceived that the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials was sufficient for them to teach culture with, and thus they did not need to provide their students with further culture input. Other participants believed that their teaching materials could not satisfy their needs for culture input and they had to provide more cultural content. The main sources of such supplementary culture input included the participants' own cultural knowledge, intercultural experience, and cultural information retrieved from websites.

The teaching materials the participants used in the observed classes presented cultural content to a limited extent and with a bias focussing on cultural products. However, such cultural content can facilitate teachers in integrating culture into their EFL teaching in terms of introducing cultural topics, aspects of language-culture links, and cultural facts. Such cultural content can also help teachers to address culture in their teaching practices by providing, albeit to a limited extent, explicit instructions for teaching culture, for example exploring, comparing and discussing cultural practices.

Most of the participants displayed their limited teaching of culture in both interviews and observed classes. They seemed to address culture only when a cultural point (e.g., a vocabulary item that needed cultural explanation and language use in a certain cultural context) appeared in the main teaching materials and as a support for their students' target language use and knowledge. When addressing culture, they focussed mainly on providing cultural facts related to English-speaking cultures and comparing cultural practices. Several other participants perceived that the cultural content in their teaching materials was inadequate and thus they supplemented their set teaching materials with further culture input. However, such supplementary culture input was typically cultural information. Furthermore, culture-general knowledge and deep-level cultural elements such as beliefs and values seemed to be neglected. Participants' view of teaching culture as the transmission of cultural knowledge reflected their static view of culture and culture teaching.

Though all these participants were aware of the interrelationships between language and culture, in their EFL teaching practices they addressed these relationships mainly by explaining and exemplifying the cultural content, if any, of vocabulary items to be introduced to their students. Several participants were observed to address these links in the form of pragmatic and interactional norms of the target language.

It is apparent that IC components such as intercultural skills and intercultural awareness were not addressed by the participants in their EFL teaching practices. Thus, in their context of EFL teaching the participants still integrated culture to a very limited extent and treated culture as a peripheral element separate from language. All the participants, including those who believed that the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials was insufficient, missed various opportunities to address the cultural points introduced in their teaching materials in ways that promoted the development of their students' IC. Most participants missed opportunities to teach more than one specific component of IC, especially cultural knowledge (typically culture-general and cross-cultural), intercultural skills and critical intercultural awareness. None of the participants taught IC in an extensive and explicit way. With the cultural content provided in their teaching materials, the participants could have addressed IC or its specific elements more extensively.

Thus, there need to be various efforts and changes made so that culture can be integrated in EFL teaching practices as a core element with the aim of developing students' IC in this context. One such area or change is the area of LTPD, which will be the focus of Chapter 7.



## **Chapter 7 EFL teachers' professional development**

### **7.0 Introduction**

The two previous chapters have described and discussed the findings about the participants' beliefs in teaching culture and their practices in their integration of culture into EFL teaching. The participants seemed to hold a static view of culture and limit it to cultural products and observable cultural behaviour especially in language use in their own EFL teaching context. They tended to grant culture a minor supporting status and treated it as a peripheral element in their teaching practices. The participants' views of culture and its status as well as their limited integration of culture into their EFL teaching indicate that they did not consider culture a core element to be taught in an explicit and integrated way with language. Furthermore, they were observed to miss various opportunities to address IC or its specific elements in their teaching practices. Thus, in order for culture to become a core and integrated element in this EFL teaching context, one of the important issues that needs to be addressed is LTPD.

This chapter is devoted to the issue of TPD for EFL teachers, particularly in terms of integrating culture into EFL teaching practices. The chapter begins with a section (section 7.1) focussing on the issue of LTPD. It presents the themes emerging from the participants' reports and comments on their professional development as well as on their needs for such development for the improvement of their integration of culture into language teaching. Section 7.2 discusses suggested areas of TPD for EFL teachers with regard to this integration. This is a source of information for Vietnamese policy makers, at both the governmental and institutional levels, as well as EFL teachers. The chapter ends with a summary of the points presented in sections 7.1 and 7.2.

### **7.1 Participants' professional development**

The presentation of culture in current English language textbooks, especially EFL ones, has not yet treated culture as a core element integrated into language teaching as many authors have pointed out (see 3.3). Culture was represented to a limited extent and with a bias in the teaching materials the participants used (see 6.2.3). Many of these participants stated that such cultural content was insufficient for them to teach culture with. In addition, none of the participants fully exploited the cultural content provided in their teaching materials (see 6.3 and 6.4). Thus, language teaching methodological issues concerning how to integrate culture into EFL teaching practices need to be a

strong focus of LTPD. This section describes and discusses what the participants reported in terms of their professional development. This then informs the proposal of areas of TPD for EFL teachers in this Vietnamese context.

In the first series of interviews with the participants, the topic of TPD was mentioned to the extent that participants described how they gained their cultural knowledge in particular and IC in general. This topic was discussed in more detail in the second series of interviews. The participants shared their experience, ideas and comments as well as suggestions concerning language teacher development activities and programmes, especially focussing on the integration of culture into EFL teaching. There are three main themes emerging from what the participants (in one or both interviews) shared in the interviews: culture and culture teaching in LTPD; self-taught cultural knowledge and intercultural skills; and L&CI programmes and LTPD. These themes will be presented below.

### ***7.1.1 Culture and culture teaching in teacher professional development***

In the second series of interviews, the participants shared their experiences of, ideas, comments, as well as suggestions about in-country in-service LTPD programmes. According to most of them, they had attended, on average, one training workshop (typically two to five days) a year as the only form of TPD programmes available. All 10 participants shared the information that there were two types of training workshops: one for teachers from various disciplines, and the other for EFL teachers. The first type of workshop, as they reported, was organised by their university for all teachers who needed knowledge and skills required to teach at the university level. The second type was for EFL teachers, organised by different universities in Vietnam as well as by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training or international organisations such as the British Council. The second type of LTPD workshop was discussed in more detail in the interviews. One observation by the participants who had attended these workshops was that the content focussed mainly on: applying information technology in teaching; introducing techniques for language teaching and/or testing; and, developing teachers' language proficiency. These foci were described by the participants, as shown in the following extracts.

(Ext #88): I have attended one development programme for teachers in general and four or five programmes for English teachers. [. . .] I don't remember these times in detail, but all these programmes focussed on language, not on culture. [. . .] Yes, and this concentration on language is because the time [for the programmes] was short, and

also they lectured on a certain issue such as pronunciation. In addition, though we came for a workshop, we spent most of the time to do a test. [. . .] I remember that in the last workshop, the topic was designing a marking scheme for a writing composition, for example. (Interview 2 with Cam; English translation)

(Ext #89): I have been teaching [English] for seven years, attending one workshop a year at most, there were years in which no workshops were organised. [. . .] The last workshop I attended was on using information technology. [. . .] For all teachers, not only foreign languages ones. Most workshops were on information technology, testing and assessment. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Many participants stated that the workshops they had attended focussed mainly on applying information technology. However, from my own experience as an EFL teacher, it can be understood that by information technology they meant the application of language teaching software or the introduction of websites that could help language teachers in their teaching practices. These participants also stressed that such workshops only focussed on the issues of addressing linguistic knowledge and macro language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and language testing. Several workshops, as Cam described in the extract above (Ext #88), also tested teachers' language proficiency.

The participants all stated that the issues of culture and the integration of culture into language teaching were not addressed in these workshops, as noted in Chanh's comment, below.

(Ext #90): They [the workshops] were more about language teaching methods; there haven't been workshops particularly on cultural knowledge or the cultural characteristics of the countries of the language we are teaching. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Most of the participants (eight out of 10), when asked about their recommendations for LTPD programmes, stated that they wanted these programmes to include cultural and culture teaching issues, summarised below:

- Material development with regard to culture teaching;
- Culture teaching methods and techniques;
- Development of participants' cultural knowledge/ IC;
- Introduction of best practices (in terms of teaching culture);
- Development of teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching.

Seven participants stated that they wanted in-country professional development programmes for EFL teachers to address, among other things, the development of teaching materials with regard to the integration of culture in language teaching. They stated that they wanted to learn how to design explicit culture teaching objectives and develop/design suitable teaching materials for the designed objectives. Three participants reported their needs for acquiring culture teaching methods and techniques. Developing language teachers' cultural knowledge (cross-cultural knowledge, knowledge about English speaking countries) was seen by three participants as an important component of such programmes. However, one participant (i.e., Tur) disagreed with these ideas, stating that LTPD programmes should focus on the development of teachers' language knowledge and skills rather than on the enrichment of their cultural knowledge, which he argued could be learned from various sources. One participant mentioned the need for the introduction of best practices of integrating culture into language teaching from other educational institutions. Another participant wanted such programmes to increase teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in foreign language teaching. This participant explained that because teachers were not yet aware of the importance of culture in language teaching, nor that teaching culture was also a responsibility of language teachers, they only integrated culture to a limited extent. The remaining two participants (i.e., Ba and Ban) did not share their needs or suggestions. Ba stressed that for professional development teachers needed to teach themselves first and should not rely only on LTPD workshops or other programmes. Ban did not express her specific need for LTPD programmes. In general, most of the participants mentioned more than one of the above issues needed in in-country LTPD programmes. For example, Hồng and Hai said:

(Ext #91): I would like these workshops to enable us to be clearly aware of the importance of the culture element in [language] teaching; and when this awareness is obtained, [we need to know] how to integrate this culture element effectively into lessons. (Interview 2 with Hồng; English translation)

(Ext #92): In fact, teachers have always done this [developing teaching materials], but [...], it [development of teaching materials] must be done systematically and logically. Thus, there should be workshops on curriculum and teaching material development. [. . .] There should be workshops which are exclusively on cultural issues, for example workshops run by a cultural specialist on cultural issues and, especially, on how to integrate culture into language teaching. (Interview 2 with Hai; English translation)

Thus, the participants reported that the LTPD programmes that they had attended highlighted the language element, i.e., linguistic knowledge and language skills. They did not address the development of teachers' cultural knowledge in particular or IC in general; nor did they provide pedagogical ideas and knowledge on how to address culture in developing language learners' IC. The participants also reflected on their practices in integrating culture into their EFL teaching and expressed a variety of their needs and suggestions for such LTPD programmes so that culture could be integrated effectively into lessons.

### ***7.1.2 Self-taught cultural knowledge and intercultural skills***

In one or both of the interviews, almost all the participants (14 out of 15) stated that in addition to the cultural knowledge and intercultural skills gained as students and teacher trainees, they enriched their cultural knowledge and developed their IC mainly by self-teaching. That is, the available LTPD programmes that the participants attended did not provide opportunities for them to develop their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills; they thus found their own ways of developing them. One participant did not mention this way of learning, and she talked about her culture learning during her overseas study programme (for her Master of Arts degree in Australia). The participants mentioned various ways to develop this, including the following:

- Reading publications on cultures and cultural issues ;
- Communicating with foreigners;
- Learning about culture(s) from mass media, movies and websites;
- Reflecting on and/or adjusting their own cultural behaviours;
- Learning from misunderstandings in intercultural encounters;
- Listening to English spoken by native speakers.

Table 7.1 summarises the main ways in which the participants reported they enriched their cultural knowledge and their intercultural skills.

Table 7.1 Ways of self-teaching cultural knowledge and intercultural skills

| <i>Participant</i> | <i>(1*)</i> | <i>(2*)</i> | <i>(3*)</i> | <i>(4*)</i> | <i>(5*)</i> | <i>(6*)</i> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hồng               |             |             | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Hai                | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |
| Huệ                | ✓           | ✓           |             | ✓           |             | ✓           |
| Đào                |             | ✓           |             |             |             |             |
| Lan                |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Sen                | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |
| Liên*              |             | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |
| Cúc                | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |
| Cam                | ✓           |             |             |             | ✓           |             |
| Chanh              | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |
| Mai                |             | ✓           |             |             |             |             |
| Ba                 | ✓           |             | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Tur                | ✓           |             | ✓           |             |             |             |
| Năm                |             | ✓           | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |
| Ban                |             | ✓           | ✓           |             |             |             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>8</b>    | <b>11</b>   | <b>11</b>   | <b>7</b>    | <b>2</b>    | <b>1</b>    |

\*Note: (1) - Reading publications on cultures and cultural issues; (2) - Communicating with foreigners; (3) - Learning about cultures from mass media, movies and websites; (4) - Reflecting on and/or adjusting their own cultural behaviours; (5) - Learning from misunderstandings in intercultural encounters; (6) - Listening to English spoken by native speakers. One participant, Liên, did not specified these ways, but she talked about her cultural experiences during her MA studies in Australia, which implies that she might have developed her cultural knowledge and intercultural skills in the ways numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5.

As seen in Table 7.1, eight of the participants said that they gained cultural knowledge by reading publications (mostly books) on cultural issues, cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Eleven participants said that they learned about culture and developed their intercultural skills by communicating with foreigners, especially foreign teacher colleagues in their university schools. Similarly, enriching cultural knowledge from mass media (e.g., television programmes on culture or cultural issues, and newspapers) and websites and by watching movies was also described as another key method for 11 participants. Seven participants reported that they developed their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills by reflecting on their own cultural behaviour in intercultural encounters with foreigners, which helped them in adjusting their behaviour in intercultural situations. One participant explicitly said that she learned culture from misunderstandings in encounters with foreigners, and another participant implied this when talking about her intercultural experiences in an English-speaking country. Another participant, when describing language-culture links, reported on her culture learning by observing and listening to native speakers speaking English. The following extracts illustrate these methods of culture learning.

(Ext #93): Before, it [my culture learning] was mainly via materials, for example I used to listen [to spoken English], and found out how people talked, or from reading books written on culture, and recognised what people would say in this or that situation. [. . .] Then, since I started teaching in the university or at language centres, I have had the chance to talk to foreigners and to ask them questions. I have had more chances recently, but mainly I learn from listening, reading or watching. I mean I haven't had many chances for real communication. (Interview 1 with Huệ; English translation)

(Ext #94): It [my cultural knowledge] comes mainly from reading some books written on cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Second, since I started teaching, I have had the chance to communicate with foreign teachers; though there are not many chances, there are exchanges, [. . .] from watching movies or news desks. [. . .] In encounters with foreigners, I mainly observe how they talk, for example how they start a conversation or the topics they mention, as well as their behaviour and body language. But I don't often discuss cultural topics with them. [. . .] I focus on conversation topics, what topics they mention, what topics are appropriate to talk about. (Interview 1 with Sen; English translation)

Thus, as described by the participants, their cultural knowledge was mainly accumulated from teaching themselves and through interactions with others. Their intercultural skills were gained from interactions with either their foreign teachers of English (when they were EFL students or teacher trainees) or their foreign colleagues (who were mostly English native speakers teaching at the same university). In other words, the participants' foreign interlocutors were mainly native English-speaking teachers of English. However, as Huệ admitted, there were still limited chances for teachers to participate in such intercultural encounters, even with English-speaking teachers of English, because there were not many foreign teachers in their working context.

### **7.1.3 *Language and culture immersion as teacher professional development***

In the second series of interviews, eight participants expressed their wishes to participate in L&CI programmes. They wanted to have an opportunity to stay for a period of time in an English-speaking country or, less preferably, in a country where English is spoken as a second language for their professional development. They described this opportunity as “ideal” (e.g., Hồng and Huệ), “first wish” (e.g., Cam), “common wish [of language teachers for years]” (e.g., Chanh), “wonderful project” (e.g., Hai) and even “utopian” (e.g., Huệ). One participant, Ban, described foreign language teachers, including herself, who had not had such a chance as “unprivileged”

teachers. The benefits of such programmes, in their views, would be the gains in their cultural knowledge and their language and intercultural skills, as well as the enrichment of authentic cultural input that they could provide their students with. Two other participants did not explicitly express this wish, stating that they were willing to participate in any course or programme useful to their professional development. Following are extracts that represent these wishes.

(Ext #95): Actually ((laughs)) what is ideal, or even utopian, is that we have the chance to live in the [target] culture for some time so that we can understand and learn more. [. . .] I feel that it would be something very natural and easy to remember, but I also feel that it is still utopian now. [. . .] The word culture is broad in its sense, and another thing is the language knowledge. Because we can't say that our English is standard, there are many things that we have to learn and to adjust. (Interview 2 with Huệ; English translation)

(Ext #96): It is the common wish of all teachers for many years that teachers have more chances to develop themselves, and to attend courses in countries where the target language is used as a second language or native language. It would enable teachers to have up to date cultural knowledge, not just knowledge gained from reading. [. . .] Another benefit would be that we could practice and use our foreign language and cultural competence in real communication. (Interview 2 with Chanh; English translation)

Thus, most participants considered L&CI experience a factor that could help them develop both their language proficiency and their IC, especially cultural knowledge and intercultural skills. L&CI experience was also what they wanted most for their professional development in terms of integrating culture into their EFL teaching practices. Such L&CI programmes, they thought, would enable them to encounter a variety of speakers and to engage with the target culture. For these participants, first-hand intercultural experience from such L&CI programmes could be both professionally beneficial to them and supportive of their students' development of cultural knowledge. For example, they said that they could bring back with them authentic cultural input such as realia to introduce to their students as well as cultural information. Liên, a participant who had spent two years studying in Australia for her Master of Arts degree, mentioned her engagement with the target culture and the IC she gained from such engagement. She reported that she developed her intercultural skills and awareness by living in the target culture (i.e., the Australian culture) and interacting with native and non-native speakers (mainly other international students) of English. In her view, such cultural knowledge and intercultural experiences helped her to a great



extent in integrating culture into her EFL teaching practices, especially in activities involving comparisons of cultural practices.

It is worth noting that the current Vietnamese government policy supports university foreign language teachers' professional development, for example, by providing them the chance to participate in L&CI programmes overseas (Government of Vietnam, 2008). However, none of the participants said that they knew about these chances. This indicates that they did not seem to have a sufficient understanding of this policy.

When asked further about the current Vietnamese government policy for foreign language education, several participants said that they had heard something about it. However, they thought it was about English teaching at the primary or secondary level of education. Several others said that they did not know about this policy. The following extracts illustrate participants' different understandings of the policy, and particularly the chances for them to participate in L&CI programmes (as part of the policy).

(Ext #97): I have heard about it [the current foreign language education policy]. However, on the internet, newspapers and radio, they talk mostly about, for example, school language teachers. There seems to be no particular programmes for university foreign language teachers. [. . .] I found from the internet that they only focus on developing school teachers' [language and language teaching] ability. (Interview 2 with Ban; English translation)

(Ext #98): I don't know much [about policies], but I've just heard about a policy [. . .] It's a policy in which [foreign languages] are taught from Grade 3 to university level. [. . .] However, I don't know about them [the chances for university language teachers to participate in L&CI programmes]. (Interview 2 with Cam; English translation)

(Ext #99): I don't know anything about it [the current foreign language education policy]. (Interview 2 with Năm; English translation)

This means that the policy, launched in 2008 (Government of Vietnam, 2008), had not been successfully communicated to these participants (i.e., university EFL teachers) by the time I conducted these interviews in 2011. I myself had not known about this policy until 2010 when I searched for information about Vietnam's foreign language education policies in preparing for this study. Thus, in the Vietnamese foreign language education context, there do not seem to be clear strategies for communicating such policies to teachers.

#### **7.1.4 Summary**

In section 7.1, I have presented findings about and discussions of participants' reports and comments on their professional development, particularly regarding the integration of culture into language teaching. According to the participants, TPD programmes, mainly in the form of workshops, appeared to be in two categories: one for teachers of different content areas and the other for EFL teachers. In the participants' views, the workshops available for EFL teachers focussed mainly on one or more of three main areas: technological support for teachers (e.g., using computer software in language teaching), methodological issues related to linguistic knowledge and language skills, and assessment and development of teachers' language proficiency. These participants also noticed that such workshops seemed to neglect issues related to the culture element in language teaching. Because many participants were aware that they did not address culture sufficiently in classes for various reasons, including their own limited cultural knowledge, they wanted in-country LTPD workshops and other programmes to cover further areas concerning culture and teaching culture. They wanted these programmes to address such areas as the development of teaching materials for the integration of culture into language teaching, methods for teaching culture, development of teachers' cultural knowledge and intercultural skills, introduction of best practices in the integration of culture into language teaching, and development of teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching. As teachers of English, the participants reported that their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills were mainly self-taught. This learning approach, for most of the participants, included reading publications on culture and cultural studies, gaining cultural knowledge from mass media, movies and websites, interacting with foreigners, and reflecting on and adjusting their own behaviour in intercultural encounters with foreigners.

Most of the participants wanted to participate in L&CI programmes in countries where the target language (i.e., English) is spoken. For them, this form of LTPD was their first wish because it could create chances for them to develop their target language proficiency, cultural knowledge and intercultural skills, and to collect authentic cultural input.

The description of the participants' beliefs and practices in teaching culture, the findings from the participants' reports on issues concerning LTPD, as well as the literature review serve as a basis for suggesting areas of TPD for EFL teachers. These areas are discussed in greater detail in section 7.2, below.

## **7.2 Suggested areas of EFL teacher professional development**

As can be seen in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the participants seemed to treat culture as a peripheral element and integrated culture to a very limited extent into their EFL teaching practices. They focussed mainly on the language element, i.e. linguistic knowledge and language skills, and considered culture a supporting element for their students' acquisition of the target language. Numerous opportunities to develop their students' IC were missed, even with the cultural content provided in the main teaching materials used in those classes, as presented in section 6.4. Furthermore, LTPD programmes (mostly in the form of workshops) available for the participants seemed to neglect the issue of integrating culture into language teaching. Thus, in this EFL teaching context the following areas of LTPD are proposed so that culture can be integrated in ways that aim for the development of language learners' IC. These suggested areas, seen as being interrelated, include teachers' awareness, teachers' own IC, teachers' pedagogical learning, and making changes in teaching practices and assessment.

### **7.2.1 Teachers' awareness**

The participants did not seem to be aware of their integrated role as teachers of both language and culture (Byram, 2009; Liddicoat et al., 2003; Newton & Shearn, 2010b), in their EFL teaching practices. Although they, as English language learners and users, were aware of the importance of culture and the interrelationship between language and culture, as EFL teachers, they only addressed culture to a very limited extent. They seldom included explicit cultural objectives in their lesson plans, for example. This view of the status of culture could be a result of various factors such as the form and content of student assessments, the limited time allocated for teaching their English courses, and the focus on the linguistic knowledge in their curricula (as presented in section 5.3).

Here I argue that LTPD needs to begin with the development of teachers' awareness concerning the integration of language and culture in language teaching. I also agree with Hồng's comment that Vietnamese EFL teachers, including herself, were not aware of the need to integrate culture into their EFL teaching practices and thus they did not usually address it. Therefore, beginning with raising teachers' awareness of the language teacher's integrated role of teaching both language and culture for the development of their students' IC, LTPD can then address other areas such as teachers'

own IC, methodological issues related to teaching culture in ways that develop this competence, and changes in teaching practices. These areas, as discussed in section 7.2.2, will then promote the development of teachers' awareness concerning their role of teaching both language and culture.

The participants in the present study tended to have a static view of culture in their professional context (see Chapter 5), and this view was a factor leading them to address culture to a limited extent in their classrooms (see Chapter 6). Thus, as discussed above, LTPD needs to directly address culture, IC, and teaching and assessing IC. It needs to begin with ensuring teachers' awareness of their now expanded role of teaching both language and culture, ideally in an integrated way. It is important to realise that some teachers who currently have low or no awareness of this role might claim that they are teachers of language, but not of culture (see also 5.2.2). To raise these teachers' awareness of the important status of culture in language teaching, the following measures could be taken. Firstly, LTPD programmes should ensure that teachers are aware of current Vietnamese foreign language education policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008). In particular, they need to understand the relevance of the reference to CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) which frames the Vietnamese policy. "Interculturality" is a key term in this document and teachers should understand the full relevance of the term and how it has changed approaches to language teaching. In LTPD programmes teachers could be given the opportunity to discuss the term "interculturality", including related areas such as culture, cultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, intercultural skills, and attitudes, all of which are related to IC. Teachers would thus become aware of their integrated role of teaching both language and culture, seeing that teaching culture and developing their students' IC is part of their responsibility. Secondly, LTPD programmes could also help teachers gain a better understanding of the inseparability of language and culture in language teaching practice. Teachers need to fully understand that language-culture links can be found at all levels of communication, particularly intercultural communication, from the context of communication to linguistic forms (Liddicoat, 2009). In addition, LTPD programmes could group teachers into geographical clusters, enabling them to discuss the current language policy and share ideas and knowledge concerning the integration of culture into language teaching, as well as international trends in language teaching, on a regular basis.

### 7.2.2 *Teachers' intercultural competence*

One important area in LTPD is teachers' own IC. This competence consists of five categories of “savoirs”: savoirs (i.e. knowledge), savoir comprendre (i.e., skills in interpreting and relating), savoir apprendre/faire (i.e., skills for discovery and interaction), savoir être (i.e., attitudes), and savoir s'engager (i.e., critical cultural awareness) (Byram, 1997, 2012). These four IC elements in terms of five categories of “savoir” (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) can be addressed in LTPD programmes, with each programme highlighting one, two, three or all of these elements.

There are two main ways that can support language teachers' development of their own IC: participating in in-country LTPD programmes that address this competence and participating in overseas L&CI programmes. These approaches can also be mutually supportive as presented later in LTPD.

Firstly, in-country LTPD programmes may be organised in the traditional form of workshops in the Vietnamese context. The inculcation of intercultural skills and critical intercultural awareness can become the focus of such in-service LTPD programmes. This is because, as reported by most of them, cultural knowledge can be developed by the participants themselves (as presented in 7.1, above), especially with the availability of access to cultural information via mass media, publications, and the internet. What these participants would still lack will be cultural knowledge gained from first-hand intercultural experience, or engagement with other cultures. In the interviews, almost all the participants mentioned this engagement as part of the gains they could obtain from L&CI experiences (see 7.1 above). The value of improving teachers' critical intercultural awareness in workshops and programmes is that this improvement can help them deal with how to address this issue with their students.

Secondly, L&CI programmes were what the participants wanted most as a form of professional development, especially concerning first-hand cultural knowledge and intercultural skills. L&CI programmes are chances for language teachers to spend a period of time (usually a short period, two to six weeks or several months) in a country in which the language they teach is spoken, fully immersed in the target language culture. Common features of such programmes include: homestay (i.e., the language teacher lives with a host family in the country he/she goes to); interactions with local people (including the members of the host family) in the target language; and engagement with the target culture (see also 3.4.2). Numerous studies (e.g., Allen, 2010; Bilash & Kang, 2007; Harvey et al., 2011) have shown that such programmes can be

beneficial to language teachers not only in terms of cultural knowledge and intercultural skills but also in terms of language proficiency as well as awareness of language-culture links. It should be noted that in order for such L&CI programmes to have a positive impact on teachers' learning (of both IC and target language proficiency), various structuring factors of these programmes need to be taken into consideration, as Harvey et al. (2011) point out. The key factors include: providing information (e.g., itinerary, orientation, cultural information, and accommodation); setting goals and outcomes for teachers (e.g., development of language proficiency, gathering language/culture resources); keeping a reflective record of the experience; and debriefing of the experience when returning from the host country (Harvey et al., 2011). In the context of foreign language education in Vietnam, the Vietnamese government decided in 2008 that teachers of foreign languages at the tertiary level of education (i.e., including the university EFL teachers as participants in the present study) would have chances to participate in short-term professional development programmes overseas (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Thus, if Vietnamese language teachers have an opportunity to participate in such L&CI programmes the factors mentioned above need to be considered to provide teachers with sufficient and appropriate support.

However, the effect of such gains on teachers' teaching practices when they return to their work also depends on teachers' competence in transferring what they have gained into their teaching practice. Thus, in-country LTPD programmes can then be organised for the teachers when returning to their work to be supported to translate the cultural and language gains into their classroom teaching practices. In Harvey et al.'s (2011) view, when returning from an overseas L&CI programme, teachers need to be facilitated by those with expertise in the areas of language teaching and ICC in implementing changes in their classroom teaching practices. In other words, in-country LTPD programmes can provide these teachers with pedagogical support, presented below, in integrating culture into their language teaching.

### ***7.2.3 Teachers' pedagogical learning***

The traditional strength of TPD workshops is updating teachers' knowledge and introducing new ideas in both theory and practice. In the context of the present study, culture has not yet been treated as a core element; nor has it been integrated sufficiently into language teaching and assessment to address the development of students' IC. The participants had not been updated with the current approaches to language teaching. For example, all the participants when asked if they knew about ILT approaches said that

they had no idea of such approaches. However, they were all aware of the goal of developing ICC, broadly understood as the ability to communicate with people from other cultures using the target language. Thus, LTPD programmes need to provide teachers with learning opportunities to update their pedagogical knowledge and skills related to the addressing of the language learner's IC. Professional development programmes for Vietnamese EFL teachers (both pre-service and in-service) need to introduce ideas of ILT approaches, which address directly the development of learners' IC (as presented in Chapter 2). An understanding of such a language teaching approach, its assumptions and its core principles, can also help the participants to be further aware of the importance of addressing culture in language teaching. It would also increase their awareness of the role of the language teacher regarding the teaching of culture.

Regarding more practical issues of teaching methods and techniques to address culture in the language classroom, LTPD programmes may introduce how efforts in integrating culture into language teaching can be and have been made. As seen in section 6.4, all the observed participants missed various opportunities to address culture in their classes with the cultural content provided in their teaching materials. Several participants even seemed to neglect certain cultural points introduced in the teaching materials. Thus, it is helpful for teachers such as the participants in the present study to be familiar with practical techniques in integrating culture into their EFL teaching practices. Introducing best practices seems to be an effective way, as also mentioned by several of the participants (see 7.1.1). This can be in the form of demonstrating to teachers how a specific cultural point (e.g., a cultural practice, product, value and norm) can be intertwined with language in a language class. LTPD programmes also need to provide opportunities for teachers to link their prior knowledge with the new knowledge in practical activities so that they can be comfortable with the new innovation and motivated in adjusting their new practices in their own teaching contexts (Timperley et al., 2007). Furthermore, such provision also means that these programmes need to be extensive in terms of time, rather than simply a one-day workshop (Timperley et al., 2007). Programmes could be in the forms of courses or extended workshops on teaching "a linguaculture" (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 11), for example.

Another form of pedagogical learning that LTPD programmes can provide is increasing teachers' ability to develop teaching materials that integrate culture and language to serve the aim of developing students' IC. These pedagogical learning opportunities may range from demonstrating how cultural content can be identified and

how it can be addressed as culture input in language teaching, using the same teaching materials that teachers currently use (see also 6.4) for the design of supplementary cultural input. For example, to design supplementary cultural input, the English language teachers in Young and Sachdev's (2011) study used television programme excerpts and newspaper articles from English-speaking countries. Many other sources are also useful and worth introducing, including: personal intercultural experiences, personal photos, DVDs, videos, texts taken from the target language country, and films, as language teachers in Harvey et al.'s (2011) study used. It should be noted again that in integrating culture, culture input related to a diversity of cultures is more desirable than the input that is limited to English-speaking countries in the Vietnamese EFL teaching context of the present study.

As previously presented, almost all the participants reported their wishes to participate in an overseas L&CI programme to develop specific elements of their IC. It is useful for teachers to receive pedagogical support from in-country LTPD programmes (e.g., courses, workshops, and seminars) on returning from the host country. They need to learn how to link their new knowledge and skills with their prior ones, as well as how to translate what they have gained from their L&CI experiences into their classroom teaching practices. Furthermore, they can go on to share this with other EFL teachers in their university and from other educational institutions.

#### ***7.2.4 Making changes in teaching practices and assessment of students***

As seen in previous chapters, the participants in the present study integrated culture into their EFL teaching practices to a very limited extent, which did not give culture a central status. Such practices, according to the participants, were affected by what and how their students were assessed (see also 5.3.2). Therefore, it is necessary for LTPD programmes to support teachers to make changes, concerning IC, in their teaching practices and in assessing their students.

Firstly, in terms of changes in addressing culture, teachers need further understanding in how to transfer their new knowledge, skills and motivation gained from LTPD programmes into their own teaching contexts. LTPD programmes can assist teachers in doing so. The model of school-based follow-up development activity (Waters & Vilches, 2000), as mentioned in section 3.4.1, may effectively work to help teachers apply innovations in their teaching practices. With this model, LTPD programmes can help teachers select a certain topic related to how to integrate culture



into their language teaching and then support them in developing their plan, preparing and implementing the plan, and finally observing and evaluating the effect of the plan (among a group of colleagues). Such support can help build a bridge connecting the professional knowledge from TPD programmes and the application of such knowledge in teachers' teaching practices in their own contexts.

Secondly, one significant factor that affects teachers' teaching practices is, as mentioned previously, assessment (Wong, 2013), i.e. what is assessed and how assessment occurs. Several participants explicitly stated that currently assessments mainly focussed on linguistic knowledge and language skills, and this limited the integration of culture into their teaching. The language focus in assessments meant that these participants prioritised the language element in their teaching. The content of such examinations would be limited to the linguistic knowledge and language skills introduced in the teaching materials used in that semester (see also Ba's description of examination content in Ext # 43, section 5.3.2).

In order for culture to become a core element integrated in language teaching, assessments (both semester examinations and other forms of assessment) need to include student's IC in general as well as the component elements of this competence (e.g., cultural knowledge and intercultural skills). However, in order to do this, teachers need to have taught IC in their EFL classes prior to the assessment. The teaching materials that the participants used introduced cultural practices, topics and information as well as linguistic units that needed cultural exploration (see also Table 6.1 in 6.2.3.1). Teachers could have used these opportunities to engage with this content comprehensively to develop their students' IC. Students could be given opportunities to explore, make comparisons with their own culture, reflect on cultural differences, modify their cultural behaviour in interactions and develop their critical intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat, 2002). Such cultural content could then be utilised as the basis for assessing students' IC and its components, even within the current assessment system. One example follows to show that an integration of IC into current examination-based assessment is possible and practicable.

For example, Nãm's and Ban's teaching materials (used in the observed classes) introduced the practice of "sunbathing". Nãm and Ban could have used this opportunity to teach IC related to the practice of sunbathing. I have described how they could have done this in 6.4. In assessment, students could then have been required to apply their IC learning to a similar topic such as entertainment, table manners, welcoming guests and

shopping. In addition, teachers might also be taught how to assess their students by keeping, for example, a profile on individual students' IC and development of IC in class rating components such as attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness. With this pedagogical knowledge, teachers could then integrate IC into the assessment of their students throughout a semester, rather than just in examinations.

Moreover, teachers need to be supported in designing tools for assessing their students' IC or its elements, i.e. categories of *savoir* in Byram's (1997, 2012) terms. In the context of the study, as the participants reported, the management of each university school or of the university decided the forms of examinations. Thus, it is necessary for the management to be aware of the need for culture and IC to be integrated in assessments, instead of focussing on merely the language element.

Therefore, in order to ensure the efficacy of teachers' application of their newly constructed knowledge and skills gained from TPD programmes to their classrooms, TPD programmes need to support teachers in ways that produce a positive impact on students' learning outcomes.

### **7.3 Summary**

The main findings about participants' reports and comments on TPD are summarised as follows. The participants reported that workshops, as the main form of TPD programmes available, presently focussed on providing teachers with computer technological support and language teaching methodological guidance in terms of addressing (both teaching and assessing) linguistic knowledge and language skills. Several workshops also aimed to assess and develop teachers' language proficiency. These LTPD programmes did not cover any issues related to the integration of culture into language teaching; nor did they address teachers' cultural knowledge in particular or IC in general. According to most of the participants, their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills were mainly self-taught. They developed these IC components by reading publications on cultures and cultural issues, gaining cultural facts from mass media, movies and websites, interacting with foreigners and reflecting on their own cultural behaviour. The participants reported that they wanted to participate in L&CI programmes in English-speaking countries to develop their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills, as well as their language proficiency. They also wanted in-country LTPD programmes to address the integration of culture into language teaching. They mentioned such issues as the development of teaching materials for the integration of

culture into language teaching, methods and techniques in teaching culture, the development of teachers' cultural knowledge, intercultural skills and teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching, and the introduction of best practices.

In general, continuous professional development is necessary for language teachers in terms of their pedagogical knowledge and skills, their language proficiency, and their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills (Allen, 2010). Thus, specifically regarding the integration of culture into language teaching practices to achieve the ultimate goal of the development of the language learner's IC, Vietnamese university EFL teachers need support from LTPD programmes in various areas. Firstly, these programmes need to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of the integration of culture into language teaching, which could enhance their own IC and their competence in teaching a "linguaculture" in Crozet et al.'s (1999) terms. Thus, the second area of support from such LTPD programmes is the development of teachers' own IC. LTPD programmes can do this in two ways: providing teachers with in-country LTPD workshops, seminars and courses and providing them with opportunities to participate in overseas L&CI programmes. The third area is the support for teachers to transfer their newly constructed pedagogical and cultural knowledge as well as their newly gained intercultural and language teaching skills into classroom teaching practices in a way that can have a positive impact on their students' learning outcomes, particularly in terms of IC development. Finally, as seen in previous chapters, the participants addressed culture to a very limited extent, and one of the factors that led to this was that the current assessments of students were entirely in the form of testing students' linguistic knowledge and language skills. Thus, LTPD programmes need to support teachers in changing their teaching practices and assessment of their students. In order for IC, the foregrounding component of Byram's (1997) ICC model, to become the ultimate goal of language teaching, culture needs to be taught in an integrated way with language, and it is necessary for IC and its elements, or categories of *savoir*, to be integrated into language assessment.

## **Chapter 8    Conclusions**

### **8.0    Introduction**

One of the main aims of language education should be the development of learners' ICC (Sercu, 2006), enabling language learners to be successful in intercultural interactions and mediating between cultures (Byram, 2008). This competence consists of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural competences, of which IC is the foregrounding one (Byram, 1997). To address the development of language learners' IC, culture must be integrated into language teaching as a central element (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000). The present critical ethnographic study aimed to socially construct local knowledge about the integration of culture into university EFL teaching in a Vietnamese context. It addressed the overarching research question: *How do we currently understand Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their teaching practices?*

This chapter first reviews the theoretical and methodological issues underpinning the present study and provides a summary of the background to the study (section 8.1). It then summarises the key findings from the analysis of the collected data (section 8.2). Section 8.3 describes the relationships among these findings and thus provides a more focussed appraisal of the issue under study. Section 8.4 presents a discussion of the possible implications of the findings in terms of positive changes in the Vietnamese EFL education context. These changes, broadly speaking, address the development of learners' IC. They can be categorised into three areas of change: for language teachers, for language teacher educators, and for language education policy makers. To facilitate thinking about these changes I have suggested a model showing how language teachers can interact with their institutional, national and international contexts to address the main aim of language education, the development of learners' IC. The model also demonstrates how teachers and their language teaching are impacted by these contexts. Section 8.5 of the chapter proposes areas of further research that build on and extend the scope of the present study. The chapter ends with an overall conclusion of the whole study.

### **8.1    Theoretical issues and background to the study**

This study has a critical ethnographic design, all the levels of which (i.e., ontology, epistemology, methodology and method) are framed by social constructionism. This section reviews how the main theoretical and methodological ideas have underpinned

the design of the study, as well as how the topic, the integration of culture into language teaching, was examined in a Vietnamese setting.

### ***8.1.1 Theoretical issues***

Social constructionism stresses that human reality is socially constructed in interactions and is subjective and, particularly, intersubjective in nature, and thus multiple realities exist (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010). It highlights the historically and socio-culturally differentiated constructions of the world, i.e. experiences of one another and of the self (Burr, 2003). In this sense, research participants' own accounts of their experiences need to be respected in describing such constructions. Knowledge, therefore, is socially constructed, maintained and transmitted in human interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It is specific to cultures and times (Burr, 2003; Hibberd, 2005; Lock & Strong, 2010). Thus, to construct contextualised and relativistic knowledge (Miller, 2005) about a cultural group, it is necessary to interact and work in collaboration with members of the group (Creswell, 1998; Shotter, 1993). Furthermore, social constructionism also requires researchers to be critical in order to make change in the world (Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010). Thus research knowledge is seen as a force for changing the world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010).

This study examined how a cultural group of Vietnamese university EFL teachers addressed culture in their language teaching. It aimed to construct knowledge that is specific to the socio-cultural context (Burr, 2003; Lock & Strong, 2010) about the current integration of culture into EFL teaching by this group of teachers. With this contextualised and relativistic knowledge, it also aimed to suggest changes in the context of Vietnamese EFL education for the development of learners' IC. In other words, it is a critical ethnographic study of Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into language teaching and an empirically based consideration of how things could be different.

In the light of social constructionism, the research procedure for the present study examined multiple realities and ways of understanding the world, and incorporated criticality as an inherent feature. Firstly, I recruited participants to represent as far as possible the population of EFL teachers in the field site (i.e. a university in North Vietnam), and thus to represent their multiple realities. Secondly, in constructing knowledge, I collected data by interacting with the participants in

interviews. These interviews helped me to understand and gather their perspectives and their ways of understanding regarding the issue under study. Because knowledge is socially constructed in interactions in daily social practices (Burr, 2003), I observed these participants in their classroom teaching in their own natural setting. I was able to observe them engaging in interactions with their students in their professional practices. These teacher-student classroom interactions were based mainly on the teaching materials the participants used. Thus, I gathered copies of these materials so that I could gain further understanding of the participants' practices. Thirdly, in analysing data, I both looked for patterns in the participants' beliefs and practices to describe the whole group and, at the same time, respected their different perspectives. That means, the data analysis methods that I used, i.e. preliminary and thematic (Boyatzis, 1998; Gibson & Brown, 2009), allowed the data set to have privilege and the right of speaking for itself. Finally, social constructionism also underpins the presentation of data in the form of findings and discussions of findings. Participants' own accounts were presented in quotes from interviews. My own discussion, interpretation and evaluation of these multiple perspectives helped me to contribute to the construction of knowledge about the phenomenon under study. My contribution to this construction of knowledge was made explicit by referring to my own experience, knowledge and personal point of view. From the current understanding of EFL teachers' integration of culture into language teaching in a Vietnamese context, I also proposed suggestions for positive changes to be made in this context, based on my knowledge and the body of knowledge from a review of the literature. This proposal of suggestions reflects the criticality of this study, i.e. interweaving knowledge and social change (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003). Furthermore, in presenting data, I provided thick data description (Braun & Clarke, 2006), for example, in the form of quotes and emic descriptions representing participants' multiple perspectives, attitudes and practices. I also presented my own perspective in interpreting and discussing participants' accounts so that readers of the thesis might reach their own interpretations of the context and the issue of interest. In doing so, readers who are familiar with contexts that are similar to the one in this study can relate the findings and the constructed knowledge to their own contexts.

### **8.1.2 Background to the study**

Culture is a multi-faceted concept. It is commonly conceptualised in terms of its structural elements that can be represented in many ways. One of the most common ways of doing this is by using the "layer" metaphor. Within this metaphor these layers

are both visible (e.g., cultural artefacts and practices) and invisible (e.g., beliefs, values and norms) as can be seen in the onion analogy of culture (e.g., Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) and the iceberg model (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Culture is also described in terms of its functions in human life, the process of constructing and transmitting cultural elements, political dominance, moral and intellectual refinement (Faulkner et al., 2006). It is, as well, understood as a place (e.g., a country or region) and a group of people (Faulkner et al., 2006). Language and culture are inseparable, and culture influences all levels of human communication (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). Culture becomes particularly salient in intercultural communication, i.e. communication between people from different cultural backgrounds (Liddicoat, 2009). Therefore, addressing culture in language education so that language learners become competent in communicating across cultures is a very important issue.

In this era of globalisation, language education needs to address the development of language learner's IC (Scarino, 2009). There are several influential IC models: Byram's (1997), Liddicoat's (2002) and Deardorff's (2004 as cited in Deardorff, 2006) models. Byram focusses on the structure of the competence and describes its components in terms of five categories of *savoir* (i.e., *savoir être*, *savoirs*, *savoir comprendre*, *savoir apprendre/faire*, and *savoir s'engager*). These categories represent four aspects of IC: knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness. Liddicoat's and Deardorff's models both stress the developmental process of this competence, considering it an on-going process of development. While Byram's model helps to depict the necessary components of IC to be aimed for in language education, Liddicoat's model shows how to achieve this competence in the language classroom, and Deardorff's model is advantageous in both describing the aims and the process to achieve these aims.

In order to develop IC in language learners, culture needs to be addressed in an integrated way with language (Liddicoat, 2002). ILT approaches highlight this integration (Liddicoat et al., 2003). The integration of culture into language teaching also plays an essential role in Newton and Shearn's (2010b) iCLT approach, which stresses both IC and communicative competence. Furthermore, a combination of both a static view and a dynamic view of culture is necessary (Liddicoat, 2002; Schulz, 2007). However, research has shown that language teachers in various contexts around the world still tend to have a static view of culture rather than a dynamic view or a

combination of both (e.g., Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Luk, 2012). Language teachers currently seem to define fairly limited goals in teaching culture, focussing on the knowledge component rather than other IC components such as intercultural skills and awareness (Castro et al., 2004). Such beliefs have an impact on teachers' practices in addressing culture in their language classrooms. Teachers, in numerous studies and in various language teaching contexts, have addressed culture to a relatively limited extent (Castro et al., 2004; East, 2012; Harvey et al., 2010; Ho, 2011; Luk, 2012; Sercu, 2005). To teach culture comprehensively for the development of language learners' IC requires change to the current practices such as those described in the above-mentioned studies. To facilitate change, TPD is an important factor. However, current LTPD programmes do not seem to address issues related to improving teachers' ability to teach IC (Harvey et al., 2010). Such issues may include: teachers' awareness of the role of culture in language teaching; teachers' own IC; and teacher's methodological knowledge and ability to teach and assess IC.

The recent Vietnamese government foreign language education policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008) advocates the teaching and learning of foreign language for intercultural communication. This advocacy implies the necessity of the development of IC in Vietnamese foreign language learners. One Vietnamese study, Ho (2011), examined the intercultural teaching and learning in the EFL classroom in a Vietnamese university, as reviewed in Chapter 3. However, in his study Ho did not exclusively or comprehensively address issues related to LTPD, particularly those concerning the development of learners' IC. TPD is important in education in general and in language education in particular. These issues, as pointed out and discussed in detail in the present study, include: teachers' awareness of the role of culture in language teaching; development of teachers' own IC; and teachers' pedagogical learning and development of ability in addressing and assessing IC. Section 8.2, below, summarises the findings in the present study.

## **8.2 Summary of findings**

This section summarises the key findings, providing insights into the current integration of culture into language teaching in a Vietnamese context. The presentation of the findings not only describes the commonalities in participants' professional beliefs and practices but also reflects their multiple perspectives (i.e., differences) as well as my own perspective (i.e., the perspective of the researcher of the study and a former language learner, teacher trainee and teacher). These findings are summarised in three



broad categories: EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching culture, their integration of culture into language teaching practices, and LTPD.

### ***8.2.1 EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching culture***

How culture is addressed in language teaching depends largely on how language teachers view culture and what cultural goals they aim for in addressing it (Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Liddicoat, 2002). The participants in the present study regarded culture as a pervasive and broad concept. They perceived and discussed the influence of culture on every aspect of human life and its presence in all human activities. However, the majority of participants, when relating culture to their professional context of EFL teaching, seemed to limit culture to the behavioural aspect of culture, especially language behaviour. It appears that these EFL teachers tended to hold a static view of culture rather than a dynamic one (Liddicoat, 2002) or a combination of both views of culture in their EFL teaching context.

With a static view of culture and rather limited conceptualisations of culture in their professional context, the participants gave culture a peripheral status in their EFL teaching practices. The main evidence for this claim included the following. Firstly, the participants devoted limited time and attention to addressing culture in their EFL teaching practices. It seems that most participants, though aware that in language education culture and language should be of similar status, stated that they spent less than 30% of the classroom time on culture (usually from 5% to 20%). None of the participants reported a higher percentage than 30% of their classroom time teaching culture. Secondly, the majority of participants did not usually include explicit cultural aims in planning their lessons. Cultural aims, according to them, were included only when the lesson materials they were going to teach from contained a cultural topic or introduced a cultural practice. Thirdly, the participants did not realise that they, as language teachers, had an integrated role of teaching both language and culture. Several participants even explicitly denied the role of teaching culture, seeing it as someone else's responsibility.

Regarding the goals in addressing culture in their EFL teaching, the participants defined these goals in four broad categories. These categories included: (a) supporting their students' appropriateness of the target language use; (b) enhancing effectiveness in intercultural communication; (c) developing their students' knowledge about English-speaking cultures, especially in how native speakers use English; and (d) developing

positive attitudes towards other foreign cultures and cultural differences. Participants' descriptions of their cultural goals in EFL teaching did not include the important components of IC such as intercultural skills and critical intercultural awareness. They seldom aimed for the development of their students' awareness of cultural diversity which can be observed among English-speaking countries and cultures, including also countries where English is spoken as a significant second language.

Most of the participants reported that there were various obstacles in teaching culture in their own context, explaining why they would address culture only to a limited extent. They named seven main obstacles. The four most common ones included: the low target language proficiency level of their students; the need to focus on linguistic knowledge to meet the demands of examinations; time constraints; and a lack of motivation in learning English in a number of students.

### ***8.2.2 EFL teachers' integration of culture into teaching practices***

The participants appeared to have a static view of culture, defined very limited goals in addressing culture in their EFL teaching, and reported numerous obstacles in teaching culture (as summarised above). These could be seen as factors that led to their limited integration of culture into their language teaching. Following is a summary of the key findings presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

Firstly, all the participants taught English in classrooms shared for teaching other courses, with fixed long desks and benches for students. This made it difficult for teachers to organise small group work activities in such classrooms. The class size varied, with an average of 40 to 45 students in each class. Several classes had over 50 students. Some participants reported that the large size of their English classes was a factor that led them to limit their addressing of culture. In their view, because there were too many individual students and small groups of students to work with, they did not have enough time to introduce more culture input than what was provided in their teaching materials. With a large class, they felt that they would need to prioritise their linguistic aims (i.e., linguistic knowledge and language skills) over culture. Thus, this view reflects the participants' approach to culture teaching; i.e., they seemed to treat culture separately from language and as an additional element in their language teaching.

Secondly, the participants' classroom teaching practices depended heavily on their set teaching materials (either a selected commercially available English textbook

or a set of materials compiled from existing English textbooks and books for English test preparation). The participants designed and organised their teaching activities relying on what was provided in their prescribed teaching materials. Usually, they strictly followed the instructions in the teaching materials and provided further explanation to facilitate their students' understanding of the tasks and content. Several of the participants sometimes provided their students with supplementary input (both language and culture).

Thirdly, regarding the cultural content in the set teaching materials, more than half of the participants believed that this content was sufficient to teach to their students and it was not necessary to supplement their prescribed teaching materials with further cultural input. This is because these participants defined very limited cultural goals in addressing culture. Several other participants reported that the cultural content in their teaching materials was insufficient for them to integrate culture into their EFL teaching and, thus, they provided their students with further culture input. For most of these participants, the main source of supplementary culture input was their own cultural knowledge, intercultural experience, and information from websites.

An analysis of the cultural content provided in the collected sections from the participants' teaching materials used in the observed classes showed the following points. These teaching materials facilitated teachers to introduce culture input mainly in the form of cultural topics, aspects of language-culture links, and cultural facts. Such cultural content could also support students' target language acquisition and practice. However, these materials seldom provided explicit instructions for teaching culture. This meant that if teachers only followed the instructions from the materials they would seldom explicitly address culture in their language teaching. These teaching materials presented culture mainly in the form of introducing cultural information rather than in the form of instructions for teaching and learning culture.

The participants tended to teach culture incidentally, addressing culture only as a response to a cultural point (e.g., a vocabulary item that needed cultural explanation or exploration and a cultural practice) appearing in the teaching materials. They, as previously mentioned, included cultural objectives in their lesson planning only when a specific lesson introduced a cultural topic or when such objectives were prescribed in the instructions provided in their teaching materials. The typical ways in which the participants addressed such a cultural point included: (a) providing information and explaining the point; (b) making a comparison between the culture introduced and the

Vietnamese culture; and (c) providing language aids (e.g., vocabulary items and grammatical structures) for students to talk about the cultural point. They taught culture mainly in the form of transmitting cultural knowledge. This way of teaching culture reflected their static view of culture. Furthermore, there were cultural points that several participants did not address. For most of the participants, they addressed culture to support their students' target language use and to provide cultural knowledge. When addressing culture, the participants mainly provided cultural knowledge, typically knowledge about English-speaking cultures, and made comparisons between the students' own culture (i.e., Vietnamese) and these target language cultures. None of the participants appeared to address IC in an explicit, extensive and comprehensive way.

Finally, there were numerous moments in the observed classes where the participants missed opportunities to address culture in ways that could support the development of their students' IC. In other words, with the cultural content provided in the teaching materials that the participants used, they could have integrated culture more extensively. The elements of IC that most of the participants missed opportunities to address were: cultural knowledge (especially culture-general and cross-cultural knowledge), intercultural skills and critical intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997, 2012). That is, even with the relatively limited cultural content provided in the teaching materials the participants currently used, they could have organised numerous further activities to address IC or its specific elements. Such extension activities could have supported the students, for example, to explore, compare, relate, reflect on and evaluate cultures in general and cultural products, practices as well as cultural beliefs and values in particular (Byram, 1997; Newton & Shearn, 2010b).

Thus, in the participants' beliefs about teaching culture and their practices in integrating culture into language teaching, culture was only given a minor supporting role. It was not seen as a core element to be explicitly taught in an integrated way with language. In order for culture to be integrated into EFL teaching in ways that address the development of students' IC, changes and efforts must be made and appropriate teacher training needs to be provided.

### **8.2.3 *EFL teacher professional development***

The participants reported that the LTPD programmes (mainly in the form of workshops) they had attended focussed only on support for using technology and language: teaching linguistic units and language skills. These professional development programmes did

not cover cultural issues or train teachers in how to integrate culture into language teaching. They did not assist teachers to increase their cultural knowledge, intercultural skills or competence in teaching culture. The participants reported that they improved their own cultural knowledge and intercultural skills (i.e., specific IC elements) mainly by self-teaching. The most common ways in which the participants improved these components of their IC included: (a) reading publications on cultures and cultural issues; (b) communicating with foreigners; (c) learning about culture from mass media, movies and websites; and (d) reflecting on and/or adjusting their own cultural behaviours in intercultural encounters. The participants also wanted to participate in overseas L&CI programmes for both linguistic and cultural gains in improving their competence in teaching culture.

The participants thus needed support in developing their own and their students' IC. It is necessary for LTPD programmes to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of culture and its integration into language teaching, as well as awareness of the language teacher's integrated role of teaching both language and culture. Teachers need explicit pedagogical support from these programmes in addressing culture in an integrated way with language and in ways that have a positive impact on the development of their students' IC.

### **8.3 Relationships among findings**

The findings about the patterned beliefs and practices among the cultural group of Vietnamese university EFL teachers have patterned interrelationships. Figure 8.1 describes these relationships and thus provides a comprehensive understanding of the current integration of culture into language teaching in this context.

It was found from this study that the participants integrated culture into their EFL teaching practices to a very limited extent and they missed various opportunities to address culture to develop their students' IC. As can be seen in Figure 8.1, this limited integration of culture was directly affected by seven main factors. These factors have been identified as: (a) teachers' views and conceptualisations of culture, especially in their EFL teaching context; (b) teachers' limited goals in addressing culture; (c) the nature of the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials; (d) their low awareness of the language teacher's role in regard to teaching culture; (e) teachers' perceived obstacles in integrating culture into language teaching; (f) the lack of focus on

culture teaching in TPD programmes they had attended; and (g) inadequate communication flows between language education policy makers and teachers.

Firstly, though the participants knew of the multiple facets of culture (e.g., its elements, its functions, and the process of forming culture), they tended to hold a static view of culture and limit it to cultural products and observable cultural practices, especially language behaviour in their professional context. Their static view and relatively shallow conceptualisations of culture became a factor that led to their limited integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices. The participants mostly focussed on provision of cultural knowledge and on cultural differences in language use, comparing the target language and the students' mother tongue.

Secondly, because of such conceptualisations of culture the participants defined limited goals in addressing culture while teaching English. For most of the participants, culture mainly supported the use of the target language in communicating with its native speakers, and thus was not usually addressed in their classes. They taught culture when cultural explanation or exploration would help their students acquire certain linguistic units or in using them culturally appropriately. For these participants, culture played only a minor supporting role in language teaching and learning.

Thirdly, as a common practice shared among Vietnamese teachers of English, the participants' teaching depended heavily on set teaching materials. They typically designed and organised their classroom activities on the basis of what was provided in their pre-prescribed teaching materials. Meanwhile, the cultural content in these teaching materials was found to be inadequate for culture to become a core element to be taught explicitly with language in an integrated way. Furthermore, this content was presented separately from language, usually in the form of cultural information. It was the participants' dependence on such teaching materials that limited their teaching of culture.

Another factor was that many of the participants did not realise that they, as language teachers, because of a change in government language education policy, now had an integrated role of teaching both language and culture in ways to develop their students' IC. Several participants even saw the task of teaching culture as somebody else's responsibility. Thus, the participants did not seem to be aware of the importance of culture and its integration into language teaching in their own teaching context because they were not aware of a change in government policy.

The fifth factor was that the participants perceived numerous obstacles in integrating culture into their EFL teaching practices. Obstacles such as time constraints, the need to focus on linguistic knowledge in their teaching to help their students meet the demands of examinations, and their own limited cultural knowledge also prevented them from addressing culture more extensively.

The sixth factor was the lack of focus on cultural and culture teaching issues in current LTPD programmes. According to the participants, the language teacher professional programmes they had attended focussed only on language. These programmes, typically workshops, mainly introduced ideas, methods and techniques in teaching linguistic knowledge and language skills. They did not touch on culture, teachers' own IC, or teachers' competence in integrating culture into language teaching to develop their students' IC. Thus, the participants did not receive what they felt was necessary support regarding the integration of culture into their language teaching practices. This lack of support was also a factor causing the limited extent to which participants addressed culture and IC in their EFL teaching practices.

Finally, the communication of foreign language education policies from policy makers (both at the national level and the institutional level) to language teachers was neither prompt nor successful enough (see 7.1.3). For example, the participants did not understand much about the current government foreign language education policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008), which started three years prior to the time they were asked about this policy. Some participants were even unaware of this policy. This policy advocates the teaching and learning of foreign language to develop ICC. That is, culture needs to be seen as a central element in language teaching in the policy. Thus, teachers' poor understanding of the current policy also led them to give culture a less important status and address culture to a fairly limited extent in their language teaching practices. In addition, it led to their low awareness of the integrated role of teaching both language and culture.

The main reasons leading to the current limited integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching can be summarised in Figure 8.1. These reasons can be seen as important factors affecting how culture is addressed for the development of learner's IC in the context of Vietnamese foreign language education at the university level. The figure, thus, provides a holistic understanding of this context.

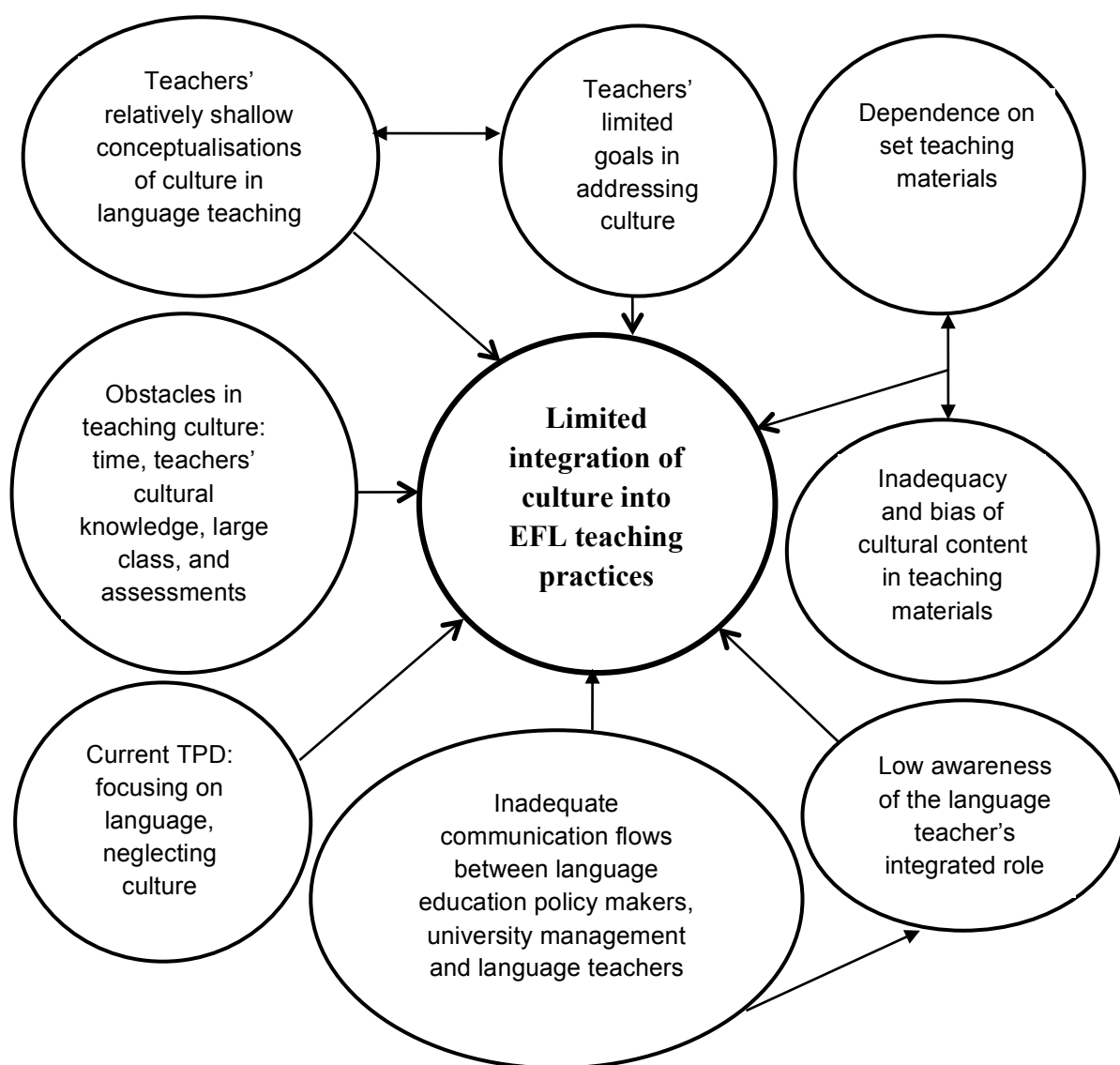


Figure 8.1 Current reasons for limited integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching

To improve the integration of culture into language teaching, supportive policies that help language teachers to develop both their own IC and their ability to address and assess this competence for their students are needed. In such policies, there should be LTPD programmes that provide language teachers with pedagogical support in terms fostering the development of students' IC. Furthermore, the development of teachers' own IC, their teaching competence and their ability to assess IC are also interrelated with their current low awareness of the role of culture in language teaching as well as of their role of teaching culture. The issues of TPD and government policies will be further discussed in section 8.4.



## 8.4 Implications

A critical analysis of the current integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching practices has shown that culture has not yet been treated as a core element in language teaching. In order for culture to become integrated, there need to be significant changes and efforts made. The findings in the present study have numerous implications in aiming for better language teaching planning and practices that address the development of language learners' IC. These implications are presented in three interrelated categories: for EFL teachers, for language teacher educators and for language education policy makers. These categories of implications also contribute to an optimal model in which language teachers interact with their institutional, national and international contexts for language teaching that aims to develop learners' IC (see Figure 8.2).

### 8.4.1 *Implications for EFL teachers*

As already argued, it is necessary for language teachers to be aware of the need to teach language and culture in an integrated way (e.g., Byram, 2009; Liddicoat et al., 2003). It is only with this awareness that teachers themselves will become open to new ideas on how to address culture in their language classrooms while making the requisite changes in their teaching practices. A positive change can be related to designing explicit cultural aims, designing cultural input, addressing all the components of IC, and learning how to assess this competence.

Firstly, it is necessary for teachers to include explicit cultural aims in lesson planning. This explicitness not only represents teachers' awareness of the status of culture but also helps them to reflect on and evaluate their own teaching practices. With explicit cultural aims stated in lesson plans, teachers will then be able to design appropriate activities to address culture. They can organise a wide variety of classroom activities in which culture is effectively integrated into language teaching and learning to develop their students' IC.

Secondly, it is advisable that even when their teaching relies on prescribed teaching materials, teachers need to identify the cultural content provided in these materials as much as they can. As analysed and discussed in section 7.1, the participants in the present study missed numerous opportunities contained in the set materials they used to address culture in ways that would help their students to develop their IC. Several participants did not seem to be aware of some of the cultural points presented in

the teaching materials. When teachers are able to identify such cultural content and include explicit cultural aims in their lesson planning, they can introduce this content as culture input to their students. Teachers can help their students notice, explore, reflect on and experiment with this cultural content (Liddicoat, 2002) in developing their IC. Significantly, the cultural content that is introduced needs to represent cultural diversity, especially when English is taught and learned as a lingua franca, moving beyond the focus on only English-speaking cultures.

Thirdly, it would be better for teachers to free themselves from their dependence on the prescribed teaching materials, using them as just one source of input (for both language and culture). The present study found that many of the participants strictly followed the instructions provided in these materials, without any adjustment to their own teaching situations or any supplementary input. However, these materials seldom included instructions for teachers on how to address culture explicitly (see also 6.2.3.3). Thus, if teachers only follow the teaching instructions in, say, a textbook, there will seldom be chances for them to address culture explicitly, at least with current textbooks.

Another change that teachers may make is supplementing culture input if they use the pre-designated sets of teaching materials (as described in 6.2.1). Several participants in the present study believed that the cultural content provided in their main teaching materials was sufficient and that it was not necessary to provide further culture input. This was because they were not aware of the role of culture, which led to their limited integration of culture into their teaching practice. Several other participants held the opposite beliefs, stating that the cultural content in their main teaching materials was insufficient and that they provided additional culture input, chiefly in the form of cultural information. However, when providing further cultural input, teachers need to organise for their students to engage with it (e.g., noticing, reflecting on and experimenting with it), rather than merely providing cultural information.

Finally, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the components of IC to be developed in their students. For example, very few of the participants were observed to address the deep-level culture elements of beliefs and values. This negligence would hinder the students from gaining a better understanding of their own as well as other cultures. Thus, it would be impossible for students to evaluate their own cultural products and behaviour as well as others' on explicit criteria (Byram, 1997). In other words, critical intercultural awareness, the central component of IC (Byram, 2012), was not given any attention.

#### **8.4.2 *Implications for language teacher educators***

In preparing teachers who can teach and assess IC, language teacher educators need to have expertise in the area of teaching and assessing this competence. This expertise will help them build knowledge and skills to teach culture as a central and integrated element of language teaching in their teacher trainees. Language teacher education programmes need to include the following issues. Firstly, they can develop teacher trainees' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching and learning. Secondly, they can introduce updated international trends in language teaching: pedagogical ideas and innovations (e.g., ILT approaches and principles and methods in addressing culture in ways that develop learners' IC). Thirdly, it is necessary for these programmes to help teacher trainees to develop their own ICC. This is because language teachers can also be seen at the same time as both language users and language learners who are competent to communicate across and mediate between cultures. This competence is important for teacher trainees in addressing the development of their own students' IC when they become teachers. Fourthly, language teacher educators need to build up in teacher trainees the ability to teach and assess IC. This ability also includes the ability to develop appropriate teaching materials.

#### **8.4.3 *Implications for language education policy makers***

The implications presented above are for language teachers in general, EFL teachers in particular, as well as for language teacher educators. Section 8.4.3 proposes implications for language education policy makers with regard to changes that can be made to the language teaching environment and LTPD.

Firstly, language teachers need an environment that is supportive to them in addressing culture as a core and integrated element in language teaching. In order to create such an environment, education authorities and language education policy makers at the institutional level (e.g., university rectors, heads of university schools and foreign language departments) need to be aware of the significance of culture in language education. For example, regarding the physical setting of English classrooms (as discussed in 6.1) all participants taught English in rooms with fixed long desks and benches. This made it difficult for them to organise small group-work activities, in which flexible chairs are preferable because it is more convenient for students to move them around the room to form discussion groups. Thus, education authorities in universities are generally advised to provide classrooms, at least, for language teaching

with movable chairs to support teachers and students in organising group-work activities. Teachers could also be taught how to work within the restraints (e.g., time constraints, quantity of teaching work, and large classes) that they have in the meantime. Furthermore, language education policy makers need to be aware of the necessity of including the assessment of students' IC in language examinations. With such awareness, they need to make changes and help teachers make changes in what and how to assess students. Instead of merely examining students' linguistic knowledge as currently practised, assessment of language students needs to include the assessment of ICC as well, i.e. incorporating the assessment of students' IC within language, or more accurately, language and culture assessments.

Also required are better communication flows of policies (e.g., the current Vietnamese government foreign language education policy) between policy makers at the national level and teachers in the classroom. Teachers need to be informed of and understand their national policies so that these policies can be realised in their teaching practices. For example, government bodies, particularly the Ministry of Education and Training, need to establish and maintain these communication flows. They can produce, and circulate to teachers, official written documents and guidelines that stress the necessity of culture in language education. These documents may suggest how culture can be integrated into language education in curriculum design, material development, teaching practices, and student assessment. Alternatively and preferably, New Zealand Ministry of Education's website for language teachers and learners (at: <http://learning-languages.tki.org.nz/>) can be seen as an example of "best practice" in being effective in communicating policies to language teachers as well as to educational institutions (e.g., schools). Through this website, New Zealand language teachers are also provided with language curriculum guides, professional support, language resources, and language teaching and assessment guidelines. Furthermore, they are informed of updated pedagogical ideas and innovations, as well as research in language education, both nationally and internationally. The circulation of policies can also be through TPD programmes. In addition, language education policies must deal with relevant issues that language teachers see as their obstacles in integrating culture as a core element in language teaching such as professional knowledge, large classes, time constraints, and student assessment. In the present study, according to the participants, such obstacles were among the main factors that caused their limited integration of culture into their EFL teaching practices.

Secondly and of great significance, supportive policies for LTPD in regard to addressing the development of students' IC are necessary. Such policies can and need to support language teachers in three main ways: (a) raising teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching; (b) facilitating teachers to develop their IC in particular and ICC in general; and (c) enabling teachers to teach culture as an integrated component in language teaching that addresses the development of IC. These ways are discussed below.

- *Raising teachers' awareness:* Languages education policies need to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language teaching that aims for the development of learners' IC. Because this awareness is interrelated with teachers' own IC and their ability to teach and assess this competence, these can be addressed simultaneously. However, language education policies may start bringing about positive changes to language teaching practices by raising teachers' awareness. This needs to be included in language teacher education programmes (for pre-service teachers) as well as LTPD for in-service teachers. To raise teachers' awareness, there needs to be regular and ongoing communication between language education policy makers and teachers.
- *Facilitating teachers' development of intercultural competence:* If language teaching aims for the development of learners' IC, teachers must possess this competence as a precondition. In other words, with the intercultural speaker as the norm in language teaching and learning, the teacher must be a competent intercultural speaker. Thus, language education policies need to facilitate teachers' development of ICC in general and IC in particular. Such policies need to provide support for both teacher trainees and in-service teachers to develop this competence. Both pre-service and in-service language teachers need to be seen as language users and language learners at the same time. This means that the diversity and dynamism of cultures and the interrelationship between language and culture always need to become an important part of languages education policies.

As presented in section 5.3.6, the participants in the study commented that when they were English language learners and language teacher trainees, culture was given little attention in their education programmes. Thus, they reported that their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills (two components of IC) were rather limited and they had to enrich them by self-teaching (see 7.1.2). Thus, language education policies need to construct culture as a compulsory element in designing curricula for language courses and language teacher education programmes.

Furthermore, non-native in-service English language teachers (who are also learners and users of languages) such as the participants in this study also need to have opportunities to improve their ICC in general and its specific components (e.g., linguistic competence, socio-linguistic competence, and IC) as part of their continuous professional development. Regarding IC, there are two main ways to facilitate in-service teachers to develop this competence: in-country LTPD programmes and overseas L&CI programmes.

In-country programmes can address teachers' development of such components of IC, or categories of *savoir* in Byram's (Byram, 1997, 2012) terms, as cultural knowledge (i.e., *savoirs*), critical intercultural awareness (i.e., *savoir s'engager*), and intercultural attitudes (i.e., *savoir être*). The intercultural skills of interpreting and relating (i.e., *savoir comprendre*) can also be developed in these programmes. In this way, with the participation of non-Vietnamese people (as organisers and foreign teacher participants), such in-country programmes may more fully facilitate Vietnamese teachers (as well as foreign participants) to develop their intercultural skills of discovery and interaction (i.e., *savoir apprendre/faire*).

As decided in the 2008 languages education policy by the Vietnamese government (Government of Vietnam, 2008), tertiary foreign language teachers (including university language teachers) can be supported to participate in short-term overseas L&CI programmes. These programmes could be a good chance for language teachers to develop their ICC. Research has indicated that overseas L&CI programmes have a positive impact on language teachers' ICC, especially in terms of the development of their language proficiency, as well as their cultural knowledge, intercultural skills and awareness (see also 3.4.2). However, to maximise the impact on teachers' development of ICC, such programmes need to be well-structured and provide support for the participants in all the three stages before, during and after the L&CI experience (Harvey et al., 2011). Thus, organisers of these overseas L&CI programmes for Vietnamese EFL teachers, for example, need to take all these into consideration. Specifically, they need to consider the following issues, according to Harvey et al. (2011): providing sufficient and appropriate information prior to the experience, setting clear goals and outcomes, support during the experience, as well as debriefing of and reflecting on the experience when returning from the host country. For example, before departing, teacher sojourners need to be aware of what they are expected to gain from such a programme, how they can achieve their goals, and what is seen as evidence of

the expected gains. When in the host country, they need to follow what has been planned and (receive support to) solve possible problems that may arise. They also need to reflect on the experience and evaluate it in terms of what they have learned from it, particularly the development of their ICC. Importantly, teachers need to be facilitated to transfer what they have learned (e.g., their developed ICC) into their own classrooms. There may also be a requirement for them to communicate their experiences and insights to other language teachers so that the L&CI experience can have maximum professional development spread.

- *Developing teachers' teaching ability:* When teachers are aware of the importance of the integration of culture into language teaching and are themselves competent in intercultural situations, they need to be supported to develop their ability to teach culture in an integrated way with language. Thus, in regard to achieving the goal of ICC in language education, policies need to facilitate teachers' teaching ability. That is, LTPD programmes must provide teachers with pedagogical support in terms of ideas, methods and techniques in addressing and examining culture as a core element that is integrated into language teaching.

As presented in section 7.2.3, none of the participants in this study was informed about ILT approaches, the approaches that directly address the development of IC. Therefore, LTPD programmes need to introduce these approaches to both pre-service and in-service language teachers. For example, introducing and discussing the basic principles of these approaches such as those developed by Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) and Newton and Shearn (2010b) are important and necessary ideas for teachers to master.

To enhance classroom teaching practices that integrate culture and language, these programmes need to train teachers in how to address culture in an integrated way with language. To do so, Liddicoat's (2002) IC model can be helpful, as a first step, for teachers to envisage what should occur in the pathway of developing their students' IC. That is, teachers need to be aware of the cyclical development of IC involving input-noticing-reflection-output (Liddicoat, 2002). Furthermore, by getting familiar with Deardorff's (2004 as cited in Deardorff, 2006) process model of IC, teachers can understand how to develop this competence in their students, and where to start. This model also helps teachers to have general ideas about what needs to be addressed (i.e., the necessary IC components such as attitudes, knowledge and skills, internal and external outcomes). To facilitate teachers with detailed components of IC, Byram's

(1997) IC model (in five categories of *savoir*) and the list of objectives in addressing this competence in language education (as fully presented in Chapter 2) need to be introduced and discussed in these programmes. This model and the full list of objectives provide teachers with a description of what should be aimed for in their language teaching practices. In short, all these IC models need to be introduced to teachers. They form a framework for teachers to understand what and how to address the development of this competence in their students.

In addition, introducing best practices of the integration of culture into language teaching can further support teachers in applying the new ideas to their own English classes. Discussion and analysis of such practices can help teachers expand their teaching repertoires.

Another point, as discussed in section 7.2.4, is that TPD programmes need to help teachers to become confident about and ready for making changes in their own teaching practices in diverse teaching situations. These changes also involve the employment and development of teaching materials that move beyond a dependence on what is provided in pre-published textbooks and pre-compiled teaching materials. Appropriate teaching materials that integrate culture and language are necessary for teachers to address the development of their students' ICC. Positive changes are also needed in assessing students. To accomplish this, teachers need to be supported in making changes in how to assess their students' ICC, involving both IC and the communicative competence required for an intercultural speaker.

The above implications are for language education policies at both the university level and other earlier levels of education (e.g., primary and secondary). Because the development of language learners' IC requires culture to be integrated with language from the beginning of the language learning process (Liddicoat et al., 2003; Newton & Shearn, 2010b), this developmental aspect needs to be realised in language education policies.

In summary, language education policies, at both the national and institutional levels, need to support teachers in terms of raising teachers' awareness of the necessity of addressing the development of their students' IC. It is also necessary that these policies facilitate teachers' development of their own ICC in general and IC in particular as a pre-condition for their teaching practices that aim for the training of the intercultural speaker. These policies, at the same time, need to provide pedagogical support for teachers to make positive changes to their own teaching practices in terms of



how to integrate culture into language teaching in ways that address the development of their students' IC.

#### **8.4.4 *A suggested language teacher-in-context interaction model***

The literature, the findings and implications as previously presented suggests a model for language teachers' interactions in their professional contexts at institutional, national and international levels (see Figure 8.2). In this model, the two-way arrows indicate the bidirectional interactions, which are described below.

First and foremost, the student is in the centre of the model. Teachers need to take into consideration issues such as cultural goals, teaching materials and teaching methods to aim for the development of students' IC (Byram, 2009). It is necessary for teachers, as well as students, to be aware of this aim in language teaching and learning. Language teachers' classroom teaching, thus, should generally be driven by the goal of training the intercultural speaker (Byram, 2009).

Secondly, in a community of practice such as a group of EFL teachers in the present study, teachers need to interact with each other, communicating their knowledge and experiences regarding professional beliefs and practices. This communication is useful in helping teachers to construct and enrich their repertoire of knowledge.

Thirdly, it is necessary for teachers and management at the institutional level (e.g., university rectors, head of university schools and of language departments) in teachers' immediate context to actively interact with each other. Management of educational institutions need to be aware of the necessity of teaching and assessing IC in language education. They should generally know about possible obstacles for teachers in addressing the goal of developing IC in learners (e.g., physical context of classrooms, teachers' need for pedagogical learning, and assessment practices), and act appropriately to deal with these obstacles.

Fourthly, communication between teachers and the national level policy makers should be as efficient and direct as possible (e.g., via website updates, newsletters and through professional development programmes sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Training). Significantly, three years after the start of the current Vietnamese government foreign language education policy which affects all levels of education, the participants in this study still did not understand much about this policy (see also 7.1.3). Therefore, there needs to be clear and efficient strategies for communicating these policies to teachers. Such policies should be made clear to teachers in terms of language

education aims, LTPD needs, teaching materials and assessments. Furthermore, it is necessary for the government to provide support for teachers to grow professionally so that they are able to teach and assess IC in their teaching practices. This is because the application of CERF in the current Vietnamese foreign language education policy (Government of Vietnam, 2008) means the necessity of addressing intercultural awareness, knowledge and know-how (Council of Europe, 2001). In other words, teachers need to be able to teach and assess specific IC components. This government support can be in the form of providing TPD programmes as discussed in section 7.2.

Fifthly, teachers need to be well-informed of their larger context of language education internationally. On the one hand, teachers need to be encouraged and supported to learn about current language education trends and pedagogical innovations around the world. This learning helps them keep updated with internationally relevant language teaching and learning ideas and trends. For example, L&CI programmes, with the component of teachers' pedagogical learning, are also useful for teachers to develop both professionally and personally. On the other hand, international language education contexts should also be informed of different local settings, for example the Vietnamese university EFL teaching in this study, so that the issues in specific contexts are recognised and discussed internationally.

Furthermore, language education at the three levels (i.e., institutional, national and international) should be as interactive as possible to support teachers in their professional activities. For example, educational institutions need to work in collaboration with the governmental educational authorities to organise LTPD programmes that provide teachers with professional learning opportunities. They also need to be informed of international language education trends and pedagogical innovations. Thus, they can provide their language teachers with appropriate support. Similarly, national foreign language education policies, e.g. the current Vietnamese policy, should be tuned into international language education trends in terms of pedagogical innovations and development.

As can be seen in Figure 8.2, LTPD is a very important issue. Language education management at both the national and institutional levels need to provide language teachers with relevant, timely and ongoing professional learning opportunities (see also 7.2).

In summary, to address the development of IC in their students, language teachers need to be as interactive as possible with their colleagues, particularly in their

own community of practice. It is important for language teachers to actively engage with regular and on-going activities and maintain communication flows with language education management at both their institutional and national levels, and, ideally, with international language education contexts. Furthermore, as presented above, these interactions are bidirectional. For example, at the national level, on the one hand, foreign language education policy makers need to communicate their policies effectively to teachers. Communication flows should generally be as direct as possible so that teachers in educational institutions can have a comprehensive understanding of these policies. Issues such as foreign language education aims, teaching materials and assessments need to be made clear to teachers. On the other hand, policy makers need to be informed of teachers' beliefs and practices from teachers' perspectives. Interactions thus need to be as dialogical as possible. These ideas can be summarised by considering the following figure, Figure 8.2.

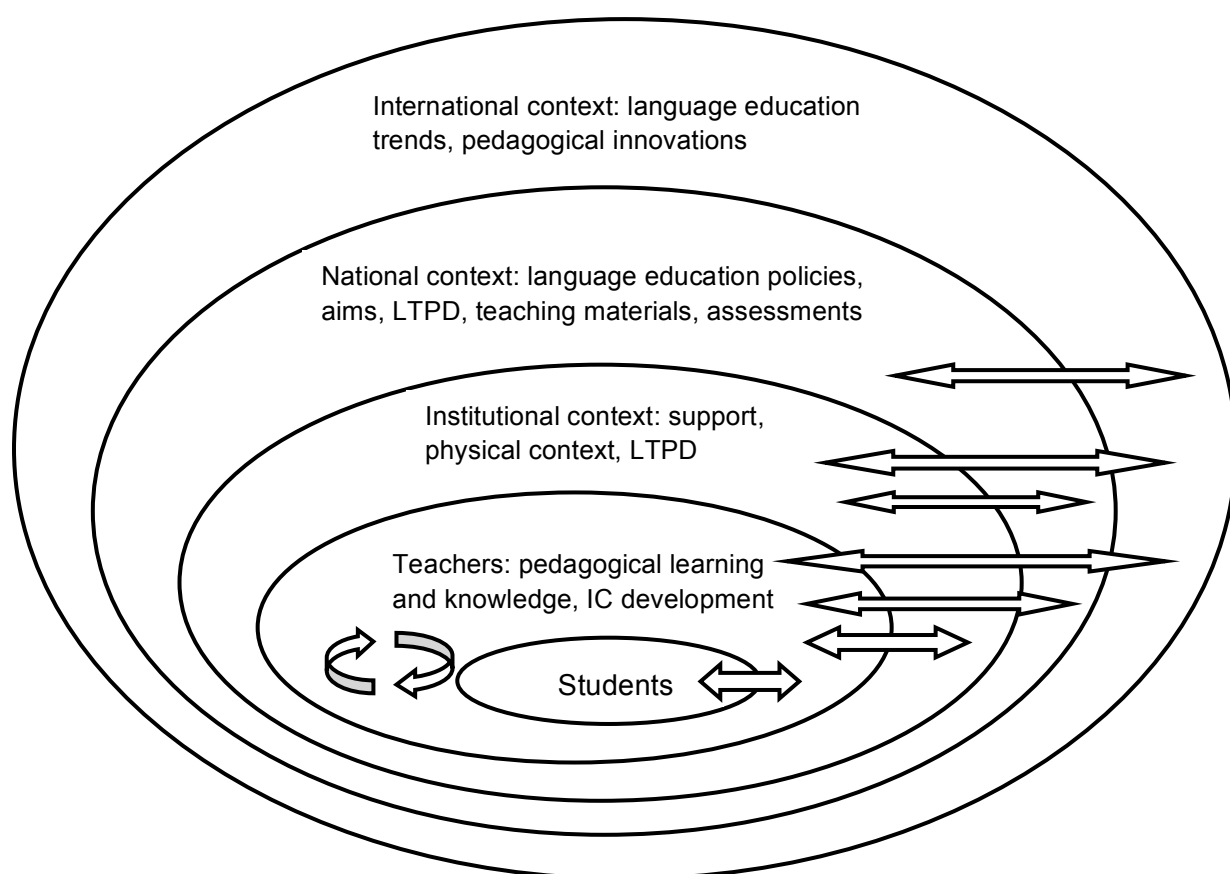


Figure 8.2 Language teacher-in-context interaction model

## 8.5 Further research

This critical ethnographic study has aimed to contribute to knowledge about how culture is integrated into language teaching. The knowledge constructed via this study is significant in understanding the cultural group of Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in addressing culture in their language teaching. However, the design of the present study has its own limitations in terms of longitudinal observation and the diversity of sources of data (see also Chapter 4). Therefore, further research areas have been suggested to gain a deeper insight into Vietnamese language teachers' context and their "culture" of addressing culture in language teaching for the development of language learners' IC. These further research areas are as follows.

Firstly, I only managed to observe each participant twice in the field (with one to three weeks between these two observations). Thus, more longitudinal research would enable deeper insights into how and to what extent teachers integrate culture into their teaching practice to develop their students' IC. Studies with data from longer and continuous observation of teacher participants in their professional practices (e.g., teaching planning, teaching materials development, and classroom teaching activities) would help to gain a deeper insight into their practices. Continuous and longer observations may help to reveal possible change in teachers' teaching practices (which reflect their developing beliefs and attitudes) regarding the teaching of culture in their EFL classrooms. Therefore, when culture is seen as a process, a deeper understanding about the "culture" in addressing culture in EFL teaching of the examined cultural group (i.e., Vietnamese university EFL teachers in this case) can be gained. Furthermore, such longitudinal observations could be associated with an analysis of a wider range and larger amount of teaching materials the teachers use in observed classes. This more extensive analysis, thus, may help to generate more nuanced insights into such materials and teaching practices.

Secondly, in the present study I dwelt upon the following main sources of information: interviews with teachers, classroom observations, field notes, and analysis of teaching materials used in these observed class hours. Further research could involve more sources of information to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon and the socio-cultural context of the cultural group under study. Such sources may include: interviews with students about their beliefs and practices in language learning concerning the development of IC; interviews with management of universities (e.g., university rectors, heads of university schools and foreign language departments) about

their beliefs and practices as well as decision making concerning the issue under study; and examining the world of work, i.e. employers of the students who graduate from the university in this globalised world.

Thirdly, evaluative studies of TPD programmes (both for pre-service and in-service language teachers) in the context of the study (i.e., Vietnam) could also help to point out the impact of such programmes and possible and practical changes to be made to the teaching practices. Such studies may focus on how language teachers are trained concerning the role of and competence in teaching both language and culture in an integrated way in teacher education programmes. They may also address the support for language teachers provided in TPD programmes. This support can be in terms of developing teachers' own IC (and its specific components such as cultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and intercultural awareness) and their competence in teaching culture in an integrated way with language.

## **8.6 Conclusions**

In conclusion, although the findings from this study cannot be generalised to all other language teaching contexts, they can provide insights into what EFL teaching may be like in universities in Vietnam. The contextualised, socially constructed knowledge in this study has contributed to knowledge about language teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching. With rich descriptions and interpretations of data, the study also provided some direction for understanding similar language teaching contexts. Such contexts include: the teaching of other foreign languages and EFL teaching at other levels of education (e.g., secondary) in Vietnam, as well as EFL teaching in other places that have similar socio-cultural contexts. The study has aimed to achieve three key objectives. Firstly, it provided an analysis and critique of Vietnamese university EFL teachers' integration of culture into their language teaching. Secondly, it pointed out areas of change that LTPD programmes should make regarding the aim of developing language learners' IC. Finally, the study proposed suggestions for making positive changes in the context of EFL teaching in Vietnam. These suggestions are first for language teachers to make changes in their practices regarding the integration of culture as a central and integrated element into language teaching. They are also for language teacher educators to prepare teachers who can teach and assess IC in language teaching. Finally, they are for language education policy makers to provide different kinds of support for teachers to address the important goal of developing learners' IC.

EFL teachers in this context appeared to hold a static view of culture rather than a dynamic view or a combination of both. Specifically, they tended to limit culture to cultural products and language behaviour in their language teaching. Several of these teachers did not consider teaching culture their responsibility and thus they gave culture only a minor supporting role in their teaching. They defined very limited goals in addressing culture, and therefore addressed culture to a fairly limited extent. Most of the participants also believed that there were various obstacles in integrating culture into their language classes, for example, time constraints, physical classroom constraints, examinations that focussed on linguistic knowledge and teachers' own limited cultural knowledge. An important factor contributing to the current limited integration of culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching was that LTPD programmes (mostly in the form of workshops) available for teachers mainly focussed on language to the exclusion of culture. These programmes typically dealt with ideas and methods in teaching a certain linguistic component or language skill. They did not address issues such as teachers' IC, the integration of culture into language teaching, and ideas, methods and techniques in addressing culture.

Thus, for culture to become a core element that is explicitly taught in an integrated way with language to address language learners' IC, changes and efforts must be made. Teachers need to be aware of the importance of addressing culture in their own language teaching practices and of their role of teaching both language and culture in an integrated way. They also need to develop their own IC and their ability in addressing the development of this competence for their students. Language education policies that are supportive of the development of language learners' ICC in general and IC in particular are needed. It is also important for these policies to be efficiently communicated to teachers so that teachers can have a comprehensive understanding of these policies and realise them in their classroom teaching practices.

The study has provided socially constructed knowledge about the integration of culture into university EFL teaching in a Vietnamese context. It has pointed out and advocates necessary changes to be made in this EFL teaching context so that culture can become a central element that is taught in an integrated way with language for the development of language learners' IC.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Ethics approval



#### MEMORANDUM

#### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

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|          |                                                                                                                                   |                            |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| To:      | Sharon Harvey                                                                                                                     |                            |
| From:    | <b>Dr Rosemary Godbold</b>                                                                                                        | Executive Secretary, AUTEC |
| Date:    | 5 September 2011                                                                                                                  |                            |
| Subject: | Ethics Application Number 11/195 Culture-integrated English language teaching in Vietnamese Universities: A critical ethnography. |                            |

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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 8 August 2011 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 at AUTEC's meeting on 26 September 2011.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 5 September 2014.

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 5 September 2014;

- 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 5 September 2014 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC 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 AUTEC 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.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of AUTEC 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: Thanh Long Nguyen, [msg2147@aut.ac.nz](mailto:msg2147@aut.ac.nz), [longtnu@yahoo.com](mailto:longtnu@yahoo.com), Lynn Grant

## Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

- English version

# Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: 06/09/2011

Project Title

***Integrating culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching: A critical ethnographic study***

### **An Invitation**

My name is Thanh Long NGUYEN, and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project, which will contribute to my PhD at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Whether you choose to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection without any adverse consequences.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research project will be reported as my PhD Thesis, and the results from this research will also be presented at seminars and conferences, as well as published as academic journal articles or books/ book chapters during and after the write-up phase of the project, as well as after when I have completed my PhD programme.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

This research involves Vietnamese teachers of English as a foreign language. Potential participants will represent a range of teaching experience (in years of English language teaching) and gender distribution among English teachers of the university (whose contact details I have gained from my contacts who are also teachers at the university). Thus, you are one of the teachers who can contribute to my research by sharing with me your experience and information if you choose to.

### **What will happen in this research?**

This project involves interviews with English teachers and observations of their classes. Thus, I will interview you twice (from 60 to 90 minutes each) about the issue of integrating culture in English language teaching, and I will observe two of your English classes. I will audio-record the interview, take notes, and transcribe the interview. During the classroom observations, I will sit at the back of the classroom and take notes as unobtrusively as possible of your provision of culture learning opportunities. I will



not play an active part in your lesson or observe or record any of the students' behaviour. I will also collect the teaching materials used for each of your lesson observed for an analysis of the cultural components in them.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

There are some discomforts and risks involved: a 60-to-90-minute interview can be long for you and you may feel uncomfortable; an "outsider" observing your classes can get on your nerves a little bit.

### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

There are some discomforts and risks: feeling uncomfortable in interviews, being observed in your teaching practices, and being identified; however, as you will see, they are relatively minor. And my plan to mitigate these discomforts and risks as follows. First, for the interview, you have the right to choose the time and place that you find most suitable for you; the interview will be confidential and will be in a friendly manner; the sub-topics are all related to the professional areas of English language teaching. During the interviews, you can choose whether or not to answer a question, and answer it in the way you want. Second, for the observations, you also have the right to give me a timetable of "come and see" that you feel most comfortable with. During the observations, I will choose a back seat, keeping quiet and just taking notes (and, as you have been familiar with this practice of class observation at Thai Nguyen University, you will find that it is not so annoying at all). I will also apply measures to ensure the confidentiality of information and to protect your identity (see also the section about privacy below). For example, I will use a code or pseudonym for your name in processing, analysing information, and reporting the research results. In addition, only the project supervisors and I will have access to the data.

### **What are the benefits?**

For you, the benefit will be a chance of self-reflecting on one central aspect of your professional life, for example, I will send you a brief summary of the report related to you at your desire. For me, I will have sources of evidence for my research. In particular, the information you share with me will help to understand the current practice of culture-integrated English language teaching, and propose suggestions for more effective teaching practice as well as for teacher development policy.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

I will take a variety of measures to ensure your confidentiality and privacy. You have the right to the decision of time and venue for the interview (s) and the classes for me to observe, which will not interfere with your own work. In addition, I will not let other participants or other people know your name. I will use codes or pseudonym for your name and information that you share with me, when I process, analyse data, and report the research. I will myself conduct all these processes.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The costs of participating in this research will be your time, totally around 120 minutes: 60-90 minutes for the interview, 30-45 minutes when I come back to you so that you can check if I have understood you correctly in the interview. We will discuss to negotiate times for class observations, which will take around 15 minutes. If you are selected for a second interview, the time will be from 60 to 90 minutes more.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

As expressed above, participation in this research is voluntary and you can also withdraw from the research at any time prior to the completion of data collection. However, you can take your time considering this invitation and let me know your decision in one week, as well as ask me any questions you may have concerning this invitation.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

You agree to participate in this research by completing and signing a Consent Form that I have provided.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes. When I have transcribed your interview, I will bring it back to you for you to check whether I have understood you correctly in the interview and sign it off. If you are interested in and want to be informed of the results of the study, I will send you a copy of a summary of the research results 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, Dr. Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9999 ext 9659.

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), (+64) 921 9999 ext 6902.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?****Researcher contact details**

Thanh Long Nguyen, [longtnu@yahoo.com](mailto:longtnu@yahoo.com), [msg2147@aut.ac.nz](mailto:msg2147@aut.ac.nz)

**Project supervisor contact details**

Dr. Sharon Harvey, [sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz](mailto:sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz), (+64) 921 9999 ext 9659

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 05<sup>th</sup> September 2011, AUTECH Reference number 11/195.**

- Vietnamese version

## THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU



**Ngày:** 06/09/2011

**Tên đề tài nghiên cứu:** Tích hợp văn hóa vào giảng dạy tiếng Anh bậc đại học ở Việt Nam

### ***Lời mời tham gia đề tài***

Tôi là Nguyễn Thành Long, nghiên cứu sinh tiến sỹ Trường Đại học Công nghệ Auckland, New Zealand, mong muốn quý vị tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu của tôi. Việc tham gia của quý vị là tự nguyện và việc quyết định có tham gia hay không sẽ không có ảnh hưởng gì đến quý vị. Quý vị có thể rút lui khỏi đề tài này tại bất kỳ thời điểm nào trước khi giai đoạn thu thập dữ liệu kết thúc mà không ảnh hưởng gì đến quý vị.

### ***Mục đích của đề tài nghiên cứu***

Nghiên cứu này sẽ được viết thành luận văn tiến sỹ của tôi, và kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được trình bày tại các hội nghị, hội thảo, cũng như trong các bài báo khoa học hay sách/chương sách trong và sau quá trình viết luận văn.

### ***Việc xác định và mời các cá nhân tham gia nghiên cứu***

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành đối với giáo viên tiếng Anh ở các trường đại học Việt Nam. Đối tượng giáo viên tiếng Anh tham gia đại diện cho giáo viên tiếng Anh tính theo năm kinh nghiệm giảng dạy và giới tính. Vì vậy, quý vị là một trong những giáo viên tiếng Anh có thể giúp đỡ tôi trong việc tiến hành nghiên cứu này bằng cách chia sẻ thông tin và kinh nghiệm nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia.

### ***Hoạt động nghiên cứu***

Nghiên cứu này sẽ bao gồm phỏng vấn và dự giờ: Tôi sẽ phỏng vấn quý vị trong khoảng 60-90 phút xoay quanh vấn đề tích hợp văn hóa trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh và dự 2 trong số giờ dạy của quý vị trong cùng 1 lớp. Tôi sẽ ghi âm cuộc phỏng vấn, ghi chép, và sau đó sẽ đánh máy lại nội dung phỏng vấn. Trong khi dự giờ, tôi sẽ không tham gia vào hay làm ảnh hưởng gì đến tiết dạy của quý vị, và sẽ ghi chép. Tôi sẽ không ghi chép việc học của sinh viên. Tôi cũng sẽ thu thập tài liệu giảng dạy quý vị sử dụng trong các giờ dự để phân tích nội dung văn hóa trong đó.

### ***Sự không thoải mái và nguy hại***

Khi tham gia nghiên cứu này những sự không thoải mái và nguy hại có thể sẽ xảy đến đối với quý vị bao gồm: phỏng vấn kéo dài, có sự hiện diện của người nghiên cứu trong giờ dạy, và việc tiết lộ danh tính. Tuy nhiên, tôi sẽ áp dụng các biện pháp để giảm thiểu những vấn đề nêu trên trong mục sau đây.

### ***Giảm thiểu sự không thoải mái và nguy hại***

Đối với phỏng vấn, quý vị có quyền lựa chọn thời gian và địa điểm phù hợp nhất đối với quý vị; nội dung phỏng vấn sẽ được bảo mật và tiến hành một cách thân thiện; các chủ đề phỏng vấn sẽ chỉ liên quan đến lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh. Trong quá trình phỏng vấn, quý vị có quyền lựa chọn có trả lời hay không trả lời một câu hỏi nào đó, và trả lời theo như quý vị muốn. Đối với các giờ dự, tôi sẽ không làm ảnh hưởng đến quá trình giảng dạy của quý vị, và chỉ ghi chép một số thông tin. Tôi cũng sẽ áp dụng một số biện pháp để bảo mật thông tin (xem thêm phần bảo vệ tính riêng tư dưới đây). Ví dụ, tôi sẽ sử dụng mã hoặc tên giả thay cho tên của quý vị trong quá trình xử lý, phân tích dữ liệu và công bố kết quả nghiên cứu. Thêm nữa, chỉ có tôi và người hướng dẫn khoa học của đề tài này mới có thể truy nhập vào dữ liệu.

### ***Lợi ích***

Đối với quý vị, lợi ích khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là sự tự phản hồi về một khía cạnh trong lĩnh vực chuyên môn của quý vị. Tôi sẽ gửi tới quý vị một bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu liên quan đến quý vị nếu có yêu cầu. Đối với tôi, sự chia sẻ thông tin và kinh nghiệm của quý vị sẽ là một nguồn dữ liệu quý giá phục vụ cho nghiên cứu này. Cụ thể, tôi sẽ tìm hiểu thực trạng tích hợp văn hóa trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh trong trường đại học, và đề xuất các gợi ý trong việc nâng cao hiệu quả giảng dạy tiếng Anh và trong công tác bồi dưỡng giáo viên.

### ***Bảo vệ tính riêng tư***

Tôi sẽ tiến hành các biện pháp bảo mật thông tin và bảo vệ tính riêng tư như sau. Quý vị sẽ có quyền quyết định thời gian và địa điểm phỏng vấn cũng như bố trí lớp và tiết học dự giờ sao cho không ảnh hưởng đến công việc của quý vị. Tôi sẽ không tiết lộ thông tin như tên của quý vị cho người khác biết. Tôi sẽ sử dụng mã hoặc tên giả thay cho tên của quý vị trong khi xử lý, phân tích dữ liệu, và công bố kết quả nghiên cứu. Tôi sẽ tự tiến hành các quá trình này.

### ***Chi phí khi tham gia nghiên cứu***

Khi tham gia, quý vị dành thời gian khoảng 2 tiếng cho nghiên cứu (bao gồm 60-90 phút phỏng vấn, 30-45 phút dành cho việc kiểm tra lại thông tin trong bản đánh máy nội dung phỏng vấn, và khoảng 15 phút cho việc thảo luận kế hoạch dự giờ). Nếu quý vị tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn thứ hai, thời gian sẽ thêm khoảng 1 tiếng nữa.

### ***Xem xét lời đề nghị tham gia nghiên cứu***

Như đã trình bày ở trên, sự tham gia vào nghiên cứu này của quý vị là tự nguyện và quý vị có thể rút lui khỏi nghiên cứu bất kỳ thời điểm nào trước khi quá trình thu thập dữ liệu kết thúc. Tuy nhiên, quý vị có thể dành thời gian xem xét đề nghị này và cho biết ý kiến về quyết định của quý vị trong vòng 1 tuần. Quý vị cũng có thể hỏi tôi bất kỳ câu hỏi nào liên quan đến đề nghị này.

### ***Cách thức đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu***

Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu, xin quý vị điền và ký tên vào bản Xác nhận đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu mà tôi cung cấp.

### ***Phản hồi về kết quả nghiên cứu***

Khi tôi đánh máy xong nội dung phỏng vấn, tôi sẽ mang đến để quý vị kiểm tra xem có sai sót hay thay đổi gì hay không và ký xác nhận. Nếu quý vị muốn được thông tin về kết quả nghiên cứu, tôi sẽ gửi tới quý vị 1 bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu khi đề tài này hoàn thành.

### ***Thông tin liên quan đến đề tài***

Nếu quý vị quan tâm đến nội dung của đề tài, quý vị có thể liên hệ người hướng dẫn khoa học của đề tài: TS. Sharon Harvey, e-mail: sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz, ĐT: (+64) 921 9999 ext 9659.

Nếu quý vị quan tâm đến phương thức tiến hành nghiên cứu, quý vị có thể liên hệ Thư ký điều hành AUTECH, Dr. Rosemary Godbold, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+64) 921 9999 ext 6902.

### ***Liên hệ***

- Nghiên cứu sinh: Nguyễn Thành Long, email: longtnu@yahoo.com, hoặc: msg2147@aut.ac.nz
- Hướng dẫn khoa học: TS Sharon Harvey, e-mail: sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz, ĐT: (+64) 921 9999 ext 9659

**Phê duyệt:** Ủy ban Đạo đức Nghiên cứu Trường Đại học Công nghệ Auckland ngày 05/9/2011 Số 11/195

### Appendix 3: Informed consent form

- English version

## Consent Form



**For use when interviews and observations are involved.**

*Project title: Integrating culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching: A critical ethnographic study*

*Project Supervisor: Dr. SHARON HARVEY*

*Researcher: THANH LONG NGUYEN*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 06/09/2011.
- ☐ 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-recorded and transcribed, but that the transcriptions will be shown to me to confirm accuracy.
- ☐ I understand that I will let the researcher observe two of my classes and that during the observations notes will be taken.
- ☐ 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, notes, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of a summary of the research results (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 05<sup>th</sup> September 2011, AUTEK Reference number 11/195***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

- Vietnamese version

## XÁC NHẬN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU



**(Dành cho nghiên cứu có phỏng vấn và quan sát)**

Tên đề tài: Tích hợp văn hóa vào giảng dạy tiếng Anh bậc đại học ở Việt Nam

Hướng dẫn khoa học: TS. Sharon Harvey

Người tiến hành nghiên cứu: Nguyễn Thành Long

- ☐ Tôi đã đọc và hiểu rõ thông tin trong bản Thông tin dành cho người tham gia nghiên cứu đề ngày 06/09/2011.
- ☐ Tôi đã có cơ hội hỏi thêm về đề nghị tham gia nghiên cứu và đã được trả lời.
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rõ rằng trong cuộc phỏng vấn, người nghiên cứu sẽ ghi chép và ghi âm và sau đó sẽ đánh máy nội dung ghi âm để phân tích, và tôi sẽ được xem nội dung này để xác nhận tính đúng đắn.
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng tôi sẽ cho phép người nghiên cứu dự 2 tiết dạy cùng 1 lớp sinh viên của tôi, và trong quá trình dự giờ, người nghiên cứu sẽ ghi chép và không tham gia vào giờ dạy của tôi.
- ☐ Tôi hiểu rằng tôi có quyền rút lui khỏi nghiên cứu hay rút lại bất kỳ thông tin nào tôi đã cung cấp tại bất kỳ thời điểm nào trước khi giai đoạn thu thập dữ liệu kết thúc mà không ảnh hưởng gì đến tôi.
- ☐ Nếu tôi rút lui, tôi hiểu rằng mọi thông tin liên quan bao gồm băng ghi âm, bản đánh máy nội dung phỏng vấn, và ghi chép sẽ được hủy bỏ.
- ☐ Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.
- ☐ Tôi muốn nhận 1 bản tóm tắt kết quả nghiên cứu: ☐ Có ☐ Không

Chữ ký người tham gia nghiên cứu: .....

Họ và tên người tham gia nghiên cứu: .....

Địa chỉ liên hệ của người tham gia nghiên cứu: .....

Ngày:.....

**Phê duyệt:** Ủy ban Đạo đức Nghiên cứu Trường Đại học Công nghệ Auckland ngày 05/9/2011, Số 11/195

(Ghi chú: Người tham gia nghiên cứu giữ 01 bản.)

## Appendix 4a: Interview guide (for interviews 1)

- English version

Date of interview: ..... Time of interview: .....

Participant code: .....

| Main Questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Possible probes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Q1. "Culture" is a term that is widely used, for example in talking of language use. In your setting of English as a foreign language teaching, how do you personally define this term? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think of first when you hear or see the word "culture"?</li> <li>• What is conveyed by this word for you?</li> <li>• Which do you attach this word to? An individual person, a group of people, nation, or ...?</li> <li>• What do you think the aspects of culture are? (knowledge, skills, attitudes)</li> <li>• Cultural elements? Observed? Underlying? Functions? Process?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Q2. Language and culture are inseparable. As an EFL teacher, what culture-teaching objectives do you think you should aim at?                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think you want your students of English to learn in terms of culture? What aspects?</li> <li>• Whose culture(s) do you think you should integrate in teaching culture in your English lessons?</li> <li>• In terms of cultural knowledge? Cultural awareness? Especially, awareness of cultural difference?</li> <li>• What about the link between culture and language in general? Between the target language the culture(s) of the target language?</li> <li>• What about other cultures that are not the target language culture (for example, the French culture)?</li> <li>• Your idea about intercultural communication?</li> <li>• What about intercultural communicative competence?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Q3. What do you do in your professional activities to teach culture?                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it necessary to provide your students of English chances to explore/ reflect on their own culture(s) in the English language classes?</li> <li>• How often do you address culture in teaching?</li> <li>• What are culture learning activities do you organize in your classes?</li> <li>• What cultural topics do you introduce in the language class? How often?</li> <li>• Do you provide them a chance for comparing their own culture with another one? Can you give an example?</li> <li>• Do you explicitly discuss or organise for your students to discuss cultural topics? Can you give some examples of these topics and how you do?</li> <li>• Do you create chances for your students to be involved in intercultural communication, in for example, simulated situations or real contact?</li> <li>• What about lesson planning? Self-teaching about culture? Intercultural experience?</li> </ul> |
| Q4. What culture input do you use for teaching culture?                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching material? Ready-made and commercially available? Developing it by yourself? Sharing with your colleagues?</li> <li>• Sources: course book/ internet/ personal ...</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |



- Vietnamese version

| Câu hỏi chính                                                                                                                                                                               | Gợi ý                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>C1. “Văn hóa” là 1 thuật ngữ được sử dụng rộng rãi, ví dụ nói về việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ. Trong bối cảnh dạy tiếng Anh như 1 ngoại ngữ, thầy/ cô định nghĩa thuật ngữ này như thế nào?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thầy/ cô nghĩ đến điều gì trước tiên khi nghe đến từ này?</li> <li>• Từ này mang nội dung gì?</li> <li>• Thầy/ cô gắn những nội dung gì đối với từ này? Cá nhân, 1 nhóm người, dân tộc, ...?</li> <li>• Những khía cạnh của văn hóa là gì? (kiến thức, kỹ năng, thái độ)</li> <li>• Các thành tố văn hóa? Thấy được? Bên dưới? Chức năng? Quá trình?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>C2. Ngôn ngữ và văn hóa là không thể tách rời. Với tư cách là một giáo viên tiếng Anh, theo thầy/ cô thì mục tiêu dạy văn hóa mà thầy/ cô đảm nhiệm là gì?</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thầy/ cô muốn sinh viên tiếng Anh của mình học những gì xét về khía cạnh văn hóa? Những khía cạnh văn hóa nào?</li> <li>• Văn hóa của ai nên được lồng ghép vào khi dạy văn hóa trong giờ dạy tiếng Anh?</li> <li>• Về kiến thức văn hóa? Nhận thức văn hóa? Nhận thức khác biệt văn hóa?</li> <li>• Mối quan hệ giữa văn hóa và ngôn ngữ nói chung? Giữa văn hóa và ngôn ngữ đích?</li> <li>• Văn hóa khác với văn hóa của ngôn ngữ đích? (văn hóa Pháp)</li> <li>• Giao tiếp giao văn hóa?</li> <li>• Năng lực giao tiếp liên văn hóa của bản thân?</li> </ul>                                                                   |
| <p>C3. Hoạt động dạy văn hóa?</p>                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cần thiết cung cấp cho sinh viên cơ hội tìm hiểu văn hóa của họ khi học tiếng Anh?</li> <li>• Thường xuyên đề cập đến văn hóa trong dạy tiếng?</li> <li>• Hoạt động học văn hóa thầy/ cô tổ chức trong giờ học tiếng?</li> <li>• Chủ đề văn hóa thầy/ cô giới thiệu? Thường xuyên?</li> <li>• Tạo cơ hội cho sinh viên so sánh văn hóa? Ví dụ?</li> <li>• Thảo luận/ tổ chức cho sinh viên thảo luận chủ đề liên quan đến văn hóa? Ví dụ?</li> <li>• Tạo cơ hội cho sinh viên tham gia giao tiếp liên văn hóa? (giả định, thực)</li> <li>• Soạn bài? Tự học? Kinh nghiệm giao tiếp liên văn hóa? Năng lực liên văn hóa?</li> </ul> |
| <p>C4. Tài liệu (đầu vào) văn hóa?</p>                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tài liệu giảng dạy văn hóa? Tự soạn? Sách có sẵn? Chia sẻ với đồng nghiệp?</li> <li>• Nguồn: sách/ giáo trình/ internet/ báo/ cá nhân</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

#### Appendix 4b: Interview guide (for interviews 2)

- English version

Date of interview: ..... Time of interview: .....

Participant code: .....

| Main Questions                                                                                                                                          | Possible probes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Q1. Let's recall the lesson that you did on the day of ..... In that lesson, what do you think the cultural objectives were?                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mentions of possible culture teaching moments/ cultural components</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Q2. For the observed culture learning opportunities                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was the aim of the opportunity/ activity/ task?</li><li>• Is it a common practice in your language class?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Q3. For the unobserved culture learning opportunities, based on the observation and teaching material                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you think it would be a good idea to ...?</li><li>• What if ...?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Q4. Do you have any suggestions for your own professional development in terms of integrating culture in your English language teaching? What are they? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you have any needs for developing your own cultural knowledge, awareness?</li><li>• What about intercultural contact? (When? Where? For how long?) Courses? Material?</li><li>• Have you attended language teacher professional development programme? How many? Who organised? Effective in terms of culture teaching?</li></ul> |
| Q5. Do you have any recommendations about institutional support/ government support concerning EFL teacher development?                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any suggestions concerning policy (institutional, governmental) regarding integration of culture in language teaching?</li><li>• Courses/ programmes/ time/</li><li>• Sharing ideas/ discussions?</li></ul>                                                                                                                          |

- Vietnamese version

| Câu hỏi                                                                                                                | Gợi ý                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C1. Hãy nhớ lại bài dạy ngày ... Trong tiết dạy đó, mục tiêu văn hóa của thầy/ cô là gì?                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gợi lại các thời điểm dạy văn hóa/ nội dung văn hóa</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| C2. Đối với các cơ hội học văn hóa của sinh viên                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mục đích của cơ hội/ hoạt động/ nhiệm vụ?</li> <li>• Việc làm thường xuyên?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| C3. Đối với các cơ hội học văn hóa cho sinh viên không thể hiện trong bài dạy, căn cứ vào quan sát, tài liệu giảng dạy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thầy/ cô có cho rằng nếu .... thì sẽ là tốt?</li> <li>• Nếu ... thì?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| C4. Thầy/ cô có gợi ý nào về bồi dưỡng giáo viên xét về khía cạnh tích hợp văn hóa trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh?          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nhu cầu về phát triển kiến thức văn hóa của mình? Nhận thức văn hóa?</li> <li>• Tiếp xúc liên văn hóa? (Thời gian? Địa điểm? Bao lâu?) khóa học? Tài liệu?</li> <li>• Các khóa bồi dưỡng giáo viên? Số lượng? Đơn vị tổ chức? Hiệu quả (trong dạy văn hóa )?</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |
| C5. Thầy/ cô có gợi ý/ đề xuất về sự hỗ trợ của trường? Chính phủ trong việc bồi dưỡng giáo viên?                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chính sách (trường, nhà nước) liên quan tích hợp văn hóa trong dạy tiếng?</li> <li>• Khóa học/ chương trình/ thời gian</li> <li>• Chia sẻ ý tưởng/ thảo luận với đồng nghiệp?</li> </ul>                                                                                           |

# OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

(Used for classroom observations)



Project title: *Integrating culture into Vietnamese university EFL teaching: A critical ethnographic study*

- **Observer's role:** Non-participant. That is, the observer does not take any active part in the class that is observed. The observer's activities are limited to observing the teachers' teaching practices and taking notes of these teachers' practices.
- **What to be observed:** During classroom observations in this project, observed are the teachers' practices of providing culture learning opportunities for the students, and teachers' use of teaching materials and other teaching aids (e.g. chalk board and projector). Students' learning activities and behaviour are not observed or recorded.
- **Who to be observed:** In classroom observations, only the teachers are observed. The students are not observed.
- **What to be collected:** The data to be collected include teachers' teaching practices, and teaching materials used in the observed classes. Evidence of students' learning activities is not collected.
- **What to be recorded:** In classroom observation the teachers' culture teaching practices are recorded, including: teacher's delivery of the lesson and managing the class activities. The focus is on teacher's provision of culture learning opportunities for the students, especially teachers' explanations of cultural components, teachers' setting and managing of tasks and activities that foster students' culture learning, teachers' use of teaching materials and other teaching aids. Students' learning activities and other behaviour are not recorded.
- **How to record:** Recordings of teachers' teaching practices are conducted in forms of run-on note-taking in an A4 notebook. Notes on the teacher's practices are to be taken in silence and in a manner that is as unobtrusive as possible.

## Appendix 6: Original extracts in participants' own words in Vietnamese

- (Ext #1): Em nghĩ văn hóa là một khái niệm rất rộng, nói đến một nền tảng chung của một nhóm người nào đó, nó bao gồm không chỉ những giá trị vật chất mà còn cả những giá trị tinh thần. [...] Vật chất có thể là những tài sản của cộng đồng [...] các công trình. [...] Đó là niềm tin của cộng đồng đó, hoặc là thái độ quan điểm hay cách họ đánh giá một vấn đề, tức là cách nhìn nhận một vấn đề, cho đó là đúng hay không đúng, hợp lý hay không hợp lý. [...] Theo em thì ngôn ngữ là một yếu tố quan trọng [của văn hóa]. [...] cách suy nghĩ, quan điểm, hành xử. [...] Có những cái không nhìn thấy được như giá trị, niềm tin, rồi phong tục tập quán. [...] những hệ thống những điều cấm kỵ, kiêng kỵ được xây dựng [...] tôn giáo. (Interview 1 with Sen)
- (Ext #2): Khi mà nghĩ đến từ văn hóa thì em nghĩ đến tất cả các yếu tố liên quan đến cuộc sống vật chất, tinh thần của một con người, một cộng đồng, một xã hội- tức là tất cả những giá trị vật chất, những giá trị tinh thần, những niềm tin hay là những ứng xử thể hiện ra bên ngoài, bao hàm rất nhiều những yếu tố. (Interview 1 with Hai)
- (Ext #3): Khi nghĩ đến văn hóa thì em thường nghĩ đến lối sống, cách cư xử của một con người ở một đất nước cụ thể nào đó. [...] Kiểu như vậy, lối sống, cách cư xử, suy nghĩ của người Việt Nam. [...] Ngoài cách cư xử và lối sống thì theo em văn hóa còn có ngôn ngữ, truyền thống hay rất nhiều các khía cạnh trong cuộc sống, từ việc ăn mặc, phương tiện đi lại, cách thức ăn uống, các món ăn, hoặc là truyền thống, phong tục tập quán. (Interview 1 with Cam)
- (Ext #4): Ví dụ như ở Việt Nam chẳng hạn và cách đây khoảng năm-bảy năm thì sinh viên không biết lễ hội Halloween là gì, bởi vì Halloween là của nước ngoài, và cả Giáng sinh cũng vậy, Giáng sinh là dành cho những người theo đạo. Nhưng hiện nay thì cũng du nhập, kể cả ngày lễ tình yêu 14 tháng Hai chẳng hạn. (Interview 1 with Ba)
- (Ext #5): Văn hóa theo em nghĩ thể hiện một cái gì đó liên quan đến giá trị vật chất cũng như tinh thần của con người, nó không phải là cái gì đó cố định mà có thể thay đổi theo thời gian để phù hợp với cuộc sống của con người, nó có 1 số chức năng như điều chỉnh hành vi, thái độ, phân biệt các nhóm người hay các nền văn hóa v.v. [...] Nó có những phần có thể nhìn thấy và những phần không thể nhìn thấy. Đó cũng là quá trình con người tích lũy dần dần mới có được. (Interview 1 with Lan)
- (Ext #6): Khi mà nói đến văn hóa thì liên tưởng đến rất nhiều, ví dụ như cách ứng xử, ăn uống, ăn mặc, rồi như vừa nói là ứng xử giữa người với người. (Interview 1 with Đào)
- (Ext #7): Em nghĩ đến cách sống, cách cư xử của một người, hoặc của một tập thể người, lối sống, cách sinh hoạt hay cách người ta cư xử với nhau trong một tập thể. Đó là cái em nghĩ đến đầu tiên. (Interview 1 with Chanh)

- (Ext #8): Văn hóa thì theo em người ta nghĩ đến đầu tiên là cách ứng xử, vì bản thân cuộc sống xã hội là giao tiếp. Cái đầu tiên là con người ứng xử. (Interview 1 with Tư)
- (Ext #9): Ví dụ như trong văn hóa Việt Nam chẳng hạn, khi ăn cơm- có thể cái này là khác về văn hóa- mình ăn cơm thì mình phải mời người lớn tuổi trước, từ những người lớn nhất rồi đến người nhỏ nhất. Nếu mà ai đó mà không mời thì người ta sẽ suy nghĩ đấy là chưa được ngoan lắm, chẳng hạn như thế. (Interview 1 with Huệ)
- (Ext #10): Đặc biệt khi dạy tiếng Anh giao tiếp thì cái từ văn hóa có vẻ như là cách mà người ta sử dụng ngôn ngữ ở nước Anh và sự khác biệt giữa cách sử dụng ngôn ngữ trong tiếng Việt. (Interview 1 with Năm)
- (Ext #11): Có thể là một giáo viên ngoại ngữ nên em chú ý đến nhiều cái, như ngôn ngữ. [...] Có. Rất đậm, mang tính văn hóa rất rõ rệt. Trong việc sử dụng tiếng Anh hàng ngày, nó rất là rõ. Ví dụ như ở Việt Nam, khi gặp nhau thì người ta thể hiện sự quan tâm đến nhau và câu hỏi thiên về câu hỏi mang tính cá nhân, ví dụ như “Anh ăn cơm chưa?”, “Chị đi đâu đấy?”. Nhưng trong bối cảnh hỏi thăm hay chào hỏi một người phương Tây thì ta cần tránh câu hỏi đó, và chỉ hỏi rất chung chung, ví dụ như “Chào buổi sáng”, “Chúc buổi sáng tốt lành” hay “Thật là vui được gặp anh/ chị”. (Interview 1 with Cúc)
- (Ext #12): Ví dụ như chủ đề về tình yêu thì có câu là “Love me, love my dog” chẳng hạn, thì tiếng Việt có câu “Yêu ai, yêu cả đường đi lối về”, còn người Anh lại nói là “Love me, love my dog”. Vì sao lại thế? Vì người anh rất quý chó. Chó được coi như 1 người bạn thân thiết, chính vì thế mà họ không bao giờ ăn thịt chó, trong khi đó ngược lại người Việt Nam thì [ngược lại] .... Thì qua việc dạy ngoại ngữ cũng có thể so sánh giữa hai nền văn hóa. (Interview 1 with Đào)
- (Ext #13): Ví dụ như trong tiếng Anh thì chỉ có 1 giới từ dùng cố định như “in the garden”, nhưng ở người Việt thì người ta lại sử dụng “ngoài vườn”, “trên vườn” hoặc là “trong vườn” hay “dưới vườn”. Thì đó là những cái ví dụ em cũng hay đưa ra để minh họa. (Interview 1 with Hai)
- (Ext #14): Theo em thì phải 50% là văn hóa, 50% là ngôn ngữ. 50% là văn hóa, tức là mình sẽ tập trung vào những việc như nó ảnh hưởng đến việc sử dụng câu từ trong trường hợp nào, khi nào, với ai, cho nó phù hợp. Và ngôn ngữ thì chính là những phần ngữ âm, ngữ pháp, từ vựng, các kỹ năng. (Interview 2 with Hai)
- (Ext #15): Nhưng lý tưởng thì em phải cho rằng nó phải ngang bằng với nhau, 50 [% ngôn ngữ] -50 [%văn hóa]. Tức là nó phải hoàn toàn gắn kết và song song với nhau, mình không thể tách rời hay coi trọng một bên nào hơn. (Interview 2 with Chanh)
- (Ext #16): Theo bản thân em thì bao giờ ngôn ngữ cũng chiếm một tỉ trọng lớn hơn, và trong đó có văn hóa để hỗ trợ cho các tình huống giao tiếp

đó. Tỷ lệ có lẽ là 60 [%ngôn ngữ] - 40 [%văn hóa] hay 65 [% ngôn ngữ] -35 [% văn hóa]. (Interview 2 with Cam)

- (Ext #17): Nó không phải là môn văn hóa mà nó là môn ngoại ngữ, là giảng dạy tiếng Anh, mình dạy cho họ ngôn ngữ để từ đó họ tìm hiểu về văn hóa của người nước ngoài. Thực ra em nghĩ là tỷ lệ lý tưởng phải là 80 [% ngôn ngữ] - 20 [% văn hóa]. (Interview 1 with Ban)
- (Ext #18): Thực ra mình hiểu rất rõ là ngôn ngữ và văn hóa là hai mảng luôn luôn song hành, luôn luôn lồng ghép vào nhau, không thể tách rời được. Nhưng nhiều khi trong quá trình dạy học thì mình lại phải làm nổi bật trọng tâm, có, phải có sự hi sinh [văn hóa cho ngôn ngữ] ấy. [ . . . ] Mình lại phải tập trung rèn luyện kỹ năng ngôn ngữ trước. (Interview 1 with Chanh)
- (Ext #19): Thực chất thì mục đích của mình là dạy ngôn ngữ cho sinh viên, nhưng văn hóa thì lại gắn liền với ngôn ngữ nên không thể tách rời được. Tuy nhiên là trong các giờ học thì mình vẫn phải ưu tiên giảng dạy ngôn ngữ nhiều hơn, vì kỳ thi thì hướng đến kiểm tra ngôn ngữ chứ không kiểm tra văn hóa, cho nên mình phải có ưu tiên hơn. Em có định lượng một khối lượng cụ thể, chẳng hạn như kiến thức ngôn ngữ thì phải chiếm khoảng 70%, và khoảng 30% là văn hóa mà thôi. (Interview 2 with Chanh)
- (Ext #20): Tỷ lệ thực tế trên lớp theo em thì phải khoảng 90% đến 95% ngôn ngữ, và chỉ có 5% - 10% là văn hóa. [ . . . ] Lý do chính là thời gian trên lớp em tập trung vào nội dung ngôn ngữ nhiều hơn, đưa ra các quy luật ngữ pháp hay cách diễn đạt câu, và đặt học sinh vào một bối cảnh văn hóa nhất định. [ . . . ] Về thời gian, và còn một cái nữa là áp lực về kiến thức ngôn ngữ phải truyền đạt cho sinh viên. (Interview 2 with Cam)
- (Ext #21): Mình chỉ tập trung vào ngôn ngữ là chính, còn văn hóa thì em thấy cảm giác là mọi người, kể cả bản thân em cũng thế, khi dạy thì mình chưa đặt mục tiêu rõ ràng là mình phải đưa yếu tố văn hóa vào đây hay phải nhấn mạnh vào yếu tố văn hóa đối với sinh viên, mà chỉ hướng tới rèn luyện kỹ năng ngôn ngữ cho sinh viên. [ . . . ] Nhiều khi là do mình không ý thức rõ ràng về cái việc là phải tập trung về vấn đề văn hóa, cho nên nếu có nhắc đến hay vô tình nhắc đến yếu tố văn hóa thì nó không sâu. (Interview 2 with Hồng)
- (Ext #22): Bọn em không tách biệt giữa dạy ngôn ngữ và dạy văn hóa, mà chỉ tìm cách xen kẽ, tức là về mặt ngôn ngữ là chính, và khi nào cần thì sẽ khái quát và đúc rút ra và giúp cho sinh viên khái quát được những nét văn hóa từ những hoạt động ngôn ngữ, từ việc dạy học đó. (Interview 1 with Tư)
- (Ext #23): Nếu như có thể, vâng. Nếu như là em cảm thấy nó có sự khác biệt lớn [thì sẽ đưa các mục tiêu văn hóa vào bài soạn]. (Interview 1 with Hồng)
- (Ext #24): Nó cũng còn tùy vào nội dung bài giảng hôm đó nữa. Nếu bài giảng hôm đó là về một chủ đề văn hóa thì rõ ràng là mục tiêu văn hóa phải được đặt vào trong mục tiêu chung của bài học. Nhưng nếu

không học về nội dung văn hóa hay chỉ học về ngữ pháp hay từ vựng thì cũng khó đưa mục tiêu văn hóa vào trong đó được.  
(Interview 1 with Chanh)

- (Ext #25): Mục tiêu văn hóa thì được coi là một mục tiêu giao tiếp. Ví dụ như mục tiêu của bài này là để cho sinh viên có được kỹ năng giao tiếp này hay kỹ năng giao tiếp kia thì có mục tiêu văn hóa ẩn ngay sau đây mà em không chỉ rõ ra là đây là mục tiêu văn hóa. [...] Thực ra thì đối với mục tiêu về giao tiếp, về văn hóa thì bọn em cũng không dám xây dựng một mục tiêu lớn. Vậy nên trong từng tiết học, từng buổi học mình làm sao để cho sinh viên hiểu được nội dung văn hóa, 1 khía cạnh văn hóa nào đó thì cũng được coi là một thành công rồi. (Interview 1 with Tư)
- (Ext #26): Thông thường thì đó không phải là mục tiêu văn hóa mà theo em thì đó là mục tiêu ngôn ngữ mà có chứa yếu tố văn hóa. Tức là khi soạn bài mà bài đó liên quan đến nội dung mà cần phải có kiến thức văn hóa thì em sẽ tìm hiểu về nội dung văn hóa đó để giảng giải cho sinh viên. (Interview 1 with Cam)
- (Ext #27): Nhưng bọn em không phải là giáo viên dạy văn hóa nên không tham vọng nhiều là dạy nhiều về văn hóa, mà là phản ứng trong những tình huống cụ thể khi mình biết về văn hóa của họ. (Interview 1 with Ban)
- (Ext #28): Trước hết sinh viên hiểu biết về văn hóa của những quốc gia mà mình học tiếng, cụ thể là những quốc gia nói tiếng Anh. Trong đó có rất nhiều lĩnh vực, nhưng em chủ yếu là giúp sinh viên giao tiếp sao cho phù hợp với tình huống, tránh những áp đặt của ngôn ngữ thứ nhất – tiếng mẹ đẻ - sang ngôn ngữ đích. Và thứ hai là tránh những hành vi, cử chỉ mà không phù hợp trong văn hóa đích. (Interview 1 with Sen)
- (Ext #29): Khi mà thấy được là có sự khác biệt thì mình sẽ đi tìm hiểu xem sự khác biệt đó là như thế nào. Dưới góc độ là một người học tiếng Anh, một ngôn ngữ của phương Tây, phải tìm hiểu xem tình huống này thì họ diễn đạt trong văn hóa của họ như thế nào; hoặc là trong tình huống này thì tôi được phép nói cái gì; và cái gì thì không nên hay tuyệt đối không được nói, mặc dù ở Việt Nam có thể nói nhưng có thể ở những đất nước nói tiếng Anh đó thì ta cần phải tránh. (Interview 1 with Cúc)
- (Ext #30): Về kiến thức văn hóa mà em muốn sinh viên của mình nắm được đó chính là những tình huống trong giao tiếp, nói chính xác là những tình huống giao tiếp đó thì người Anh và người Việt sử dụng những cách nói chuyện và giao tiếp khác nhau như thế nào. Đó là những cái mà em muốn so sánh để chỉ ra sự khác biệt và sinh viên có thể nắm được mà không mắc những lỗi mà gây ra bởi sự ảnh hưởng của nền văn hóa Việt Nam, ngôn ngữ của Việt Nam khi học tiếng Anh. (Interview 1 with Năm)
- (Ext #31): Cho nên khi dạy sinh viên tiếng Anh hay là tiếng gì chẳng nữa thì mình cũng phải cung cấp cho họ một nền tảng văn hóa càng nhiều càng tốt để họ có thể tránh được những hiểu lầm ấy, và có thể giao



tiếp với nhau được hiệu quả hơn. [ . . . ] Nên, mình vừa đọc thêm và cũng truyền đạt lại những gì mình biết về văn hóa để cho các em sử dụng kiến thức về ngôn ngữ cộng với văn hóa để giao tiếp cho tốt hơn. (Interview 1 with Huệ)

(Ext #32): Ví dụ như khi giao tiếp với người Anh, Mỹ hay Úc thì cũng nên biết một số nét văn hóa cơ bản của họ để khi giao tiếp với họ không để cho họ cảm thấy sốc khi mà thấy mình có những hành động lạ chẳng hạn. Mình cố gắng để hòa đồng với họ để cho giao tiếp đạt được kết quả. (Interview 1 with Liên)

(Ext #33): Kiến thức về văn hóa thì rộng, nhưng em muốn sinh viên của mình hiểu được phong tục tập quán của đất nước mà ngôn ngữ mình đang học, ví dụ cụ thể nhất là Anh hay Mỹ. Mình phải hiểu được phong tục tập quán của họ, phong tục tập quán là khá rộng, nó bao gồm như cách họ giao tiếp như thế nào, trong từng tình huống thì dùng những từ như thế nào. (Interview 1 with Đào)

(Ext #34): Trong quá trình học tiếng Anh mà để sinh viên nắm được văn hóa của một đất nước không nói tiếng Anh thì sẽ chỉ ở một mức độ rất hạn chế. Lý do là trong quá trình dạy tiếng Anh thì sẽ tập trung vào văn hóa của Anh, Mỹ, hay Canada chẳng hạn. (Interview 1 with Cam)

(Ext #35): Cái chính vẫn là văn hóa của các đất nước nói tiếng Anh, còn ngoài ra có các ví dụ về văn hóa của các đất nước khác gần gũi với chúng ta, để sinh viên thấy được sự phong phú và đa dạng của các nền văn hóa, ví dụ như văn hóa Hàn Quốc là một nền văn hóa mà em rất quan tâm. (Interview 1 with Cúc)

(Ext #36): Giúp cho sinh viên có thái độ đúng đắn, tôn trọng những gì liên quan đến văn hóa, và mặc dù những yếu tố khác biệt đó ... nhưng họ nên có thái độ tôn trọng. (Interview 1 with Lan)

(Ext #37): [Cung cấp] kiến thức, đồng thời cũng giúp cho sinh viên có một thái độ tích cực đối với nền văn hóa đó. (Interview 1 with Chanh)

(Ext #38): Mình chỉ định hướng với các em thứ nhất là về thái độ để các em tiếp nhận, và cái thứ hai là giúp- ví dụ như đưa các ví dụ thú vị chẳng hạn để cho các em ngạc nhiên, và khi các em ngạc nhiên rồi thì các em có thể là tìm hiểu thêm. (Interview 1 with Huệ)

(Ext #39): Ví dụ như khi dạy đọc - viết, hay nghe – nói thì cơ bản là [đối với] các em cái nền cơ bản khá là thấp, [ . . . ] vẫn còn các lỗi về ngữ pháp, dùng từ. Cho nên mình phải tập trung vào ngôn ngữ, và rồi về văn phong một chút nữa, về cấu trúc. (Interview 2 with Huệ)

(Ext #40): Chẳng hạn như đặc điểm của người học thì vừa là lớp học rất đông, và trình độ tiếng Anh của các em không đồng đều nhau, hoặc là rất kém. Nên nếu mình diễn đạt nhiều thông tin văn hóa bằng ngôn ngữ mà các em đang học thì sẽ gặp rất nhiều khó khăn trong việc tiếp thu được ngôn ngữ đích, mục tiêu ngôn ngữ trong bài hôm đấy. (Interview 2 with Chanh)

- (Ext #41): Tuy nhiên là trong các giờ học thì mình vẫn phải ưu tiên giảng dạy ngôn ngữ nhiều hơn, vì kỳ thi thì hướng đến kiểm tra ngôn ngữ chứ không kiểm tra văn hóa, cho nên mình phải có ưu tiên hơn.  
(Interview 2 with Chanh)
- (Ext #42): Ví dụ như hiện nay bọn em đang đề nghị cho sinh viên thi vấn đáp chẳng hạn [. . .]. Hiện nay thì cho sinh viên thi trắc nghiệm trên máy, chủ yếu là ((switches to English)) multiple choices ((switches back to Vietnamese)), và như thế dẫn đến việc là sinh viên tương đối lười học, có những người tin là họ cứ ((switches to English)) tick ((Switches back to Vietnamese)) bừa thì đương nhiên sẽ có số điểm nào đó và để có thể đủ vượt qua kỳ thi, và đó cũng là mục tiêu của họ rồi. Đó cũng dẫn đến thực tế là kỹ năng ngôn ngữ của sinh viên cũng kém hơn. Động lực của sinh viên, hay mục tiêu học tập của sinh viên sẽ khác đi vì cách thức thi khác. [. . .] Và thực tế là phương pháp dạy của giáo viên cũng sẽ phải khác để phù hợp với việc sinh viên thi cử. Còn nếu thi vấn đáp mà yêu cầu sinh viên tìm hiểu một vấn đề nào đó thì sẽ tạo nhiều cơ hội để sinh viên tiếp xúc với văn hóa hơn. Đơn cử như khi sinh viên tìm hiểu về một môn thể thao chẳng hạn thì sinh viên sẽ phải lên mạng để tìm hiểu, và nó cũng gắn liền với lịch sử phát triển của 1 môn thể thao, và đó là văn hóa. (Interview 1 with Cam)
- (Ext #43): Tiêu chí là dựa trên những kiến thức mà sinh viên đã được học. Ví dụ như thi hết kỳ thi dựa trên giáo trình học đến bài 7 thôi, bài 7 trong cuốn sách *KnowHow*, thì mình chỉ dùng đến kiến thức từ bài 1 đến bài 7 thôi, không vượt quá. (Interview 2 with Ba)
- (Ext #44): Nếu mình bổ sung thêm một số hoạt động học văn hóa hay một số kiến thức thêm cho sinh viên thì tiến độ học tập của sinh viên sẽ chậm lại, vì nó kéo dài hơn, và sẽ không hoàn thành được nội dung giảng dạy. (Interview 2 with Hai)
- (Ext #45): Em nghĩ việc này [bổ sung nội dung văn hóa] là cần thiết. [. . .] Tuy nhiên là việc bổ sung đó thì cũng không được nhiều bởi vì thời lượng cho phép cho một cuốn giáo trình là cố định. Mình không có thời gian để cho sinh viên có những hoạt động thêm nữa. Với 45 tiết trên lớp thì cũng chỉ ((switches to English)) cover ((switches back to Vietnamese)) được nội dung trong giáo trình đó thôi, còn nếu có thêm thời gian thì cũng chỉ bổ trợ những kiến thức ngôn ngữ đó.  
(Interview 1 with Cam)
- (Ext #46): Thực ra nếu ta đề cập quá nhiều đến văn hóa thì kiến thức ngôn ngữ sẽ bị thu hẹp lại. Văn hóa có điểm tích cực là giúp cho các hoạt động dạy học cũng như các hoạt động ngôn ngữ trở nên sôi nổi hơn, gần gũi hơn. Tuy nhiên nếu văn hóa mà nhiều quá, lấn át phần kiến thức về ngôn ngữ thì sẽ hạn chế người học trong việc lĩnh hội kiến thức môn học đó. Theo em nếu có thể phân chia về tỉ lệ phần trăm thì là 70% là ngôn ngữ và 30% là văn hóa. (Interview 1 with Tư)
- (Ext #47): Em nghĩ là cái đó [dạy văn hóa] phụ thuộc vào việc chuẩn bị của giáo viên. Nếu như giáo viên chủ động giới thiệu [nội dung văn hóa] thì không phụ thuộc vào việc có nhiều hay ít thời gian, chỉ cần

đan xen chứ không cần nói quá nhiều về nó hay có lúc lại không nói gì đến nó. Nó phụ thuộc vào việc chuẩn bị và thiết kế bài giảng của giáo viên. [...] Vâng, vẫn sử dụng ngôn ngữ, vẫn nằm trong phần bài giảng. (Interview 1 with Lan)

(Ext #48): Sinh viên cũng không quan tâm nhiều lắm [đến môn tiếng Anh], vì tiếng Anh chỉ là 1 môn cơ bản, học rất ít, cả hai học kỳ mà chỉ có 100 tiết thôi, thì sinh viên chỉ biết được những cái rất cơ bản trong giao tiếp tiếng Anh. (Interview 1 with Mai)

(Ext #49): Sinh viên của em thì không phải là chuyên về tiếng Anh nên họ cũng không tập trung nhiều lắm vào môn của em, nên họ cũng không thường để ý đến những nét văn hóa đó. Với bản thân em thì khi mà có sự liên quan về những khác biệt văn hóa thì em sẽ nêu ra thôi, chứ em không đi sâu vào những cái chi tiết văn hóa đó. (Interview 1 with Năm)

(Ext #50): Thứ nữa là lượng sinh viên cũng quá là đông nữa, cho nên cũng không thể, khi mà chữa một phần này thì cũng không thể có được phần khác để giải thích cho hoặc là lồng ghép vào các phần nội dung khác vào được, quá nhiều sinh viên phải chữa bài. (Interview 1 with Hồng)

(Ext #51): Thứ nhất là ngoài những kiến thức mà mình thu lượm được từ những nguồn sách vở, nhà trường, từ những nguồn mà mình tự học ra thì thực chất là từ khi ra trường, em cũng không có được những khóa học bồi dưỡng về văn hóa, cũng như không có được những cơ hội để tiếp cận những nền văn hóa, phần lớn là mình tự học, chứ không được đào tạo bài bản. Kể cả trong chương trình học thì kiến thức về văn hóa cũng không phải là một môn học quá là được coi trọng, cho nên em cảm thấy là kiến thức [văn hóa] của mình cũng bị hạn chế. (Interview 2 with Chanh)

(Ext #52): Cái khó khăn nói chung thì em cảm giác vẫn là sự hiểu biết của mình, cái chính là sự hiểu biết của mình về nền văn hóa mà mình muốn nói đến. (Interview 2 with Huệ)

(Ext #53): Em chưa từng [lồng ghép các nền văn hóa của các nước không nói tiếng Anh]. Vì thực ra thì mình hiểu về những đất nước ấy rất là ít, cho nên cũng không dám. (Interview 1 with Ba)

(Ext #54): Nếu như nó là chương trình tiếng Anh giao tiếp thì mình truyền tải một khối lượng văn hóa gắn với ngôn ngữ thì nó dễ dàng hơn so với tiếng Anh chuyên ngành. (Interview 2 with Chanh)

(Ext #55): Thực ra theo em đánh giá thì giáo trình *Inside out* thì theo mục đích mà họ đưa ra thì nó là một giáo trình thiên về hướng giao tiếp nhiều hơn, nhưng khi em xem xét thì thấy giáo trình tập trung nhiều hơn về mặt ngôn ngữ. Những hoạt động giao tiếp trong giáo trình đó thì phải do phần lớn là giáo viên thiết kế, còn để đưa ra các tình huống cụ thể hàng ngày chẳng hạn thì rất ít. (Interview 2 with Cam)

(Ext #56): Thực tế là em chỉ sử dụng 1 giáo trình duy nhất là *Inside Out*. (Interview 1 with Cam)

- (Ext #57): Bọn em căn cứ vào các chương trình chuẩn như *Inside out* hay *New Headway*, hoặc đối với tiếng Anh chuyên ngành thì là *Head for Business*, từ đó bọn em chọn ra một số phần về ngôn ngữ và văn hóa mà nó phù hợp và liên quan đến môn học cũng như đối tượng người học. (Interview 1 with Tur)
- (Ext #58): Em lấy giáo trình cứng là sách, sách hướng dẫn dạy kỹ năng, các bài thực hành theo format theo TOEFL. (Interview 1 with Liên)
- (Ext #59): Tập trung vào phát triển giáo trình mới, và những hạn chế của giáo trình, cùng nhau bổ sung thêm những tài liệu giảng dạy mới cho từng bài. [ . . . ] Và quyết định là có tiếp tục dùng giáo trình đó hay không, hay là đổi sang một giáo trình khác. (Interview 2 with Tur)
- (Ext #60): Giáo viên thì cũng không cứng nhắc trong việc đưa văn hóa vào. Em nghĩ là trong quá trình dạy mà thấy chỗ nào cảm thấy phù hợp thì giáo viên lồng ghép vào. [ . . . ] Cũng tùy vào trường hợp giáo viên lồng ghép vào đây ít hay nhiều. (Interview 1 with Liên)
- (Ext #61): Em nghĩ là không cần, vì với khả năng của sinh viên thì em nghĩ thể là đủ để họ có thể nắm được những cái cơ bản nhất trong những tình huống giao tiếp để người ta có thể tránh những trường hợp gọi là sử dụng sai lệch. (Interview 1 with Năm)
- (Ext #62): Với giáo trình đang sử dụng là *Inside out* thì cũng đáp ứng được phần nào. Họ cũng đưa ra được những nét rất đặc trưng của các nước nói tiếng Anh. Nếu họ đưa ra được các tình huống để sinh viên lựa chọn trong các tình huống văn hóa thì sẽ nổi bật hơn về nội dung văn hóa. Nên các dạng bài thiết kế thêm vào là để so sánh các nền văn hóa, lựa chọn ngôn ngữ cho phù hợp. (Interview 1 with Cúc)
- (Ext #63): Từ nguồn mà trước đây em học được, trong quá trình học thì cũng tích lũy lại, và từ kinh nghiệm đó thì truyền đạt lại cho các em chứ không nói rõ là phần này thì trích từ cuốn nào, mà thấy phù hợp thì bọn em đưa vào. [ . . . ] Vâng, từ những kinh nghiệm mà mình đã có và cung cấp cho các em. (Interview 1 with Liên)
- (Ext # 64): Em thường xuyên sử dụng internet để sưu tầm tài liệu. Ví dụ như *Asian Journal* là 1 trong những trang web mà em thường vào để đọc về những vấn đề văn hóa, và ở đó thì có thể tìm thấy các bài viết của rất nhiều các học giả từ các nền văn hóa khác nhau như Trung Quốc, Hàn Quốc, Ấn Độ, Pakistan, v.v. Họ có các nghiên cứu về văn hóa và em cũng học hỏi từ đó. [ . . . ] Ngoài những bài nghiên cứu thì còn rất nhiều các tài liệu về văn hóa. [ . . . ] Đây là những kênh có thể bổ trợ thêm những hiểu biết về văn hóa cho sinh viên. (Interview 1 with Cúc)
- (Ext #65): Ví dụ như ngay trong bài học đầu tiên hay bài thứ hai mà nói đến sự khác nhau trong lời chào giữa rất nhiều ngôn ngữ khác nhau, hay tiền tệ, hay đơn giản như những nước nào trên thế giới mà lại lái xe về bên trái chẳng hạn. Thì những cái đó chủ yếu em tìm hiểu trên internet, nhanh và tiện lợi nhưng đôi khi thì không đảm bảo độ tin cậy chính xác là đến mức nào. (Interview 1 with Cam)

- (Ext #66): Môn học mà em đang dạy để lồng ghép một số kiến thức văn hóa thì do mình tự soạn, tự tìm hiểu và sau đó thì cung cấp thêm cho sinh viên thôi. [ . . . ] Thông thường thì kết hợp, tức là ví dụ lấy từ sách khi mà mình đọc thấy nó phù hợp với nội dung mà mình truyền đạt thì lấy từ sách, cũng phải tham khảo thêm một số nguồn ở trên mạng vì giờ nó rất là nhanh. [ . . . ] Hoặc là trong một số trường hợp mà bí quá thì vẫn phải- có một mạng lưới riêng- thực ra không phải là mạng lưới mà là có những người bạn nước ngoài thì cũng có thể e-mail hoặc là hỏi trực tiếp họ. [ . . . ] Ví dụ như ở Mỹ em có một người, trước đây là một người thầy dạy tiếng Anh trong một thời gian ngắn, sau đó thì về nhưng vẫn còn giữ liên lạc. Trong một số trường hợp khi cần hỏi thì em vẫn hỏi. (Interview 1 with Hai)
- (Ext #67): Thực ra là khi mà dạy thì yếu tố về văn hóa chỉ là cái nảy sinh khi đưa ra giải thích các hiện tượng nào đó hoặc một mục ngôn ngữ nào đó xuất hiện trong bài. (Interview 1 with Hồng)
- (Ext #68): Khi dạy tiếng Anh thì em thường chỉ nêu ra những cái khác nhau giữa hai nền văn hóa là văn hóa của người Anh và người Việt. Em cũng không đi sâu, mà chỉ làm thế nào để sinh viên của mình hiểu được những nét văn hóa riêng như thế để họ so sánh. (Interview 1 with Năm)
- (Ext #69): Nó tùy thuộc vào tiêu đề của bài học. Ví dụ là hôm đấy các em học về đồ ăn đồ uống chẳng hạn, vâng, thì em cũng sẽ nói về văn hóa của người phương Tây, với lại của người Việt Nam; hoặc là phương tiện xe cộ chẳng hạn. Đấy, thế là nó tùy vào chủ điểm của bài học. (Interview 1 with Hồng)
- (Ext #70): Trong quá trình giảng dạy thì chỉ tập trung phát triển về kỹ năng và về kiến thức về ngữ pháp và từ vựng cho sinh viên, chứ còn về những cái liên quan đến văn hóa thì chưa có nhiều, và nhất là về liên văn hóa thì lại càng ít hơn. (Interview with Hai)
- (Ext #71): Văn hóa Việt Nam cũng là cái mà em chú trọng. [ . . . ] Có rất nhiều tình huống để sinh viên tự phản ánh về văn hóa Việt Nam, thông qua nhiều dạng bài tập, ví dụ như nói về gia đình mình hay từng thành viên trong gia đình thì đó là tự phản ánh về văn hóa của mình.
- (Ext #72): Ví dụ như đứng lên giới thiệu là ở vùng của tôi thì phong tục như thế này, ở vùng của bạn thì phong tục như thế này. (Interview 1 with Ba)
- (Ext #73): Vì là các em đã có một môn học riêng là môn học hình như em nhớ không nhầm là môn *Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam* gì đó thì phải. Cho nên em không cho các em tìm hiểu riêng về phần đó mà chỉ lồng ghép vào các nội dung nếu có trong bài. (Interview 1 with Hồng)
- (Ext #74): Em nghĩ cái đó cũng hay, nhưng trong thực tế thì việc đưa vào cũng tương đối hạn chế. Không phải vì mình thấy là nó hạn chế mà do chương trình và thời gian, và nhiều lúc có cảm giác như nó hơi ngoài lề một chút nên cũng không đưa vào nhiều. (Interview 1 with Sen)

- (Ext #75): Vì khối lượng kiến thức ngôn ngữ cũng tương đối nặng, cho nên văn hóa của các dân tộc khác ngoài của tiếng Anh ra thì cũng ít được đề cập hơn. (Interview 1 with Tur)
- (Ext #76): Em cũng đã nói ở trên, đó là còn phụ thuộc vào từng ngữ cảnh. Ví dụ như trong 1 bài học chỉ nhắc đến văn hóa của 1 số những nước điển hình của các nước phương Tây và 1 số nước phương Đông, thì trong đó người ta liệt kê ra Ấn Độ và Trung Quốc, thì nhân tiện cái bài đó em cũng nói luôn về văn hóa, tức là nó phù hợp với nội dung giảng dạy thôi. Còn thực ra kiến thức văn hóa thì rất rộng, mình không thể tham vọng lồng ghép được hết tất cả những cái đó được. Mình chỉ phân biệt được cho sinh viên là đối với những nước lớn, hay những nước nói tiếng Anh, và những nước láng giềng xung quanh chúng ta, chứ cũng không thể nào xa xôi được. [. . .] Khi mình học tiếng Anh thì nói đến văn hóa của những nước sử dụng tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ chính. (Interview 1 with Ban)
- (Ext #77): Nhưng họ cũng có những người sử dụng tiếng Anh, có thể là như một ngoại ngữ, có thể như là một ngôn ngữ thứ hai. Như vậy là chúng ta cũng phải cung cấp cho sinh viên những kiến thức ấy. [. . .] Lý do chính là bây giờ trong thời buổi toàn cầu hóa thì mọi người đều tiếp xúc với những người khác nhau chứ không phải những người đến những quốc gia nói tiếng Anh. (Interview 1 with Hai)
- (Ext #78): Em nghĩ là rất nên lồng ghép. Sự đa dạng về văn hóa sẽ giúp ích rất nhiều cho sinh viên trong việc tự nhận thức về cái hay, cái đẹp trong văn hóa của các dân tộc, tránh cách nhìn phiến diện. (Interview 1 with Tur)
- (Ext #79): Các hoạt động đó thì cũng đa dạng. Nhiều khi những kiến thức mà mình cảm giác là sinh viên chưa biết thì mình sẽ truyền đạt luôn, còn những cái liên quan đến văn hóa mà lại quá phổ biến mà sinh viên có thể nói được thì em có thể cho sinh viên làm việc theo cặp hay nhóm để thảo luận về những vấn đề đó. Sau đó em có thể yêu cầu sinh viên trình bày theo nhóm, theo cặp trên lớp về những hiểu biết của họ về những lĩnh vực đó. (Interview 1 with Ban)
- (Ext #80): Thực ra thì trong một vài năm gần đây thì em có giao cho sinh viên làm những cái ((switches to English)) culture projects ((switches back to Vietnamese)) khi mà nó liên quan đến một khía cạnh văn hóa nào đó, chẳng hạn như khi học về dịp lễ hội nào đó thì em có yêu cầu sinh viên chia nhóm nhỏ ra để viết về một lễ hội trong năm của người Việt hay của người nước ngoài chẳng hạn. Sản phẩm ấy có thể là dưới dạng trình bày, thuyết trình trước lớp, cũng có thể là dưới dạng một tạp chí. (Interview 1 with Chanh)
- (Ext #81): Em cũng không tự đánh giá được là có thường xuyên hay không, mà chỉ đơn giản là với những nội dung như vậy của bài học thì em thường gắn với sự so sánh giữa văn hóa Việt và văn hóa Anh [. . .] hay là bất kỳ một đất nước nào đó mà sinh viên có sự hiểu biết. Và mình có thể khuyến khích sinh viên [làm như thế]. (Interview 1 with Cam)

- (Ext #82): VD như mình có thể lấy cách ăn uống của đất nước này so với cách ăn uống của đất nước khác chẳng hạn. (Interview 1 with Ba)
- (Ext #83): Nó [hoạt động dạy tiếng Anh] chỉ thu hẹp ở việc so sánh đối chiếu của giáo viên hoặc là trao đổi với sinh viên để so sánh, đối chiếu. (Interview 1 with Hồng)
- (Ext #84): Khi dạy tiếng Anh thì em thường chỉ nêu ra những cái khác nhau giữa hai nền văn hóa là văn hóa của người Anh và người Việt. (Interview 1 with Năm)
- (Ext #85): Trong quá trình giảng dạy thì em thường tập trung vào nội dung chính và những ngữ liệu chính của buổi dạy đó, còn sử dụng thêm những thuật ngữ về văn hóa thì cũng rất hiếm, vì không có nhiều cơ hội để nói về những cái đó. (Interview 2 with Hai)
- (Ext #86): Nói thật là cũng ít dùng [những khái niệm văn hóa], vì những cái đó khá là chung, và nó hơi xa vời một chút, nên cái đó cũng ít được nhắc đến, những khái niệm chung chung. (Interview 2 with Huệ)
- (Ext #87): Có một số, nhưng có những cái mà em thấy là khó hiểu đối với sinh viên ở thời điểm đó thì em sẽ không sử dụng. Có thể em sử dụng những khái niệm như tính tập thể, tính cá nhân, những cái đó cũng dễ hiểu hơn với sinh viên. (Interview 2 with Sen)
- (Ext #88): Bồi dưỡng giáo viên nói chung thì ngoài bồi dưỡng giáo viên tiếng Anh thì còn những đợt bồi dưỡng về phương pháp giảng dạy, những đợt như thế thì em chỉ tham dự được một lần, còn bồi dưỡng cho giáo viên tiếng Anh thì bốn đến năm lần. [...] Em không nhớ chi tiết, nhưng cả bốn, năm lần đó thì không tập trung vào văn hóa mà tập trung vào ngôn ngữ. [...] Vâng, và việc tập trung vào ngôn ngữ đó thì thứ nhất là thời lượng rất ít, thứ hai là chủ yếu là nghe họ thuyết trình về một mặt nào đó, ví dụ như phát âm chẳng hạn, thêm nữa là mặc dù mình đến để tập huấn nhưng thời gian chủ yếu là mình tham gia một bài test. [...] Em nhớ là trong đợt gần đây nhất thì chủ đề là xây dựng một thang điểm cho một bài viết chẳng hạn. (Interview 2 with Cam)
- (Ext #89): Em đi dạy được bảy năm, và mỗi một năm chỉ được một lần là nhiều, có năm cũng không có. [...] Tập huấn gần đây nhất của em là về sử dụng công nghệ thông tin. [...] Dành cho tất cả giáo viên, không phải là dành cho giáo viên ngoại ngữ nói riêng. Phần lớn các khóa học là về công nghệ thông tin, kiểm tra đánh giá chẳng hạn, nó thiên nhiều về phương pháp giảng dạy. (Interview 2 with Chanh)
- (Ext #90): Nó [tập huấn giáo viên] thiên nhiều về phương pháp giảng dạy chứ nó không có những khóa học về những kiến thức văn hóa hay trao đổi về đặc điểm văn hóa của những đất nước mà mình đang học tiếng. (Interview 2 with Chanh)
- (Ext #91): Em muốn khóa tập huấn đó phải làm cho mình nhận thức rõ được tầm quan trọng của yếu tố văn hóa khi dạy học, và khi đã nhận thức được tầm quan trọng đó thì mình phải làm như thế nào để có thể

lồng ghép được những yếu tố đó vào bài học một cách có hiệu quả.  
(Interview 2 with Hồng)

- (Ext #92): Thực ra thì từ trước đến nay thì giáo viên vẫn làm, nhưng ngoài việc chuẩn bị bài dạy thì nó cần phải đảm bảo tính thông suốt, lô-gic, như vậy cái đó cũng cần phải có những khóa tập huấn hay những chương trình tập huấn về phát triển chương trình và phát triển tài liệu giảng dạy. [...] Cũng nên có những chương trình tập huấn chuyên sâu về mảng văn hóa, ví dụ như một chuyên gia nghiên cứu về văn hóa tập huấn cho giáo viên về mảng đó, và đặc biệt là cách tích hợp giảng dạy văn hóa với ngôn ngữ. (Interview 2 with Hai)
- (Ext #93): Trước đây thì chủ yếu là qua các tài liệu là chính, ví dụ như em hay nghe chẳng hạn, mình nghe thì mình thấy cách nói chuyện của họ thì à, họ nói chuyện theo kiểu đấy, hoặc là khi mình đọc những cuốn sách họ viết về văn hóa thì là trong tình huống này thì họ hay nói như thế này chẳng hạn. [...] Rồi sau này đi dạy hay dạy ở các trung tâm thì họ cũng có những giáo viên nước ngoài thì mình cũng có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc hơn, mình có thể hỏi họ hay nói với họ. Về sau thì có nhiều cơ hội hơn một chút, còn chủ yếu vẫn từ là nghe, đọc và xem. Ý em là cơ hội giao tiếp thực của mình vẫn chưa nhiều. (Interview 1 with Huệ)
- (Ext #94): Chủ yếu là tìm hiểu qua các tài liệu sách vở, một số sách về giao tiếp giao văn hóa, giao tiếp liên văn hóa thì em có đọc. Thứ hai là từ khi là sinh viên đến nay khi dạy thì có giao tiếp với giáo viên là người nước ngoài, thì tuy cũng không phải là nhiều những cũng có những buổi trao đổi [...] có được từ việc xem phim, hay các bản tin. [...] Như em đã đề cập đến, cơ bản là trong cách họ chào hỏi, giao tiếp, hay trong ăn uống, [...] Cũng ít khi trao đổi về chủ đề văn hóa [...] những chủ đề, và mình cũng hiểu là có những chủ đề mà mình không nên nói đến, chẳng hạn. (Interview 1 with Sen)
- (Ext #95): Thực ra thì ((laughs)) lý tưởng, hay có thể là không tưởng, là mình được sống trong môi trường văn hóa đó trong một khoảng thời gian nào đấy để mình có thể hiểu, và nó sẽ vỡ ra rất nhiều. [...] Em cảm giác là đó là cái rất tự nhiên, nó tự nhiên và dễ nhớ nhất, nhưng lại là không tưởng. [...] Cái từ văn hóa này thì rất lớn, và cái thứ hai nữa là cả kiến thức ngôn ngữ nữa. Vì mình không thể nói là tiếng Anh của mình là chuẩn, có những cái mà mình vẫn phải học và có thể sửa được thêm nhiều nữa. (Interview 2 with Huệ)
- (Ext #96): Đối với giáo viên thì đó cũng là cái mong muốn từ rất nhiều năm nay là giáo viên phải được bồi dưỡng nhiều thêm nữa, và nếu có cơ hội thì nhà trường nên tạo điều kiện để cho giáo viên đi học tập những khóa học ở những nước mà người ta đang sử dụng cái ngôn ngữ đó như là ngôn ngữ thứ hai hay là như tiếng mẹ đẻ chẳng hạn thì nó sẽ dễ dàng cho người dạy hơn, có kiến thức sống động hơn về văn hóa, chứ nó không phải chỉ là kiến thức trên sách vở nữa. [...] Có được cái lợi nữa là mình được thực hành hoặc là mình được sử dụng năng lực ngoại ngữ của mình và năng lực văn hóa của mình trong giao tiếp thật. (Interview 2 with Chanh)



- (Ext #97): Em có nghe nói đến, nhưng trên mạng, trên báo, đài thì người ta nói nhiều đến giáo viên phổ thông, chứ còn giáo viên đại học thì hình như chưa có chương trình gì cụ thể hay sao đó. [ . . . ] Em thấy trên mạng chẳng hạn thì chỉ nói đến việc tập trung cho khả năng của giáo viên phổ thông. (Interview 2 with Ban)
- (Ext #98): Em cũng không nghe nói về tình hình cụ thể, nhưng em cũng vừa nghe nói là có 1 đề án [chính sách] [ . . . ] Đề án [chính sách] đây là đưa ra từ lớp 3, từ lớp 3 cho đến đại học. [ . . . ] Cái này [việc giáo viên ngoại ngữ ở bậc cao đẳng, đại học được tham dự những chuyến tập huấn ở nước ngoài] thì em chưa được biết. (Interview 2 with Cam)
- (Ext # 99): Em không biết cái đó [chính sách giáo dục ngoại ngữ] (Interview 2 with Năm)